

Rhode Island Department of Education
Office of Special Needs

School Support System Report and Support Plan for the
Hillside Alternative Program
May 6, 2003

SCHOOL SUPPORT SYSTEM

Introduction

The purpose of the School Support System (SSS) is to provide a means of accountability for delivery of programs and services for students with disabilities. The School Support System model is designed to promote the involvement of the whole school district, regular educators as well as special educators and parents. It is designed to learn of the district meets the minimum regulations and what effects the program and services have on student performance. Finally, the SSS develops a school support plan for training and technical assistance.

To accomplish this the SSS includes these components:

- The Orientation Meeting The Rhode Island Department of Education (RIDE) staff meets with the Local Education Agency (LEA) to plan the site visit and identify issues or initiatives that may influence programs or service delivery.
- Data Analysis Meeting The RIDE staff meets to review LEA demographic information on selected reports including: the LEA annual plan, census information, and information collected through record review, staff questionnaires and parent interviews. To ensure that the child is at the center of the study, all analyses begin with the child. Thus, a sample of approximately 30 students with disabilities is selected; the records of these students are reviewed; their parents, teachers and related service providers are interviewed, and their classrooms are observed. The result is an in-depth, unified examination of the actual provision of programs and services for students with disabilities. The RIDE staff compiles a preliminary summary of their analyses of this data.
- Presentation by the LEA and School Site Review The site review begins with a presentation of programs by teachers and staff. The presentation provides the review team with general and specific information on delivery of programs and services to students. Following this presentation, visits to all schools are made. The team members interview school administrators and teaching staff. Parents and central office staff are also interviewed. The team gathers sufficient information and works with the LEA personnel to generate a report, covering the following:
 - The district's compliance with the state and federal regulations, relative to the education of students with disabilities.
 - The quality and effectiveness of programs and services provided by the district.
 - The need for professional development and technical assistance that will enable the LEA to improve programs and services.
- The Support Plan The RIDE team, LEA central office and building administrators meet to review the data and complete a report of results. The group designs a professional development/technical assistance support plan with timelines for implementation. This plan enables the school and district to correct areas of non-compliance and to strengthen promising programs and correct areas of weakness in order to improve services and programs for all students.
- The SSS Report The report summarizes the findings from the various data sources. The format of the report uses four divisions: Indicators, Findings, Documentation, and Support Plan. Indicators describe either performance or compliance. Findings can include a variety of some twelve categories, from school improvement to the least restrictive environment. The documentation section of the report distinguishes the source of the finding. The support plan reflects the responsive to the described findings. The support plan describes the corrective action required by the district as well as ways that RIDE will assist the district to improve programs and services.

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Hillside Alternative Program School Support System Review

May 6, 2003

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1. SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT

Indicator		Findings	Documentation	Support Plan	Follow-up Findings
Performance	1	<p>The Hillside Resource and Management Corporation (HRMC) is a multi-funded independent human service agency providing rehabilitative, education and support through contractual alternative programs and services. The Hillside Alternative Program (HAP) in Woonsocket Rhode Island an HRMC funded program is a private, non-profit 180-day school. HAP is a unique special educational setting providing an opportunity for students who may be experiencing behavioral health related issues, significant learning difficulties, truancy, multiple suspensions and or other related issues in a traditional instructional setting. The HAP offers a comprehensive educational approach for students fourteen to twenty-one years of age. The program provides specialized instruction, which focuses on work based learning to life activities facilitated in a small classroom setting. The program incorporates social emotional learning, character education and real life experiences in a cultural competent environment enabling students to expand their career pathways and economic self-sufficiency in their adult years.</p>	<p>Documentation Administrative and Faculty Interview</p>		
Performance	2	<p>The Hillside Alternative Program has developed a five year Strategic Plan that incorporates a mission and vision statement along with four specific strategies to address their overall goals. The strategies are as follows;</p>	<p>Documentation Administrative and Faculty Interview</p>		

	<p>#1: Maintain continuous contact with the communities served and initiate contact with communities intended to be served by HAP, which will expand enrollments, increase revenues and offer more varied funding base.</p> <p>#2: Focus HAP's infrastructure to provide unparalleled quality services and facilities by clearly formulating program goals and capital needs.</p> <p>#3: Cultivate public and foundation funding sources through aggressive yet focused solicitation.</p> <p>#4: Develop wise collaborations, partnerships and where appropriate, mergers with entities seeking diversity and multicultural approaches to their missions resulting in enhanced services available to a larger community.</p> <p>Although the HAP facilitates daily and portfolio based student progress and assessment to assure student learning, it is unclear how the current strategies addressed in the strategic plan incorporate goals that focus on improving student educational outcomes, school climate and enhanced social emotional learning specific to this student population.</p> <p>As the HAP facilitates their strategic plan, participation of faculty, parents, students and the community would be helpful to the process.</p>		<p>The HAP will explore the development of an additional strategy and specific goals to address student based educational outcomes, school climate and enhanced social emotional learning. (Progress up-date 8/03)</p> <p>The HAP will explore strategies to incorporate broader participation of faculty, parents, students and the community in their strategic planning. (Progress up-date 8/03)</p>	
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2. SCHOOL CLIMATE

Indicator		Findings	Documentation	Support Plan	Follow-up Findings
Performance	1	HAP publishes a comprehensive student handbook. The handbook clearly defines the expectations of the student's participation in the program academically as well as behaviorally. Information for both students and parents provides and overview of school policies, services, course of study, assessment and behavioral management strategies. As part of the student intake process parents and or guardians must sign the handbook assuring their understanding of noted information.	Documentation Administrative and Faculty Interviews		
Performance	2	Mentoring for new faculty members is informal but teachers noted being supported by administration and seasoned faculty in addressing presenting request.	Documentation Administrative and Faculty Interviews		
Performance	3	HAP has a number of community relationships, which promote community service experiences as well as student and family support. HAP works closely with the local community mental health center, there CASSP initiative, project HOPE, local churches, and Action Based Enterprises.	Administrative and Faculty Interviews		
Performance	4	Though faculty at HAP are familiar with the school crisis response and have walkie-talkies to communicate emerging concerns, there currently is no written crisis response plan.	Administrative and Faculty Interviews	The HAP will develop a written crisis response plan. (Written assurance by 8/03)	
Performance	5	The HAP is currently revising their intake process and protocols to respond more efficiently in acquiring appropriate information and parameters of responsibility with sending Local Education Agencies. The proposed process will detail specific actions and	Documentation Administrative and Faculty Interview	The HAP will facilitate a dialogue with the LEA to refine their intake process, develop structured protocols and targeted responsibilities for all special education	

		activities, outcome and documentation, decisions and responsibilities.		related activities and service provision in accordance with IDEA. (Written plan and assurance by 8/03)	
3. TEACHING PRACTICES					
Indicator		Findings	Documentation	Support Plan	Follow-up Findings
Performance	1	HAP provides students with a unique instructional standards based curriculum that focus learning and its relatedness to real life experiences. Throughout the school there was evidence of student work, facilitated instruction and student problem solving.	Observation Administrative and faculty Interview		
Performance	2	Students at HAP are academically as well as socially and emotionally assessed daily through teacher observations, student work and participation. Through this daily process and the student portfolio review, the HAP informs instructional practices for both the core curriculum as well as the individual student learning style and or need.	Administrative and Faculty Interview		
Performance	3	Within the 1-½ hour block of daily instruction a thematic approach as well diverse learning activities are facilitated in all core subjects and electives providing students an opportunity to explore learning through a variety of venues. (Example; writing across the curriculum - journals, newsletters, yearbook, field trips, math problem solving etc.)	Observation, Administrative and Faculty Interview		
Performance	4	Administration, faculty and support staff meet once a week to plan effectively for students and the overall operations of the program.	Administrative and Faculty Interview		

Performance	5	Currently the intake process does not include a team review of a student's application to the program. Faculty at the HAP reviews the intake information independently and informally communicate their ideas regarding the overall student placement.	Administrative and Faculty Interview	(See School Climate pg. 7, # 5)	
Performance	6	There are 4 teachers at the HAP, 2 teachers are special education certified and 2 teachers are currently emergency certified and are at varying stages of completing the certification process.	Administrative and Faculty Interview		

4. LEAST RESTRICTIVE ENVIRONMENT (LRE) & FREE APPROPRIATE PUBLIC EDUCATION (FAPE)

Indicator		Findings	Documentation	Support Plan	Follow-up Findings
Performance	1	The program continuum facilitated at HAP includes a 9 th /10 th grade level class, an 11 th /12 th grade class, providing core subject and elective curriculums. Students who may need a more individualizes intense instructional experience are provided that as needed. In addition there are opportunities in Business Education and a comprehensive School to Career and Adult life program.	Documentation , Administrative and Faculty Interview		
Performance	2	Students at the HAP have peer related experiences through participating in all home school related activities if they choose. In addition, whenever possible for students to initiate transition planning with their home school the HAP facilitates a supportive process for overall student success. Currently students are attending specific elective blocks at the Woonsocket High School to initiate transition planning potentially in the future.	Administrative and Faculty Interview		

5. FACILITIES					
Indicator		Findings	Documentation	Support Plan	Follow-up Findings
Performance	1	Evacuation Plans were posted throughout the school and faculty were aware of the procedures.	Documentation Administrative Interview Observation		
6. EVALUATION					
Indicator		Findings	Documentation	Support Plan	Follow-up Findings
		See Individual Education Plan (IEP)/ Procedural Safeguards			
7. INDIVIDUAL EDUCATION PLAN (IEP) PROCEDURAL SAFEGUARDS					
Indicator		Findings	Documentation	Support Plan	Follow-up Findings
Performance	1	It is the responsibility of the LEA to ensure that students receive a Free and Appropriate Public Education (FAPE). The contracted agency/non public school is an active collaborative partner in ensuring that FAPE is received.			
Compliance	2	<p>Protocols for facilitating the management of the overall process of student special education evaluations and the IEP are currently unclear between the Local Education Agency (Woonsocket) and the HAP. All IEP items in this section pertain to IEPs written by employees of the Woonsocket Public Schools.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appropriate constitution of IEP Team (JK 1-4 no general education representation.) • Description of student's strengths and needs in the general curriculum not focused as such (JK 1,2,4) currently identified by the LEA. 	<p>Administrative and Faculty Interviews</p> <p>Record Review</p>	The HAP will continue to assist the respective LEAs that they work with in providing a Free and Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) to the students they serve in accordance and adherence to the RI Regulations. This is applicable to all items in this section.	

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Completion of each category identified on the IEP • Extended School Year acknowledgement (JK 2,3) • Date for re evaluation (JK 2) • Transition related goal acknowledgement (JK 1-4) 		Timeline: Immediately and ongoing.	
Compliance/ Performance	3	It is unclear for faculty at the HAP how Extended School Year is addressed and who is responsible in lue of being an alternative education setting.	Administrative and Faculty Interview Record Review	See also Section 2: School Climate #5	
Compliance/ Performance	4	Though parents participate at IEP meetings it is unclear who is responsible to facilitate parental notice and who maintains record of notification of ETM and or IEP meetings in addition to consent for evaluations.	Administrative and Faculty Interview Record Review	See also Section 2: School Climate #5	
Compliance/ Performance	5	For students who may need itinerant supports it is unclear how they would be facilitated and who would be responsible to assure service delivery.	Administrative and Faculty Interview	See also Section 2: School Climate #5	
8. TRANSITION					
Indicator		Findings	Documentation	Support Plan	Follow-up Findings
Performance	1	<p>The HAP facilitates a comprehensive program for students to engage in real life/world experiences addressing work-based learning activities through vocational assessments and exploration, internships, job shadowing, employment opportunities and portfolio development. Students participate in the following specific activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School to Career curriculum • Career Preparation/Planning • Work Placement • Computer Skills 	Documentation Administrative, Faculty and Student Interviews		

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recreational Activities • College Preparation <p>Students have experienced work placement opportunities in the following businesses: CVS Staples Landmark Hospital Expressions Shaw's Market</p>			
Performance	2	Transitions for students planning to return to their home school/communities are thoughtfully addressed with assurances and supports to enable overall student success.	Documentation , Administrative, Faculty and Student Interview		
9. PARENT INVOLVEMENT					
Indicator		Findings	Documentation	Support Plan	Follow-up Findings
Performance	1	<p>The HAP provides a family outreach component to encourage student and family participation in education and personal pursuits, information, education and assistance and access to community resources. Additionally the HAP facilitates home visits, parent teacher conferences, informational sessions, holiday luncheons with staff and students and a school year-end dinner. The family case manager position is a consultation as needed component of HAP.</p> <p>All families interviewed positively responded to the participation of their child in the HAP in regards to the educational experience, parent school relationships, and overall support.</p>	Documentation , Administrative, Faculty and Parent Interviews		

10. PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT					
Indicator		Findings	Documentation	Support Plan	Follow-up Findings
Performance	1	Faculty at the HAP have engaged in a variety of professional development opportunities such as school to career certification, cultural diversity, physical restraint, building parent relationships, and standards in teaching. As HAP reviews there strategic plan, and current professional development opportunities arise, all faculty have opportunity to participate.	Documentation Administrative and Faculty Interview		

