

Rhode Island Department of Education
Office of Special Populations

School Support System Report and Support Plan for the
The Spurwink School
December 2005

SCHOOL SUPPORT SYSTEM

A Collaborative System of Focused Monitoring

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 exceptionalities. The School Support System model is designed to promote the involvement of the whole school/educational setting, general educators as well as special educators and parents. It is designed to learn if the school/ educational setting meets the regulations and what effects programs and services have on student outcomes. 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 school/educational setting to plan the site review and identify issues or initiatives that may influence programs or service delivery.
- Data Analysis Meeting The RIDE staff meets to review school/educational setting demographic information on selected data areas: 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 exceptionalities 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 exceptionalities. The RIDE staff compiles a preliminary summary of their analyses of this data.
- Presentation by the School/Educational Setting Review The on-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, on-site reviews 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 school/educational setting personnel to generate a report, covering the following:
 - The schools/educational settings compliance with the state and federal regulations, relative to the education of students with exceptionalities.
 - The quality and effectiveness of programs and services provided by the school/educational setting.
 - The need for professional development and technical assistance that will enable the school/educational setting to improve programs and services.
- The Support Plan The RIDE team, School/Educational Setting 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/educational setting 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 six categories, from School Improvement to Free Appropriate Education in the Least Restrictive Environment. The documentation section of the report distinguishes the source of the finding. The support plan reflects the response to the described findings. The support plan describes the corrective action required by the school/educational setting as well as resources and time lines to improve programs and services.

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The Spurwink School
School Support System Review
December 2005

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1. SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT / FAMILY ENGAGEMENT					
Indicator		Findings	Documentation	Support Plan	Follow-up Findings
		<u>School Improvement</u>			
	1	<p>Spurwink School II was founded in 1960 in Portland, Maine as a group home for boys with severe emotional problems. In the mid 1970s the RI Department of Children and Families (DCYF) began to refer children with serious emotional problems to the Spurwink School in Maine. In the early 1980's Spurwink proposed to develop three (3) therapeutic foster home in Rhode Island a day treatment program. After working with the State to purchase and renovate three (3) community residences, Spurwink School II opened in the fall of 1982. In 1984 the Spurwink School II added a fourth community residence. Also in 1984 Spurwink II was incorporated as nonprofit and added a Board of Directors. Employee stability and longevity are a significant strength. The agency, Spurwink/RI and the Spurwink School II grow and develop to continue to meet the needs of the individuals its serves.</p>			
	2	<p>The mission of Spurwink/RI is to assist children, adults with disabilities and their families in pursuing social, educational, vocational and other life enhancing opportunities. The agency provides an array of highly specialized services for children and adults with challenging emotional, behavioral and developmental disabilities which included residential, special education, clinical counseling and treatment, home-based, and consumer directed services.</p> <p>The vision of Spurwink/RI is ground in self-determination and community participation for individuals with severe cognitive and/or mental health impairments.</p>			

3	<p>Spurwink is governed by a Board of Directors that includes a myriad of community members, business members, family members and educators. There is also an advisory committee to the larger board and that is comprised of a cross section of the agency. There is also a larger strategic plan that is active. The overriding facets of the agency's strategic plan are as follows</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Student achievement Art and Music Vocational Training Family engagement Personnel <p>Spurwink RI is the involved in a variety of collaborative and community-based entities such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -RICorp (residential program) -RIAPSES -Quality Care Company -RI Children's Policy Coalition Northern RI CASP Team 			
4	<p>The Director of the Spurwink School focuses on DCYF contract compliance, supervision of residential employees, budget and overall resources of the school. Personnel administration and policies also fall under the Director purview as well as oversight of the office management and staffing. The Director of the school and the Special Education Director meet on a daily basis to conference and trouble shoot.</p> <p>The Special Education Director supervises all aspects of the school and the teachers. The Clinical Supervisor supervises the clinical pieces both at the school and the residence. Se also FAPE/LRE for additional information on programming structures.</p>			

5	<p>The Director of the Spurwink School II and the Director of Special Education for Spurwink meet on a daily basis to review programmatic issues and concerns. Teachers and staff stay till approx. 4:00 pm every Tuesday for staff meetings and professional development opportunities. Some of the recent professional development opportunities have included (but are not limited to) the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Differentiated Instruction Literary Strategies Brain Gym CPI (non-violent crisis intervention) CPR Assessment and evaluation issues Emotional and Behavioral Challenges Teacher Assistant Training Assistive Technology Training 			
	<p><u>Family Engagement</u></p>			
6	<p>There are considerable opportunities for parent/family communication between the home and school. Parents of students selected for the record review process reported ongoing communication with teachers and staff and felt an active part of their child's educational experiences. There is an after hours phone line that parents can leave a message with time and number to reach them and the Agency Director or other appropriate personnel will return the parents call as requested. See also FAPE/LRE section for additional information.</p>			
7	<p>All parents and students receive a detailed student handbook outlining all rules and school policies/ procedures etc. Plans are underway to develop a school website where parents could access homework and other school-based information. The goal is to have this in place by the end of the year.</p>			

2. INSTRUCTIONAL STRATEGIES AND SUPPORTS

Indicator	Findings	Documentation	Support Plan	Follow-up Findings
1	<p>Throughout the school there was evidence of differentiated instruction and use of teachers assessments to inform instructional practices. Teachers reported having the appropriate materials and consumables that they needed in order to meet the student’s needs. Last year the school made an investment in updating all of its textbooks. Spurwink has a curriculum scope and sequence for all academic areas. This serves as a curriculum guide, however, teachers have flexibility to address individual student needs. Recently, a teacher and Special Education Director participated in GLE professional development. They returned and shared with the other staff.</p>			
2	<p>A communication journal is maintained for all students by their teachers. These journals go home on a daily basis and inform parents and guardians about student progress (academic and behavioral).</p> <p>At the elementary level the teacher (for younger students) tracks the assignments and concepts/skills learned (phonemic awareness, fluency letter recognition etc.) on daily basis. At the end of the month a fluency checklist is completed to assess how the students are doing and where they may need additional skill development and future directions. The elementary teacher (for older students) also does a variety of formal and informal assessments (running records, sight words assessments, comprehension and vocabulary identification</p> <p>At the middle school level the teachers maintain a grade book and students utilize their agendas to monitor their progress.</p> <p>At the high school level student’s assignments are tracked</p>			

		on a daily basis in binders. This has been effective as students can access their work if absent or work is not completed and track their progress.			
	3	The house parents from the residences meet with the clinicians to debrief each morning and the clinicians debrief with the residential staff each afternoon. Three are full-time residential managers that manage the 3 residences. His job is to bring the connections from the residences to the school. Currently there 12 residents students who attend Spurwink. The residential model is that students live in homes scattered throughout the community (Lincoln, Johnston, etc.) The young people are typically moving towards adoption or long-term residential care. The focus is to adapt to life in a typical home setting and everything that goes with that.			
	4	The contracted clinical psychologist is in the process of facilitating an Outcome Study that would aggregated the data and look at safety (behavioral incidents), clinical status, adaptive functioning and academic achievement.			
	5	Behavior Rating Inventory of Executive function (BRIEF) is used for all new admissions and every triennial review. This is scored and graphed. There is also parent form so you can compare functioning across domains. Students are then, as appropriate, are be able to review the graph with the clinical psychologist and begin to develop strategies in conjunction with the classroom teacher.			
	6	Throughout the school there is a very structured behavioral program that is based on appropriate behaviors and tied into a level system. Students can earn up to 100 points per day (10 per period). At the end of each day there is free time and students can chose activities based on their level. Each Friday there is a regular incentive that students can participate in if they earn it. There is also a special			

		incentive where if students earn between 90-96 points per week they can off site to the YMCA and the/or the Boys and Girls Club to engage in activities there.			
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3. FREE APPROPRIATE PUBLIC EDUCATION IN THE LEAST RESTRICTIVE ENVIRONMENT (FAPE/LRE)

Indicator	Findings	Documentation	Support Plan	Follow-up Findings
1	<p>There are five classes for students with emotional disturbance. They are typically grouped according to age.</p> <p>Currently there are: - Primary (k-3, capacity 6 students) -Elementary group (1 class grades 4-6) 8 students -Jr./Middle School (2 classes—grouped according to social and developmental needs, capacity for 8 each) -High School (1 class, grades 9-12, capacity10). There is a strong vocational component in that class and school-to-work opportunities and career exploration.</p> <p>Each of the six classes has a full-time teacher (5 special educators and one physical education teacher) and 5 teacher assistants (all teacher assistants are certified). All but one teacher is fully certified. One is emergency certified and was a teacher assistant prior to working towards certification. The teacher assistants are responsible for supporting the teaching and learning in the classroom and for completing all data paperwork relating to the behavior system.</p> <p>There is 1 behavior specialist / crisis management. This individual is responsible for managing any behaviors that are dealt with outside of the class. Inside the class the teacher assistant is the behavioral specialist. There are two time-out areas and one quiet space area “mat area”. One is a low simulation environment (LSE) that can be used if a</p>			

	<p>student needs space to reflect or if a student is in significant behavioral distress. They then engage in a de-escalation process and a Life Space Interview. The other time out room is also a quiet space that students can use to quietly reflect. The third quiet area has a large mat that students can sit on and reflect in a non confined space. Students debrief with the behavioral specialist and/or class teacher.</p> <p>If there is behavioral incident and/or a physical restraint a detailed report is filled out. The form is appropriate for both DCYF and RIDE requirements. The contracted clinical psychologist is the "point" for staff training and review of this process.</p> <p>The incident report is used to inform the FBA/BIP process, which is, drive by the clinicians but incorporates the whole school and administrative team.</p> <p>There is 1 vocational specialist who coordinates the work-study both in school-based and community-based work experiences. He also teaches the career portion for the curriculum to the high school students. See also the Transition section for further information.</p> <p>Related services (speech, occupational therapy, physical therapy etc.) are provided as prescribed in the IEPs. Occupational therapy and physical therapy is contracted or done via LEA personnel. There is a full-time registered nurse on-site as well as a full-time speech and language pathologist (SLP). The SLP provides services to students in the classroom in small groups. She also provides technical assistance to teachers and clinicians regarding the speech and language process.</p> <p>There is a full-time health and physical education teacher. There are 4 full-time clinicians including the clinical</p>			
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		<p>Supervisor. These individuals are referred to as generalists. There are three social workers and one is a licensed mental health counselor. The clinical team meets as a team every Friday to review programmatic and individual student needs. All students have behavioral goals in their IEPs and are typically seen once a week on an individual basis and participate in a variety of social skills groups within the classes. Drama therapy, knitting, Psychology 101 are some avenues of group interaction / discussions and social skill development. The clinicians also conduct groups at the residences as appropriate. The nurse has also been facilitating health/nutrition groups both at school and in the residences. Family counseling is also provided on an as needed basis. The clinician's can meet with families at the school, at home or at a residence if applicable. The clinicians are also an integral part of the transition planning for student's return to their respective LEAs. Students may begin with an abbreviated schedule and spent part of the day at the LEA and build up to a full-time and a complete transition.</p> <p>There is part-time clinical psychologist who works in a traditional school psychologist role. One of her roles is to provide technical assistance to the staff to expand their skill sets on a variety of social emotional and evaluative issues. Through the evaluation and IEP process she expands the connectivity and testing understanding of parents and LEA representatives.</p>			
	2	<p>There is also a 45-day diagnostic evaluation process where students are evaluated and assessed for appropriateness of fit. This can also be used by LEAs as an interim alternative placement as needed.</p>			
	3	<p>Summer program (extended school year, ESY) is a continuation of the IEP. Spurwink is a 230-day program. All teachers participate in the ESY program, as the school is a 230-day program. IEP goals are added through a social-</p>			

	experiential method of programming. Last summer they participated in the ropes course at Harmony Hill once a week for five weeks. Community-based activities are also an integral part of the summer program. Cultural themes are also integrated into the program culminating with an end of summer program/presentation.			
	Alignment of curriculum with LEAs curriculum is an ongoing process. This begins at the intake process with each of the student's and LEA. For the secondary students the curriculum is aligned with the LEAs curriculum for graduation purposes.			

4. EVALUATION / INDIVIDUAL EDUCATION PROGRAM (IEP)					
Indicator		Findings	Documentation	Support Plan	Follow-up Findings
	1	All students' needs are reviewed formally on a triennial basis—one of these meeting is the IEP review. The other two are a review of the student's progress, needs and future directions.			
	2	The record management at Spurwink was very well organized. All appropriate forms, reports and information were found in its appropriate spot within the folders that were selected for review.			
	3	It is the responsibility of the LEA to ensure the student receives a free and appropriate education (FAPE). The contracted agency/non-public school, however, is an active collaborative partner in ensuring that FAPE is received and the Rhode Island Regulations adhered to.		Spurwink will provide assurances to the Rhode Island Department of Education that it will adhere to the Rhode Island Regulations Governing the Education of Children with Disabilities. <i>This is applicable to all compliance findings in this section.</i> Timeline: Immediately and ongoing	

	4	In addition to procedural safeguards, parents receive an information sheet on IDEA, and an IEP fact sheet. For IEP planning parents are asked to for their input via a series of questions to be use for IEP planning.			
	5	IEP item #40a not listed by specific assessment SW4, SW7, SW6			
	6	IEP item #38, #43 not completed SW1			

5. TRANSITION					
Indicator		Findings	Documentation	Support Plan	Follow-up Findings
	1	Vocational assessments are completed by the both the case managers and the Vocational Specialist at the high school level and the case mangers at the middle school level.			
	2	<p>The School-to-Career program at Spurwink is comprised of a variety of different levels with incrementally increasing amounts of responsibility and independence.</p> <p>All students can “apply” for a job in the school. Applications are reviewed by the Vocational Specialist who coordinates the School-to–Career Program and are based on teacher and the Vocational Specialist review of the students’ behavior via the behavioral point system. The Vocational Specialist is the Supervisor for all work-sites. A weekly performance review is completed by the Vocational specialist for in-school jobs and the vocational specialist checks in with the community-based supervisor on a weekly basis.</p> <p>The first level of the program focus on in-school jobs (trash,</p>			

	<p>lunch, recycle, magic sponge cleaning, etc.). Students receive \$.50 - \$1.25 per day for in-school based work activities.</p> <p>The second level is group based out of school work sites such as Roger Williams Park. Typically students go once a week and work as a group on landscaping opportunities.</p> <p>The third level is independent work in the community. Two students are currently in the community (one works in a grocery store and one at a medical center) They do this two-days per week (8-10 hours per week) and are paid for their employment.</p>			
	<p>When students are in the process of transitioning back to the LRE a “step down” approach is offered where Spurwink works in conjunction with the LEA to gradually transition the students. This has occurred where the students begin with a few classes at the LEAs and then work up to taking more classes. The reintegration of these students raises the opportunities for success. This transition typically last 3-6 months.</p>			