

**NEW HAMPSHIRE
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
SPECIAL EDUCATION
PROGRAM APPROVAL VISITATION
CASE STUDY COMPLIANCE REVIEW**

**NFI NORTH
CONTOOCOOK SCHOOL
SUMMARY REPORT**

**Paul Dann, Executive Director
Nancy Pierce, Program Director**

Chairperson, Visiting Team:
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Visit Conducted: January 30 and 31, 2007
Report Date: April 9, 2007

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TEAM MEMBERS

Visiting Team Members:

NAME	PROFESSIONAL ROLE
Chairperson: Mary Anne Byrne	Education Consultant
Val Aubry	Special Education Director
Barbara Cohen	NHDOE Consultant, Program Approval
Jay Marshall	Executive Director
Karen Money	Special Education Director
Marie Morgan	NHDOE Consultant, Non-Public Schools
Danielle Paranto	Principal

Building Level Team Members:

NAME	PROFESSIONAL ROLE	NAME	PROFESSIONAL ROLE
Nancy Pierce	Program Director	Gregg Magoon	Educational Coordinator
Patricia Cash	Clinical Coordinator	Harry Jones	Special Educator
Teri Cannon	Special Educator	John Healey	General Educator
Carlie Wardell	General Educator	Jennifer Helfrich	Teaching Assistant
Elaine Maxfield	Teaching Assistant		

I. INTRODUCTION

The Contoocook School is a private school which provides special education for 18 students in grades 6-12 located in Contoocook, NH. It is owned and operated by NFI North, Inc. a non-profit human services agency with programs throughout the states of Maine and New Hampshire. The school provides educational programming for students with autism, emotional disabilities, other health impairments and specific learning disabilities, many of whom have mental illnesses. The students currently enrolled in The Contoocook School come from nine different sending school districts. The Contoocook School is requesting a change in ages served from 12-21 to 11-21 because sixth graders are typically age 11. In addition they are requesting to add a second site, The Bradford School, to their existing program which will provide special education programming for an additional 18 students (doubling their enrollment) with the same educational disabilities (autism, emotional disabilities, other health impairments and/or specific learning disabilities), and which will operate with the same systems as the current program: policies and procedures, administrative structure, curriculum, behavior system, rules and beliefs.

The mission of the Contoocook School is “To value and respect ourselves and the community while learning and growing.” As the visiting team carried out their varied duties and collaborative work through the Case Study Compliance Review, the team noted students and adults alike know and live their mission. The Contoocook School demonstrates commitment to this mission with their shared responsibility for all students, common core values in defining outcomes for students, and common beliefs about conditions for learning.

SCHOOL DEMOGRAPHICS	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07
Student Enrollment <u>as of December 1</u>	15	18	18
Do you accept out-of-state students? If so, list number from each state in 06-07	no		
# and Names of Sending New Hampshire LEAs (as of October 1)	#1 Conval #8 Concord #15 Hooksett #19 Goffstown #24 John Stark #46 Andover #46 Merrimack Valley #53 Pembroke #65 Kearsarge		
DOE Approved Rate	213.13	213.13	219.52
Actual Expenditure per Pupil (Budget Divided by # of Students as of Oct 1)	28,779	31,090	34,944
# Identified Students Suspended One or More Times	5	8	3
Average Length of Stay for Students	7 mos.	13 mos.	20 mos.
<u>STAFF DEMOGRAPHICS</u>			
Student/Teacher Ratio (as of Oct. 1)	5:1	4:1	4:1
# of Certified Administrators	1	1	1
# of Certified Teachers	2	3	4
# of Teachers with Intern Licenses	2	2	1
# of Non-certified Teachers	0	0	0
# of Related Service Providers	9	8	14
# of Paraprofessionals	1.5	1	1.5
# of Professional Days Made Available to Staff	20	20	20

SPECIAL EDUCATION PROGRAM DATA	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07
<u>Primary Disability Types:</u>			
Autism	0	0	0
Deaf / Blindness	0	0	0
Deafness	0	0	0
Emotional Disturbance	19	17	13
Hearing Impairment	0	0	0
Mental Retardation	0	0	0
Multiple Disabilities	0	0	0
Orthopedic Impairment	0	0	0
Other Health Impairment	2	3	3
Specific Learning Disabilities	2	2	3
Speech or Language Impairment	0	0	0
Traumatic Brain Injury	0	0	0
Visual Impairment	0	0	0
Developmental Delay ages 3-9	0	0	0

II. PURPOSE AND DESIGN OF THE CASE STUDY COMPLIANCE REVIEW PROCESS

The New Hampshire Department of Education (NHDOE) conducted a Special Education Program Approval Visit to The Contoocook School on January 30 - 31, 2007 for the purpose of reviewing the present status of programs and services made available to children and youth with educational disabilities. As part of the NHDOE Special Education Program Approval Visit, the Case Study Compliance Review was conducted.

The New Hampshire Department of Education, Bureau of Special Education conducts program approval visits using a Case Study Model that is a focused review. This focused review permits the NHDOE to leverage its impact for change and improvement within school districts and private special education schools statewide, by focusing the attention of all educators on the following three areas of critical importance in the provision of FAPE for students with disabilities.

- Access to the General Curriculum
- Transition
- Behavior Strategies and Discipline

Activities related to this NHDOE Case Study Compliance Visit included the review of:

- ♦ All application materials submitted
- ♦ Status of corrective actions since the last NHDOE Special Education Program Approval Visit
- ♦ Personnel credentials for special education staff (verified by NHDOE)
- ♦ Program descriptions and SPEDIS verification reports
- ♦ All data collected during the visit
- ♦ Any new special education programs seeking approval from the NHDOE

The New Hampshire Department of Education provided a visiting team of professional educators to work collaboratively with the staff in each of the schools in conducting the Case Study Compliance Review and the varied data collection activities. The NHDOE Special Education Program Approval Process allowed the visiting and building level team members to conduct case studies of a representative sampling of the special education student population throughout the school district.

Evidence of the work conducted in-district and results related to student outcomes were gathered throughout the process, guided by the materials and templates provided by the NHDOE, Bureau of Special Education. Examples of evidence included student individual education plans (IEPs), progress reports, samples of student work, grades, extracurricular

involvement, permanent records, curriculum, etc. Input was gathered from key constituents, including interviews with professional staff, parents, administrators, board members and in some cases the students. In addition, classroom observations were conducted for each of the case studies being reviewed. The collective data were summarized by the visiting and building level teams. The summaries, included in the report that follows, outline identified areas of strength and areas needing improvement for the school.

Throughout the entire review process, the visiting team worked in collaboration with the staff of The Contoocook School. Their professionalism, active involvement in the process and cooperation were greatly appreciated and well recognized.

IV. STATUS OF PREVIOUS NHDOE SPECIAL EDUCATION PROGRAM APPROVAL REPORT AND CORRECTIVE ACTIONS

Based on review of the July 22, 2004 NHDOE Special Education Program Approval Report, the following patterns were identified as needing improvement:

Ed. 1109.01 (b) Elements of the IEP

The Contoocook School has developed annual goals as measured by progress on objectives that are written in measurable terms; however the annual goals themselves are not written in measurable terms. SETAC training in this area is scheduled.

Status January, 2007: Not Met

The Contoocook School, while not required to follow up, went above and beyond and reports the following activities in response to the suggestions from the previous visit/report of July, 2004:

SUGGESTION FOR IMPROVEMENT	IMPROVEMENT ACTIVITY	EVIDENCE OF IMPACT ON STUDENTS
Develop a library and quiet reading area.	The Contoocook School converted a small classroom into a library and quiet reading area and secured more reading materials through grants and donations.	Students use the library regularly, for use of reference materials and to receive individual tutoring.
Continue to expand curriculum to include outdoor experiential education.	We now have two certified high ropes instructors, and we have become a boy scout troop and thus have access to far more outdoor equipment. The past year's experiential activities have included horseback riding, whitewater rafting, canoeing, rock climbing, hiking, high ropes and low ropes work.	Student participation in these activities is very high, and the students themselves now generate ideas for outdoor activities. Teacher observations demonstrate that students involved in these activities are not acting out behaviorally when the activities are taking place.

Transition planning and support	Transition plans are documented in the IEPs of students. We have focused on this aspect of the IEP, understanding that it is especially critical with our population of students, some of whom are transitioning back to their sending districts and some of whom will struggle with living independently after graduation.	We have sponsored one parent education night with Vocational Rehabilitation, offered in-house internships to help students build their resumes and work experiences, have geared our lesson plans toward the needs of pregnant students, have set up and transported one of seniors to college tours throughout New Hampshire and have arranged (with the cooperation of her district) for the same student to take a course at NHTI during her senior year with us. In addition, we have focused on the transitional needs of our younger students to help them move from school to school, from grade to grade and sometimes from class to class. In addition, we have taught a Transitions class for one year, focusing on independent living skills and post-secondary options for high school students.
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V. JANUARY 30 AND 31, 2007 CASE STUDY COMPLIANCE REVIEW RESULTS

Data collection is an important part of the NHDOE Special Education Case Study Compliance Review Process. In the Contoocook School, the NHDOE worked with the staff and administration in the random selection of case studies to ensure that there was a representative sampling of data collected from various grades/ages and disabilities. In order to monitor whether or not special education programs are in compliance in the three focus areas, and determine any root causes of problems that may be identified through the case study process, it is essential that each case study team dig deeply into the data, and not just take a surface look. This process takes time, and the entire team working with the child being studied must be involved in collecting and analyzing the data, as well as presenting and summarizing the data with the visiting team. As such, the NHDOE works with educational communities to determine the number and types of case studies to be prepared and presented, to ensure that building teams are not inundated with much more data than they can possibly analyze, allowing them to reflect upon and generalize their newly found knowledge of their programs, practices, policies and procedures.

In preparation for the January, 2007 visit to the Contoocook School, the NHDOE and SERESC worked with the staff and administration in the planning and presentation of 3 case studies, grades 8, 9 and 12. The case study students selected represented an age range of 14 to 18 with emotional disabilities, other health impairments and/or specific learning disabilities, who had attended the school anywhere from one and a half to two and a half years. This variety of ages/grades and disabilities in the case studies provided a comprehensive review of the school's special education program.

PARENT PARTICIPATION

One of the defining features of effective schools is strong parent/community relations and open communication. Having parents as an active stakeholder in the NHDOE Special Education Program Approval Process ensures broader perspectives and brings forth new ideas. In addition, including the parent perspective enhances and strengthens the teams' case study presentations, and makes for stronger school/parent relationships. As such, parent participation and input is a required part of the NHDOE Special Education Program Approval Process. In order to ensure parent participation and feedback, the NHDOE, Bureau of Special Education involves parents in a variety of aspects of the Special Education Program Approval Process. First, parents are encouraged to be active participants in the case study presentations; second,

parents of the children presented in the case study process are formally interviewed; and third, the SAU/school is required to send all parents of students with disabilities a written survey with a request to respond. Below is a summary of the results of the parent survey, along with a summary of the comments/feedback provided to the visiting team during the January 30 - 31, 2007 Case Study Compliance Review in The Contoocook School

SUMMARY OF PRIVATE SCHOOL PARENT SURVEY DATA

Name of Private School: The Contoocook School		
Total number of surveys sent: 18	Total # of completed surveys received: 6	Percent of response: 33%

**INSTRUCTIONS FOR SCHOOL: PLEASE FILL IN NUMBER OF RESPONSES IN EACH BOX.
COMPLETE ONE PAGE FOR PARENT RESPONSES FROM EACH LEVEL:
PRESCHOOL, ELEMENTARY, MIDDLE AND HIGH SCHOOL**

SCALE 3 = COMPLETELY 2 = PARTIALLY 1 = NOT AT ALL

ACCESS TO THE GENERAL CURRICULUM:	3	2	1	No Answer
I am satisfied with my child's program and the supports that he/she receives.	5	1		
My child has opportunities to interact with non-disabled peers on a regular basis.	3	2	1	
I am adequately informed about my child's progress.	4	2		
My child is informed about and encouraged to participate in school activities outside of the school day, and is offered necessary supports.	4	2		
My child feels safe and secure in school and welcomed by staff and students.	4	1		1
A variety of information (observations, test scores, school work, parent input) was used in developing my child's IEP.	5	1		
I am satisfied with the progress my child is making toward his/her IEP goals.	3	3		
FOR PARENTS OF HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS: My child earns credits toward a regular high school diploma in all of his/her classes.	2			4
TRANSITION:				
I am satisfied with the planning and support provided for the moves my child has made from grade to grade and school to school.	4			2
All of the people who are important to my child's transition were part of the planning.	4	1		1
FOR PARENTS OF STUDENTS AGE 16 OR OLDER: I am satisfied with the written secondary transition plan that is in my child's IEP.				6
BEHAVIOR STRATEGIES AND DISCIPLINE:				
My child's classroom behaviors affect his/her ability to learn. <i>If yes, please answer the next two questions. If no, skip to OTHER..</i>	YES		NO	
I have been involved in the development of behavior interventions, strategies and supports for my child.	5			1
I am satisfied with the way the school is supporting my child's behavioral, social and developmental needs.	5	1		
OTHER:				
I fully participate in special education decisions regarding my child.	5	1		
I have been provided with a copy of the procedural safeguards (parental rights) at least once a year	6			

Individual parent comments were submitted in the application and are on file at the Contoocook School. In summary comments were positive and expressed satisfaction with the patient and caring staff that addresses individual student needs and that balances their support with academic and social expectations. The Contoocook School is said to provide positive

peer culture and role modeling. Children reportedly feel safe, are learning to trust others, enjoy school and are making friends.

The following analysis of the parent surveys was submitted by the Contoocook School:

Parents rated us most positively (either 5 or 6 out of the 6 respondents “completely agree”) in the following areas:

Access to the General Curriculum:

- Satisfaction with the child’s program and supports
- Varied information used in the development of an IEP

Behavior Strategies and Discipline:

- Parental involvement in the development of interventions, strategies and supports
- Satisfaction with the way the school supports the child’s behavioral needs
- Full parental participation in special education decisions
- Compliance with the laws concerning the provision of the procedural safeguards

Parents responded positively to the transitional work we are doing, but the responses to the survey came overwhelmingly from the parents of middle school students, so there were not as many responses in this area. It is possible that the parents of some of our youngest students are unfamiliar with the term “transition” and are unsure of what it means.

The weakest responses were in the following areas:

Access to the General Curriculum:

- Opportunities for students to interact with non-disabled peers
- Satisfaction with progress towards IEP goals

The first of the above, opportunities for students to interact with non-disabled peers, is no doubt a result of the fact that we are solely a special education school and do not accept non-disabled students. Still, our students have opportunities—primarily through sporting events—to interact with non-disabled peers, and it might be worthwhile to emphasize these events for parents. Regardless, this contact will be limited, and the lack of regular interaction may just be the nature of a private, special education setting.

The greater concern is the parents’ response to the second area, satisfaction with progress toward IEP goals. Certainly, for our students, progress is not always a straight line, but we may want to re-examine how we report progress on IEP goals. At present, we report on each goal and objective on a quarterly basis, and the language comes directly from the IEPs themselves. It might be worthwhile to ask parents to comment on this reporting system to determine if it is intelligible to them.

SUMMARY REPORT OF SENDING LEAs

Name of Private School: The Contoocook School		
Total number of surveys sent: 9	Total # of completed surveys received: 7	Percent of response: 78%
Number of students placed by: LEA: 18	Court: 0	Parent: 0

INSTRUCTIONS: PLEASE WRITE NUMBER OF RESPONSES IN EACH BOX.

SCALE 4 STRONGLY AGREE 3 AGREE 2 DISAGREE 1 STRONGLY DISAGREE

	4	3	2	1	No Answer
1. The private school team has positive expectations for students.	7				
2. I am satisfied with the educational program at the above school.	6	1			
3. The school consistently follows special education rules and regulations.	6	1			
4. The school has an effective behavioral program (if applicable).	6	1			
5. I am satisfied with the related services provided by the school.	2	5			
6. The school implements all parts of students' IEPs.	6	1			
7. I feel the school provides the necessary skills to allow the student to make progress on the IEP goals.	6	1			
8. The school program measures academic growth.	5	2			
9. The school program measures behavioral growth (if applicable).	4	3			
10. The school completes a minimum of 3 comprehensive reports per year on each child with a disability enrolled.	6	1			
11. The progress reports describe the child's progress toward meeting the IEP goals, include a record of attendance, and are written in terminology understandable to the parent.	6	1			
12. Progress reports are provided to the LEA and to the parent of the child.	6	1			
13. I am satisfied with the way the school communicates students' progress.	7				
14. The school communicates effectively with parents.	6	1			
15. The school communicates effectively with the LEA.	6	1			
16. The school involves parents in decision-making.	6	1			
17. The school actively plans for future transition to a less restrictive placement.	4	3			
18. If the school finds it necessary to change or terminate placement, they notify the LEA by convening the IEP team to: review the concerns, review/revise the IEP, discuss the placement and determine if the facility can fully implement the IEP and provide FAPE.	4	1			2
19. The school team sets meeting times that are convenient for both parents and the LEA.	7				
20. The school has met my expectations.	7				
21. I have a good relationship with the school.	7				
22. I would enroll other students at the school.	7				

Individual LEA comments were submitted in the application and are on file at the Contoocook School. In summary, all the comments were positive and speak to the strong leadership, excellent staff and solid curriculum. The staff is described as being caring, consistent, and committed/dedicated to and highly invested in student success. Communication among all parties and collaborative transition planning are seen as strengths. Parent involvement and supports are reportedly strong, as well. Of note is the fact that the school is responsive, flexible and creative when addressing individual student needs. The school is perceived as “dynamic” and as providing positive educational experiences for their students.

The following analysis of LEA survey results was submitted by the Contoocook School:
According to the LEA survey, our strongest areas (7 out of 7 respondents “Strongly Agree”) on the following:

- Positive expectations for students
- Communicating student progress
- Setting meetings at times that are convenient for other parties
- Developing good relationships with the LEAs
- Meeting LEA expectations

As a result of these responses, it is not surprising that all of the responding LEA representatives said they would enroll other students at The Contoocook School.

Our second strongest areas (6 out of 7 respondents “Strongly Agree”) on the following:

- A satisfactory educational program
- Consistency in following special education rules and regulations
- Effective behavioral program
- Successful implementation of IEPs
- Successful teaching of the skills necessary for students to meet IEP goals
- Completion of a minimum of three comprehensive reports per year
- Thoroughness and attention to detail on progress reports
- Access to progress reports for both LEA and parents
- Effective school to parent communication
- Effective school to LEA communication
- Involvement of parents in decision-making

In no areas did any LEA rate The Contoocook School below a 3 (“Agree”), and the results of the survey demonstrate that the school has a solid relationship with the LEAs it serves.

The weakest area in the survey is concerned with related services, and five out of seven LEA representatives only “agreed”—as opposed to agreeing more strongly—that the related services are adequate. The Contoocook School serves a population of students who require a range of services that a small nonpublic school cannot supply, and thus many of our services are provided by LEA personnel who visit our campus to work directly with students and consult with our faculty and staff.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS FROM THE THREE FOCUS AREAS OF THE CASE STUDY COMPLIANCE REVIEW

The Contoocook School’s revised Policy Manual is comprehensive, well developed and meets the NHDOE requirements.

Access To The General Curriculum

Implementation of IEPs

Provision of Non-Academic Services

Full Access to the District’s Curriculum

Equal Education Opportunity

The Contoocook School has addressed many of their students’ social, emotional and learning challenges in providing access to the general education curriculum. Academically they have worked to emphasize writing, computer skills and wellness throughout the curriculum. The certified teachers offer interdisciplinary courses, team teaching and experiential, hands-on learning opportunities to the students. Additional 1:1 tutoring is provided by New England College interns who volunteer many hours to the program (see Innovative Practices: Mentoring in Addendum). The newly developed curriculum in math and language arts that is aligned to the NH GLEs/GSEs accompanies the established curriculum in the

other content areas listed in the program of studies. The school emphasizes authentic success in academics that will translate into life skills, such as reading and interpreting a lease agreement. Computer based Plato courses in math, reading, language arts and science are provided for individualized, self paced learning and for customized credit recovery, when needed. Through an agreement with the Hopkinton Middle High School, courses not otherwise available are offered to select students. Healthy lifestyles are promoted through fitness training, weight/Body Mass Index monitoring, and opportunities for healthy/nutritious food choices (see Innovative Practices: School-Wide Wellness Program in Addendum). The transcript tracking process assures that students are earning credits toward a high school diploma. The Honor Roll and Meet the Challenge (homework completion) provide incentives for academic success. The school effectively engages students in their own educational and personal advancement.

The Contoocook School uses two kinds of consultants to provide content area expertise: those who work directly with the teachers to ensure that lesson plans focus on state standards, and those who come in as consultants from the LEAs and whose job it is to work directly with the students from their districts and to then meet with teachers to design effective strategies and share information

In an ongoing effort to increase focus on academic achievement, the daily point system now includes goals of class participation and homework completion. Student generated Youth Venture Grants have been awarded for radio equipment and a greenhouse to support and enrich the English/language arts (interview skills) and Science curriculum. Community involvement and services include involvement with senior citizens, membership in the Boy Scouts and the Boys and Girls Club, team sports, ski program, drumming program and Express Yourself (singing and dancing). The Yearbook Committee and Student Council provide typical opportunities in this small, private setting. High and low ropes courses, canoeing, white water rafting and camping promote sportsmanship, team building and positive social skills in non-school environments.

In planning for improved monitoring of academic performance, the Contoocook School is considering the adoption and implementation of the NWEA MAP testing, a computer based assessment of core academic subjects.

During the NHDOE Case Study compliance visit, the visitors learned that the results of the state assessment are not automatically shared with the Contoocook School. Use of these assessments would assist in planning academic interventions in the measured areas.

The school has been working collaboratively in using the NHSEIS system to enter IEP information. They are considering the purchase of CASE software to be able to work with districts who use this system.

Transition

Transition Planning

Process: Provision of FAPE

Transition Services

The Contoocook School has developed and implemented many activities to promote successful transitions for their students into the school, back to their home school and into post-school environments. They work closely with outside agencies such as Vocational Rehabilitation, Community Bridges, Riverbend Counseling and several post-secondary schools to explore options and establish connections for their students. They have enlisted guidance services from the nearby Hopkinton Middle High School for planning for post secondary school enrollment. The Transitions and Life Skills classes offer such topics as resume writing, interview techniques, college essay writing, workplace etiquette, goal setting, and functional skills such as filling out an application, budgeting and managing checkbooks.

One student is currently attending NHTI for a course in preparation for attending post secondary school next year. This transition was supported by the student's sending LEA and the visits/interviews and logistics were facilitated by Contoocook School staff. In-school support is provided to assure success with this plan

Extensive planning and involvement is done when transitioning students from and/or back to their home school. Staff meetings and visits to the home school, student visits/tours, student involvement in home school athletics, summer school attendance for new students and part time attendance are done to promote successful transitions. Extended school year

programming at the home school has been implemented in some cases to help students to maintain connections to their resident community and provide opportunities to generalize learned skills.

Internship opportunities have been offered in the past, but are not offered currently because of difficulties finding appropriate and meaningful experiences nearby.

Behavior Strategies and Discipline

The Contoocook School bases its behavior model on the Normative Approach which involves students in a positive peer culture (see Innovative Practices: The Normative Approach in the Addendum). A point system is used to promote positive goal setting and behaviors which involves the student in setting meaningful, individual goals. The students are also involved in establishing their behavior plans and incentives. The staff is trained in counseling techniques and Crisis Prevention and Intervention and provides treatment groups, individualized clinical services, meditation training and development of positive social skills in students. Daily morning goals groups, weekly school-wide community meetings and Call Groups on an as needed basis to confront, articulate and resolve problems from a “place of caring” are integral to the success of the behavior supports at the Contoocook School.

A Student of the Week program and the Positives Box, where students place encouraging observations for fellow students, are other systems in place that provide incentives and positive peer feedback.

NEW PROGRAMS SEEKING APPROVAL FROM THE NHDOE, BUREAU OF SPECIAL EDUCATION

The Contoocook school is requesting to add a second site, the Bradford School, to their existing program which will provide special education programming for an additional 18 students (doubling their enrollment) with the same educational disabilities (autism, emotional disabilities, other health impairments and/or specific learning disabilities), and which will operate with the same systems as the current program: policies and procedures, administrative structure, curriculum, behavior system, rules and beliefs. These program components have been reviewed during this NHDOE Program Approval visit/process and have been determined to meet requirements. Additional application materials (e.g. personnel roster, code inspection reports, etc.) are being considered in a separate review.

COMMENDATIONS

The Contoocook School’s strong administrative leadership at the agency, building level staff and the existence of a supportive board has set the tone for the overall positive school environment and culture. During the January, 2007 NHDOE Case Study Compliance Review, it was evident that there are many positive things happening in the school that demonstrate a high level of dedication and support to all students. There is a strong focus toward improved individual student outcomes in a variety of areas.

In preparation for this NHDOE Special Education Program Approval Visit, the Contoocook School reviewed the progress that has been made as it relates to programming and services for their students. A new system to supervise and evaluate staff and a comprehensive professional development process has been instituted which will result in even more effective programs and services for students with disabilities.

As a result of the Case Study Compliance Review conducted in the Contoocook School, the visiting team identified the following list of commendations that contribute to the effective delivery of special education programs and supports to students:

1. The Contoocook School, as part of the larger NFI North, Inc. agency, is well organized and has strong, positive administrative leadership and a clear mission and purpose.
2. There is little if any turnover in staff resulting in a tight knit community and a strong collaborative team of dedicated staff, professionals and paraprofessionals committed to the success of their students.
3. The Contoocook School provides a safe, secure, respectful therapeutic environment supported by staff trained in First Aid, CPR and Crisis Prevention and Intervention.

4. The positive working relationships between the Contoocook School and the sending LEAs has resulted in effective, flexible and student-centered decisions and programs for students.
5. Creative problem solving and a desire for continuous improvement are evident among the administration and staff.
6. Parent involvement is promoted through regular, customized parent contact, including phone calls, emails, communication logs, a quarterly newsletter, parent informational nights, progress reports, meetings, participation in outdoor adventure activities (e.g. canoeing, camping, etc.).
7. The school is flexible, creative and supportive in providing opportunities to students for successful transitions to post school environments. Past graduates return to act as positive role models for post school success.
8. A comprehensive NFI North agency-wide professional development instructional evaluation process has been developed based on the work of Charlotte Danielson. It focuses on the four domains of planning and preparation, classroom environment, instruction and professionalism.
9. The agency and program goals are linked to align professional development needs with student learning needs. There are twenty professional development days scheduled in the school calendar. A variety of supports and opportunities are provided to staff to promote individual and school-wide professional growth.

ISSUES OF SIGNIFICANCE

Issues of significance are defined as systemic deficiencies that impact the effective delivery of services to all students, including those with educational disabilities. Examples of such may include system wide issues related to curriculum, instruction and assessment. Other examples might be concerns related to inadequate facilities, ineffective communication systems within the educational community, leadership, shared mission, vision and goals, deficiencies in policies and procedures, staff recruitment and retention, professional development or other important factors related to the learning organization.

There were no issues of significance noted during the NHDOE Case Study Compliance Review.

CITATIONS OF NONCOMPLIANCE IDENTIFIED AS A RESULT OF THE January 30 - 31, 2007 CASE STUDY COMPLIANCE REVIEW

Citations of noncompliance are defined as deficiencies that have been identified through the Case Study Compliance Review Process, which are in violation of state and federal special education rules and regulations. Citations of non-compliance may result from review of policies and procedures and related application materials, case study presentations, review of student records or any other program approval activity related to the visit. **It is important to note that all citations of non-compliance that are included in this section of the report will need to be addressed in a corrective action plan.**

As a result of the Case Study Compliance Review, the following citations of non-compliance were identified. Each citation listed below must be addressed in a corrective action plan and resolved within one year of this report. A template and instructions for such planning will be provided.

Ed. 1109.01 (b) IEP Measurable Annual Goals

The Contoocook School has developed annual goals as measured by progress on objectives that are written in measurable terms; however the annual goals themselves are not written in measurable terms. SETAC training in this area is scheduled.

SUGGESTIONS FOR PROGRAM-WIDE IMPROVEMENT

Suggestions for improvement, simply stated, are recommendations provided by the visiting team that are intended to strengthen and enhance programs, services, instruction and professional development, and the NHDOE strongly encourages that serious consideration be given to the suggestions. However, discretion may be used in this area; suggestions for improvement are not considered to be required corrective actions and you may determine which suggestions most warrant follow up and address those in your corrective action plan. **System wide suggestions for improvement are listed below. Suggestions for individual programs are included in the Building Level Case Study Data Summary Reports, pages 16-22.** It should be noted that in the Building Level Data Summary Reports, any suggestion made by a visiting team member that is actually a citation of noncompliance, has an asterisk (*) before it, and it is also listed above with the citations of noncompliance.

1. Revisions to the curriculum have been done in Language Arts and Math. Continue by fully implementing this curriculum and customizing the existing curriculum to meet unique student needs. In addition, develop curriculum for the Transition and Life Skills classes. As part of this process of curriculum revision and development, continue with the curriculum mapping process that has begun.
2. Clarify the progress report format by labeling them as IEP Progress Reports and including the key to the initials used for reporting progress on each page of the report. In addition, follow up on your suggestion to ask parents to comment on this reporting system to determine if it is intelligible to them.
3. Explore/create after school opportunities for students attending the Contoocook School.
4. Consider adopting a functional behavior assessment as a format for identifying the causes of behavior and to assist in targeting behaviors and planning behavior interventions.
5. Based upon student interviews, it is suggested that the Contoocook School increase student involvement in the development and understanding of their IEPs.
6. Continue to explore and expand vocational opportunities for students.
7. When discussing plans with/for students who will turn 14 during the course of the next IEP, consider including the student's future vision, the course of study needed to actualize this vision and identifying the outside agencies that should be involved in the implementation of the student's transition to post school work, education and independent living.
8. Institute a process to obtain NECAP state assessment results from the sending LEAs.

VI. BUILDING LEVEL SUMMARY REPORTS

USING COMPLIANCE DATA FOR CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

BUILDING LEVEL CASE STUDY DATA SUMMARY

NEW HAMPSHIRE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION SPECIAL EDUCATION PROGRAM APPROVAL AND IMPROVEMENT PROCESS

School: NFI Contoocook School	Date: January 30 & 31, 2007
Programs: Self-Contained Special Education	Number of Cases Reviewed: 3
Recorder/Summarizer: Karen Money	

Collaborative Team Members:

Name: Val Aubry	Visiting
Name: Barbara Cohen	Visiting
Name: Jay Marshall	Visiting
Name: Karen Money	Visiting
Name: Marie Morgan	Visiting
Name: Danielle Paranto	Visiting
Name: Mary Anne Byrne	Visiting
Name: Nancy Pierce	Building Level
Name: Patricia Cash	Building Level
Name: Teri Cannon	Building Level
Name: Carlie Wardell	Building Level
Name: Elaine Maxfield	Building Level
Name: Gregg Magoon	Building Level
Name: Harry Jones	Building Level
Name: John Healey	Building Level
Name: Jennifer Helfrich	Building Level

Based on data collected from the Data Collection Forms, Interview Forms, Classroom Observations, etc. the following summary is intended to provide a “snapshot” of the quality of services and programs in the school/private facility in the areas of:
Access to the General Curriculum, Transition and Behavior Strategies and Discipline.

SUMMARY OF BUILDING LEVEL DATA

Filled in with the number of times a statement was marked from all Data Collection Forms:

<u>ACCESS TO THE GENERAL CURRICULUM STATEMENTS</u>							
Ed. 1109.01 Elements of an IEP CFR 300.347 Content of IEP Ed. 1109.05, Implementation of IEP 20 U.S.C. 1414 (d) Ed. 1115.07, Ed 1119.01(f) Provision of Non-Academic Services/Settings CFR 300.553 Ed. 1119.03, Full Access to District's Curricula CFR 300.24, CFR 300.347 Ed. 1119.08, Diplomas Ed. 1107.04 (d) Qualified Examiner Ed. 1133.05 (c)(h)(k) CFR 300.347 Program Requirements, Content of IEP Ed. 1133.20 Protections Afforded to Children with Disabilities CFR 300.347(a) (1) (i) ". . . general curriculum (i.e. ,the same curriculum as for nondisabled children)" CFR 300.347 (a) (3) (iii) "To be educated and participate with other children with disabilities and non disabled children"					YES	NO	N/A
Team uses multiple measures to design, implement and monitor the student's program.					3		
IEP goals are written in measurable terms.						3	
Student has made progress over the past three years in IEP goals. Goal 1					3		
Student has made progress over the past three years in IEP goals. Goal 2					3		
Student <u>has access to</u> the general curriculum (as outlined by the district, sending district or NH frameworks.)					3		
Student <u>participates in</u> the general curriculum in a regular education setting with non-disabled peers, as appropriate, with necessary supports.					1		2
When participating in a regular education setting with non-disabled peers with necessary supports, student <u>has made progress in</u> the general curriculum.							3
Student participates appropriately in state, district and school-wide assessments.					2		1
Student <u>shows progress</u> in state, district and school-wide assessments.							3
Student <u>has opportunities</u> to participate in general extracurricular and other non-academic activities with necessary supports.					3		
Student <u>does participate</u> in general extracurricular and other non-academic activities with necessary supports.					3		
Was the student's most recent individual evaluation (initial or reevaluation), including a written summary report and meeting, held within 45 days of parental permission to test? If not, was it due to: (check all that apply)					2	1	
Extension in Place	Lack of Qualified Personnel Psychologist Educator Related Services Other	Evaluation Not Completed in Time	Summary Report Not Written in Time	Meeting Not Held in Time X	Other		
<i>For High School Students:</i>					YES	NO	NA
Student is earning credits toward a regular high school diploma.					2		
<i>IF YES:</i> within 4 years?					2		
Student will earn an IEP diploma or a certificate of competency.						2	
<i>IF YES:</i> within 4 years?						2	
Does this school / district have a clear policy for earning a high school diploma?					2		

Access to the General Curriculum

Strengths

1. The Contoocook School works with the students in a variety of ways to earn needed credits toward a high school diploma.
2. Credit recovery courses are provided as needed.
3. Rubrics are used to report quarterly IEP progress.
4. Connections are made with the Hopkinton Middle High School to benefit Contoocook School students (e.g. courses, guidance services and playing fields).
5. The school makes creative use of grant writing to enrich the curriculum,
6. The school hosted a Parent Night with representatives from Vocational Rehabilitation
7. There are many extra curricular activities and opportunities offered to the students.
8. The school has established intramural sports with other schools.
9. There is an effective wellness program established school-wide.
10. The school has used technology innovatively using curriculum software, radio interviews, etc.
11. Access to Plato software for individualized courses and credit recovery.

Suggestions for Improvement

1. Revisions to the curriculum have been done in Language Arts and Math. Continue by fully implementing this curriculum and customizing the existing curriculum to meet unique student needs.
2. *Continue to work on writing measurable annual goals and objective/benchmarks that are “do able”.
3. Clarify the present levels of performance in academic and functional areas, separating them out from the student profiles.
4. Clarify the progress report format by labeling them as IEP Progress Reports and including the key to the initials used for reporting progress on each page of the report.
5. Develop competencies, course descriptions and site supervision guidelines for work experiences.
6. Develop curriculum for the Transitions and Life Skills classes that are described in the Program of Studies.
7. Develop opportunities for sharing student work on a school web site.
8. Establish a system to acquire the results of the statewide assessments from the sending LEAs.

SUMMARY OF BUILDING LEVEL DATA

Filled in with the number of times a statement was marked from all Data Collection Forms:

<u>TRANSITION STATEMENTS</u>							
Ed. 1102.53, Transition Services CFR 300.29 Ed. 1107.02 CFR 300.132 Part C Transition Ed. 1109.01, Elements of an IEP (Transition Services) CFR 300.347 (b) (1) (2) 20 U.S.C. 1401 (34) 20 U.S.C. 1414 (d)(1)(A)(i)(VIII)(aa)(bb)(cc) Ed. 1109.03, IEP Team CFR 300.344 (b) (1) Ed. 1133.05 CFR 300.347 (b)(1)(2) Program Requirements This includes movement from (a) Early Supports and Services (ESS) to preschool, b) preschool to elementary school, (c) age 14 or younger, or (d) age 16 or older, as well as from grade to grade and school to school.				YES	NO		
For all students, respond to the following 3 statements:							
Transition planning from grade to grade takes place.				3			
Transition planning from school to school takes place.				3			
Collaboration has occurred between general and special education staff in IEP development and in transition planning.				3			
For middle or high school students, <u>also</u> respond to the following 4 statements:				3			
Transition planning is designed as a results oriented process that promotes movement from school to the student's desired post-school goals.				3			
IEP team includes parent as part of transition planning.				3			
IEP team and process includes student as part of transition planning.				3			
IEP includes current level of performance related to transition services.				2			1 N/A
If the student is age 14 or older during the course of the IEP, <u>also</u> respond to the following 3 statements:							
There is documentation that the student has been invited to attend IEP meetings. *As per IEP Team decision				2			1 N/A*
A statement of the transition service needs is included in the IEP.				2			1 N/A
The statement of transition focuses on the student's course of study (e.g. vocational programming, advanced placement).				1			2 N/A
If the student is age 16 or older during course of the IEP, <u>also</u> respond to the following 11 statements:				YES	NO	N/A	
Transition plan includes coordinated, <u>measurable</u> , annual IEP goals and includes transition services that will reasonably enable the student to meet the post-secondary goals.				1			
There is documentation that representatives of other agencies have been invited to IEP meetings.							1
Statement of needed transition services is presented as a coordinated set of activities.				1			
The statement of transition focuses on the student's course of study (e.g. vocational programming, advanced placement).				1			
The IEP includes a statement of needed transition services and considers instruction.				1			
The IEP includes a statement of needed transition services and considers related services.				1			
The IEP includes a statement of needed transition services and considers community experiences.				1			
The IEP includes a statement of needed transition services and considers development of employment skills.				1			
The IEP includes a statement of needed transition services and considers development of daily living skills.				1			
Student is informed prior to age 17 of his/her rights under IDEA.				1			
If the student is preparing to graduate this year, there is a summary of the student's academic achievement and functional performance , which includes recommendations on how to assist the student in meeting his or her post-secondary goals.							1 In Process

Transition

Strengths

1. The Contoocook School looks at students holistically when planning for transitions.
2. There is flexibility when developing transition activities/options for students coming into the Contoocook School (from their home school as well as from hospitalizations), when transitioning students back to their home school and in planning for post-school life (e. g. one student is currently taking a course at NHTI).
3. The Contoocook School has developed effective, positive relationships with the sending LEAs.
4. There is a visual transcript/credit tracking system in place.
5. In order to provide positive role modeling, there are ongoing visits to the school by former students who are attending college.
6. The Transitions and Life Skills classes are effective in preparing students for transitions/independence.

Suggestions for Improvement

1. Include students' vision statements when developing the Transition Plans.
2. Assure that all the transition activities done for students are included in the written transition plan.
3. Consider including the twelfth graders' development of their Summary of Performance as part of a senior project.
4. Include the course of study when developing transition plans with eighth graders.
5. Continue to explore opportunities for off-site internships for students.
6. See suggestion #6 above.

SUMMARY OF BUILDING LEVEL DATA

Filled in with the number of times a statement was marked from all Data Collection Forms:

<u>BEHAVIOR STRATEGIES AND DISCIPLINE</u>			
Ed. 1109.02 Program	CFR 300.346		
Ed. 1119.11 Disciplinary Procedures	CFR 300.519-300.529		
Ed. 1133.07 (a) (b) (c) (d) (e)	CFR 300.510-300.529		
20 U.S.C. 1415 (K)			
Child Management – Private Schools	RSA 169-C Child Protection Act	YES	NO
		N/A	
Data are used to determine impact of student behavior on his/her learning.		3	
Has this student ever been suspended from school?		2	1
If yes, for how many days?		3	
If appropriate, a functional behavior assessment has been conducted.			3
IEP team has addressed behaviors that are impacting student learning.		3	
A behavior intervention plan has been written to address behaviors.		1	2
All individuals working with the student have been involved in developing behavior intervention strategies.		3	
Specialized training for implementing interventions, strategies and supports has been provided to parents, providers and others as appropriate.		3	
Results of behavior intervention strategies are evaluated and monitored.		3	
A school-wide behavior intervention model exists.		3	
Strengths	Suggestions for Improvement		
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Excellent rapport was observed between students and staff. 2. The Normative Approach is embedded in the culture of the school. 3. Strong clinical support is provided for the students. 4. The Call Groups system allows for discussion and solution of problems as they arise. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Refine the documentation of the point system, including the process of claiming points and feedback. 2. Consider adopting a functional behavior assessment as a format for identifying the causes of behavior and to assist in targeting behaviors and planning behavior interventions. 		

SUMMARY OF BUILDING LEVEL STRENGTHS AND SUGGESTIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT

Strengths	Suggestions for Improvement
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The school's mission is embedded and evident in the community. 2. The English teacher was identified as a strength in the program. 3. All staff were seen as caring, committed and invested in the success of both current and former students. 4. The mentoring program involving graduate and undergraduate students from New England College is an asset for the students. 5. The revision of the point system to include academic goals and student justification of points earned is seen as a positive change. 6. Twenty days for professional development is included in the school year calendar. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Increase the involvement of outside agencies/providers at student meetings, i.e. outside therapists. 2. Consider the use of the Choices software program (career cruising) to look at possible careers/employment, etc. 3. Follow up on the idea of creating a Transitions class for eighth graders to include exploring their identities, making changes, careers, transition to high school, etc.

VI. ADDENDUM: JAMES O SUMMARIES AND DESCRIPTIONS OF INNOVATIVE

ADDENDUM

JAMES O. MONITORING PROGRAM

The Contoocook School

Student File Review

Case Study Review Document

Date: February 16, 2007

Reviewer: Mary Anne Byrne

ADDENDUM
JAMES O. MONITORING PROGRAM

NFI North, The Contoocook School

Number of files reviewed: 1

COMMENDATIONS:

This is a new student at The Contoocook School. The Program Director and Education Coordinator are commended for the hard work done in preparation for the file review. They both were readily available to assist in the file review and were receptive to the reviewer's observations and suggestions. The file was well organized and the material was readily available/accessible.

CITATIONS OF NONCOMPLIANCE:

Ed. 1109.01 (b) IEP measurable annual goals

Although the objectives were measurable, the annual goals were not written in measurable terms.

When the IEP is reviewed and revised, it will be important to state the annual goals in measurable terms. At that time the student should be involved in developing the high school course of study that will be meaningful to the student's future.

INNOVATIVE PRACTICES

Name of School: The Contoocook School		
Contact Person for Innovative Practice: Nancy Pierce	Phone: 746-7702	Email: nancypierce@nafi.com
Name of Person Completing This Form: Nancy Pierce	Phone: 746-7702	Email: nancypierce@nafi.com

Definition of Innovative Practice: Educational practices that are infused with respect and rigor, provoke discussion, hold possibilities for growth and change, and improve student performance.

Components of Innovative Practices: (Indicate one of these three categories for each innovative practice identified)

1. **Classroom/School Environment** (behavior management strategies, culture, communication, celebrations and recognitions, etc.)
2. **Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment** (e.g. engaging all students in learning, integration of technology, diversified instruction, use of data to inform instruction, involving all staff in curriculum decisions, etc.)
3. **Professional Responsibilities** (e.g. professional development, communicating with families, reflecting upon teaching, mentoring, collaboration between general and special education, etc.)

Description of an Innovative Practice in Your Educational Community:

Classroom/School Environment:

1. The Normative Approach

The Contoocook School bases its program in what is known as the “Normative Approach.” This approach is founded on the belief that people are social beings and want to belong to a group. All groups have “norms,” which are a set of expectations regarding actions and behavior. This network of expectations is generally unstated and learned through a process of observation in which a new member learns what is accepted and what is not accepted.

In the Normative Approach, the students, teachers and staff form a community that works towards developing healthy norms, and new students find they gain acceptance in that community by aligning their behaviors with those norms. The intention is to help students become part of a community, to guide them toward effective decision-making skills, and to encourage them to view themselves more positively through their membership in the community and through the honest and open feedback they receive from other community members. This positive peer culture teaches more effectively than a more punitive, adult-driven culture can.

Please provide a brief commentary on data collection that has identified this practice as having a positive impact upon student performance.

The Contoocook School began the process of formally collecting data on the efficacy of the Normative Approach this past year, and each student’s progress is recorded and charted on a weekly basis. Those charts and statistics are kept in the program.

Please describe how this innovative practice is evaluated.

Due to the nature of our students’ diagnoses—many of which are mood disorders—it is difficult to track success over the course of a single month or even several months. For some of our students, the different seasons bring with them plunges in mood that are not necessarily related to any external factors, such as school or family. Our clinician has begun to make observations over the course of a year, noting that there are months when individual students will need more support. She has also begun to compare students’ data from year to year to determine if, for example, a student’s lowest point this December is less severe than that of last December.

Even with these variables, we can point to improved behaviors for many students, and our data supports our claim that the Normative Approach is an effective tool for improving students' social skills and ability to integrate into the larger community, and that it is also a good predictor of behavior, allowing our staff to help students learn how to accommodate their own disabilities by understanding their own cycles of success and failure and by planning ahead for those cycles.

2. The School-Wide Wellness Program

This year, NFI North adopted a wellness program, and The Contoocook School has made a commitment to following that program. As a result, the school has done the following:

- teachers have been asked to incorporate movement into the last five minutes of every class,
- the school has elected to offer healthy, whole-food breakfasts to all students,
- most students are enrolled in a Fit for Life class, so nutrition and healthy choices have become a part of the curriculum,
- any foods that do not meet the standards of our wellness policy have been removed from school vending machines,
- celebratory desserts have been reduced to one birthday cake—vegan!—per month,
- the focus of our field trips has been wellness activities (hiking, canoeing, whitewater rafting, indoor rock climbing, high and low ropes courses, horseback riding), and we emphasize challenge by choice,
- we have diversified the wellness-oriented activities we offer as part of the curriculum, offering skiing, yoga, meditation, therapeutic drumming, first aid and CPR.
- all students are given a healthy, whole-foods breakfast every morning, consisting of fruit, yogurt, juice and a granola bar.

Please provide a brief commentary on data collection that has identified this practice as having a positive impact upon student performance.

It is nearly impossible to make the connection between good health and academic success—especially with our population of students with mental health diagnoses—because there are too many variables. It is certainly a basic tenet for all us that wellness and mental acuity are connected, so we can assume that students who have a healthy breakfast and who are in good physical shape are going to learn better. What we can effectively track is our students' height, weight and Body Mass Index. Our school nurse is collecting data in those areas every two months.

Please describe how this innovative practice is evaluated.

We have begun to compare these statistics on a bimonthly basis to determine whether the changes in diet and exercise are having a positive effect. There are other variables, in that we do not control what they have for lunch, and we do not know what they eat during the hours when they are not in school. Still, the combination of education and modeling healthy choices, along with increased exercise, should have some impact on their physical well-being. We will track the physical changes our students experience, along with behavioral and academic markers to determine if the wellness program—as part of a larger system of positive support for our students—is having an impact on our students' performance and wellbeing.

Professional Responsibilities

3. Mentoring

Over the past two and a half years, The Contoocook School has mentored students from New England College. During 2005-2006, sixteen NEC students worked at The Contoocook School as tutors, one-on-one aides, coaches, and counselors, offering our teachers the opportunity to work with an undergraduate student to develop lesson plans, behavioral strategies and activities to enrich our students' school experiences. While most of the students from NEC have been education

majors, both graduate and undergraduate, some have also been psychology, sociology and communication majors who did internships with us in order to have authentic work experiences in their disciplines.

Please provide a brief commentary on data collection that has identified this practice as having a positive impact upon student performance.

This past semester, our students received over 45 hours per week of one-on-one attention they would not have received if it were not for our mentoring of New England College students. The result was that they got the individualized attention necessary, especially in core subjects (primarily Math and Language Arts) which present them with great challenges.

Please describe how this innovative practice is evaluated.

At the end of each semester, the mentoring teacher works with the undergraduate student and the supervising professor to complete a report about whether or not the goals of the internship or practicum have been met. At this point, the Contoocook School teacher has the opportunity to document the assistance s/he has been given by intern.