New Hampshire Department of Education

Bureau of Special Education

Special Education Program Approval and Improvement Process

2014-2015 Year-End Summary Report

June 30, 2015

The Mission of Special Education Program Approval is:
To improve educational results for all learners.

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SECTION 1: INTRODUCTION

"If everyone is moving forward together, then success takes care of itself. ~ Henry Ford

It is a pleasure to present the 2014-2015 NHDOE Special Education Program Approval Team Year End Report. On behalf of the New Hampshire Department of Education Special Education Program Approval Team it is with pride that we offer this summary which brings closure to the contract with the NHDOE. The Southeastern Regional Education Service Center (SERESC) would like to thank the New Hampshire Department of Education (NHDOE) for the opportunity of partnering with the Bureau of Special Education in the oversight and implementation of all project activities. The report is intended to provide a snapshot of the work completed and the project activities used to positively impact students with disabilities, their families and the schools we work with.

In looking back over the past 24 years of coordinating and leading the project, SERESC has worked endlessly to better understand and work with the silos of talented stakeholders who educate students with disabilities. We have tipped the silos over to create a unified systems approach to monitoring special education compliance. This included building the momentum for improved learning results for students with disabilities, narrowing the learning gap and establishing relationships, all of which have been a significant components of the work.

As always, in the past year we have taken our work seriously, devoting thousands of hours to the field through the provision of technical assistance, consultation, leading districts through the Focused Monitoring Process and by conducting Case Study Compliance Reviews in NH's private special education schools. The NHDOE Special Education Program Approval Team is very fortunate to have numerous stakeholder groups engaged in the work, and the report that follows highlights the work and outlines the impact that the program approval process has had upon the educational communities that we have worked with during the 2014-2015 school year.

As outlined in the objectives in the Request for Proposal (RFP), the Program Approval Team has been charged with carrying out a variety of activities, which over the past school year have transitioned in a number of ways. SERESC's work with Local Educational Agencies (LEAs) and private special education schools continues to have a primary focus of improving educational results and functional outcomes for students with disabilities, along with the monitoring of compliance as directed and implemented by the NHDOE, Bureau of Special Education. The work of Focused Monitoring (FM) and Case Study Compliance Review Process continues to be intentional in the design of required activities ensuring emphasis upon review of procedural

compliance, with strong consideration given to how the requirements impact student learning outcomes. In order to fulfill the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act's (IDEA's) requirements, the NHDOE and SERESC have designed a balanced approach to monitoring through the review and assessment of both compliance and program effectiveness in special education programming in schools throughout the state. During the past school year the NHDOE, Bureau of Special Education assumed full responsibilities for all compliance related activities for the LEAs and continue to be actively engaged in the Case Study Compliance Reviews conducted within the private special education schools. The report that follows summarizes the work of the NHDOE Program Approval and Improvement Process and accomplishments for the Fiscal Year (FY) 2015. As outlined in the report, the work conducted by the NHDOE and SERESC provides a differentiated system of technical assistance and support for each LEA/private special education school and is intentional in engaging district personnel in the critical components of required activities. SERESC is pleased to work in partnership with the NHDOE, Bureau of Special Education in fulfilling its responsibilities outlined in the RFP. This report is submitted to meet the obligation of the contract.

While we are proud of the many achievements of the project and the field at large, we recognize that the need continues for technical assistance and support to the field with an emphasis on results driven accountability and focus on narrowing the learning gap. Knowing that the project is coming to closure, SERESC is committed to embracing these ongoing challenges, and to supporting improved learning results for all students.

We extend a sincere thank you to the NHDOE for their partnership on this project.

SECTION 2: NHDOE FOCUSED MONITORING

Service to be provided:

Monitor Public School Special Education Programs (including early childhood special education programs) using the Focused Monitoring process based on key indicator, as well as, compliance review.

- Collaborate with the Bureau of Special Education to review the NH Focused Monitoring Process Manual annually and update as needed.
- Conduct Focused Monitoring which is a two (2) year process for selected districts. District selection and notification for Focused Monitoring is the responsibility of the Department.

Year one includes, but not limited to, a year-long program monitoring with action planning activities. Year two includes, but is not limited to, technical assistance to districts for their action plan.

Year 1 (four districts):

Schedule and conduct with the NH Department of Education the initial information session with selected districts:

- Assign team leader to facilitate focused monitoring process with each selected district.
- Work with each selected district to establish a focused monitoring team representative of administration and educators.
- Monitor special education programs in selected districts in accordance with NH Rules for the Education of Children with Disabilities Ed 1126.
- Work onsite with selected districts to determine Focused Monitoring data collection activities under supervision of the Department.
- Assist selected districts' team with data collection and analysis in regards to key indicator and other general supervision areas.
- Assist districts in development of action plan.

Year 2 (six districts):

- Assigned Team leader returns to provide technical assistance and support to district in implementing their program approval Action Plan.

A consultant team of nine highly skilled and experienced early childhood/special education and general education professionals provided the oversight and monitoring of public special education programs through the implementation of Focused Monitoring. At minimum, monthly meetings were conducted with leadership and achievement teams for those districts participating in Year I of the FM Process, and quarterly meetings held with Year II Focused Monitoring Districts. In addition, the program approval team prepares internal quarterly reports as a means of maintaining an open line of communication, sharing of data and best practices.

Within each of the Year I Focused Monitoring Districts careful attention is given to the implementation of the 5 Step Inquiry Process as outlined in the Focused Monitoring Manual knowing that the process can be adapted and modified to support existing state and local initiatives. During the past year of particular importance was the need to align Focused Monitoring activities with the ESEA Waiver and the requirements for both Focus and Priority Schools.

Listed below are the 2014-2015 Focused Monitoring Districts Year I and II and assigned technical assistants.

Year I Focused Monitoring Districts and Technical Assistants

SAU66 Hopkinton School District – Kathryn Skoglund and Diane Lurvey

SAU47 Jaffrey-Rindge School District – Maryclare Heffernan and Jennifer Dolloff

SAU37 Manchester High Schools – Jane Bergeron, Joseph Miller and Edward Hendry

SAU26 Merrimack School District – Joseph Miller and Maryclare Heffernan

Year II Focused Monitoring Districts and Technical Assistants

SAU8 Concord School District – Diane Lurvey and Kathryn Skoglund

SAU10 Derry School District – Maryclare Heffernan and Diane Lurvey

SAU37 Manchester Middle Schools – Jane Bergeron, Joseph Miller and Edward Hendry

SAU64 Milton School District – Jennifer Dolloff, Edward Hendry and Jane Bergeron, adjunct

SAU44 Northwood School District – Kathryn Skoglund and Robert Greenleaf

SAU59 Winnisquam School District – Maryclare Heffernan and Joseph Miller

SECTION 3: CASE STUDY COMPLIANCE REVIEW DATA COLLECTION SUMMARY

Service to be provided:

Monitor Private Special Education Programs on a cyclical basis using the year-long case study compliance review process with follow-up to the corrective action the following year.

- Collaborate with the Bureau of Special Education to review the monitoring of Private Special Education Programs Process Manual annually and update as needed.
- Monitor selected private special education programs in accordance with the New Hampshire Rules for the Education of Children with Disabilities Ed 1126, as well as, private special education programs who also are requesting nonpublic “school” approval based on Ed 400:

- Assign team leader to facilitate year-long case study process with each selected private special education program as selected based on a cyclical process. Approximately 10 each year plus follow-up corrective action the next year.
- Conduct onsite visit (1-3 days) at each of the selected private special education programs using trained educator and parent volunteers to gather evidence related to three focus areas through a collaborative case study review process. The focus areas presently are: access to general curriculum, transition, behavior strategies and discipline. This process includes providing a corrective action template, conducting interviews, classroom observations and review of records.
- Assist private special education programs in development of corrective action plans based on findings of non-compliance as well as child specific findings of non-compliance.
- Identify and provide written documentation to Bureau of Special Education of findings of non-compliance and child specific non-compliance. Both the private special education program and the district of liability must be informed of child specific findings. Child specific findings of non-compliance must be corrected and verified within 45 days.
- Provide to the Bureau of Special Education each private special education program final report of findings for the review, approval and dissemination within 60 days of the onsite visit.

- Assigned team leader returns to the private special education program within one year to verify correction of findings of non-compliance within outlined timelines:

  - Develop written onsite compliance review report to be submitted to the Bureau of Special Education within 60 days of the onsite visit.
  - Verify the correction or the lack of correction of noncompliance within 150 days of the date of the private special education program's final report.
  - Provide the Bureau of Special Education with written correspondence regarding a private special education program's correction or the lack of correction of non-compliance.

A consultant team of nine highly skilled and experienced early childhood/special education and general education professionals provided the oversight and monitoring of private special education schools. Each private school was assigned technical assistance to facilitate and oversee all aspects of the Case Study Compliance Review Process. Included in this process was job embedded professional development, support to the private school, multiple pre-visitations, review of all application materials and supporting documentation and conducting the Case Study Compliance Review. Following the Case Study Compliance Review the

summary report was developed for review and approval by the NHDOE, Bureau of Special Education to with final version of the document distributed to the private special education school. Included in the process was the review of all "non-public" school approval application materials and the tracking and reporting of all findings of noncompliance (student specific and systemic) and the review of the corrective action plan. All reports and supporting back up documentation are completed and delivered to the NHDOE.

2014-2015 Private School Case Study and Technical Assistants

Clearway High School – Jenifer Dolloff and Edward Hendry

Granite Hill School – Kathryn Skoglund and Joseph Miller

Hunter School – Jane Bergeron and Edward Hendry

NFI Bradford School – Diane Lurvey and Maryclare Heffernan

NFI Midway Shelter – Diane Lurvey and Maryclare Heffernan

NFI Contoocook – Diane Lurvey and Maryclare Heffernan

NFI Davenport – Diane Lurvey and Maryclare Heffernan

Pine Haven Boys Center – Kathryn Skoglund and Diane Lurvey

RSEC Academy – Kathryn Skoglund

RSEC Longview School – Kathryn Skoglund

Seacoast Learning Collaborative – Jennifer Dolloff and Edward Hendry

Second Start Alternative High School – Kathryn Skoglund

Spaulding Youth Center – Jennifer Dolloff and Robert Greenleaf

Sununu Youth Services Center/Youth Development Center – Maryclare Heffernan and Joseph Miller

Wediko Children's Services – Maryclare Heffernan and Edward Hendry

2013-2014 Private School Case Study Corrective Action Follow Up and Technical Assistants

Birchtree Center – Maryclare Heffernan

Children Unlimited – Jennifer Dolloff

Coe-Brown Northwood Academy – Kathryn Skoglund and Robert Greenleaf

Enriched Learning Center – Jane Bergeron

Monarch School of New England – Kathryn Skoglund

Nashua Children's Home – Jennifer Dolloff

Strafford Learning Center – Maryclare Heffernan

Wolfeboro Area Children's Center – Jane Bergeron in collaboration with Colleen Bovi

SECTION 4: PROGRAM MANAGEMENT

Services to be provided:

Perform overall management activities of the monitoring of districts for special education and approval for Private Special Education Schools project:

- Hire a Project Manager to organize and oversee all aspects of the project.
- The Project Manager will communicate either by teleconference, written updates and/or in person weekly with the Administrator, Bureau of Special Education or designee to communicate on all program approval matters including, but not limited to, status of budget, maintenance of visit schedule, status of corrective action activities, correction of child specific noncompliance, updating of new programs seeking approval, and progress of schools requiring corrective action.
- Hire or contract staff to support the project that are knowledgeable in and familiar with early childhood special education, special education, regular education, promising practice and current research, the federal regulations and State rules governing special education and the structure of the public schools and non-public special education approved schools in New Hampshire. In addition, staff should also be knowledgeable and/or familiar with rules for school approval and Charter Schools as they relate to special education program approval.
- Establish a pool of volunteers knowledgeable about early childhood special education, regular education and special education to serve on school visits and as resources for schools in the monitoring process, technical assistance visits and improvement processes.
- Hire support staff able to support the project in a clerical manner with reports, mailings, note-taking, maintaining data bases, setting up and making meeting arrangements, tracking visits and follow-up required for monitoring, improvement, and corrective action processes.

- Collaborate with NHDOE to design, implement and provide professional development workshops about/related to the program approval process; orientation, facilitation, and networking sessions. Provide Professional Development certificates to the district staff participation in the Focused Monitoring Process.
- Gather feedback from constituents participating in the monitoring process.
- Write informative compliance reports, final reports that must be completed within 60 days of the school visit, and correspondence for and to the field, including but not limited to, monitoring process, timely correction of noncompliance and child specific noncompliance.
- Maintain databases to yield statewide data obtained through the special education monitoring and program approval project on school, district and/or SAUs incidences of systemic and student specific noncompliance and status of corrective actions.
- Assist in updating and creating new forms, applications, and procedures for New Hampshire's Focused Monitoring System and Case Studies for private special education programs as required for the approval process.
- Effectively collaborate and communicate with other individuals, agencies, and/or organization to enhance the success of the project.
- Be a positive spokesperson for the New Hampshire Department of Education.
- Provide a strategy for evaluation of the project's success in achieving the stated priorities and in meeting and promoting the stated General Requirements.

The project director is responsible for oversight and supervision of the Program Approval Technical Assistance Team and for maintaining ongoing e-mail, telephone and correspondence with all stakeholders, oversight of the budget and regular review of the finances. Monthly meetings were conducted with the team, as well as regularly scheduled meetings with individual team members. With the significant transitions in the varied aspects of the program approval process additional attention was given to supervision and coaching of team members in regard to report writing, invoicing, and evolving expectations as related to reporting requirements. Regular meetings/phone conferences were conducted with the NHDOE, Bureau of Special Education to keep them updated on project activities and maintains an open line of communication. The project director was also responsible for oversight and monitoring of compliance timelines (report writing and related timelines, follow up corrective actions, findings of noncompliance etc.). Monthly updates on all compliance data was submitted electronically to the NHDOE, Bureau of Special Education. The project director was also responsible for ensuring that all required training sessions were designed and implemented, including but not limited to the Private School Case Study Orientation and the School District Focused Monitoring Orientation and that all budgetary reports were submitted on a monthly basis.

Provide the following invoicing and reporting requirements for the monitoring of districts for Special Education and Approval for Private Special Education Schools project:

- Provide data for and otherwise participate in evaluation activities related to this program.
- Participate in dissemination activities related to their project.
- Provide monthly invoices with a summary of activities conducted during the month towards the accomplishment of services to be provided outlined in section 2.0 of the RFP.
- Write reports and progress updates to NH Department of Education, Bureau of Special Education as requested.
- Submit a final year-end report to the NH Department of Education, Bureau of Special Education including any information requested.
- Seek written approval from the Administrator, Bureau of Special Education, prior to presenting the monitoring process to other organizations/agencies unless the presentation is to districts and/or special education programs involved in the Focused Monitoring or the Private Special Education Program year-long case study process.
- Clearly note on any and all documents of the project, that it is being funded by the New Hampshire Department of Education, Bureau of Special Education.

Monthly data is submitted to the NHDOE, Bureau of Special Education as requested.

Monthly invoices with summary of activities and supporting documentation have been submitted to the NHDOE as required by reporting requirements in the grant.

All documents produced and distributed are noted as funded by the NHDOE, Bureau of Special Education.

Feedback is collected and reviewed regarding the effectiveness of NHDOE Program Approval events, specifically the Case Study and Focused Monitoring Orientations.

A final year-end report is submitted annually to the NHDOE, Bureau of Special Education.

SECTION 5: 2014-2015 PROGRAM SUMMARY

Inspiring innovation and excellence in professional practice has always driven our work at SERESC, but never more so than it did through the 24 years of leading the NHDOE Program Approval Process. Through the project the NHDOE has met many milestones, has made significant impact upon the field and students with learning challenges. During the 2014-15 school year our highly skilled and capable team of education consultants was responsible for the oversight and implementation of all of the requirements outlined in the RFP; we have been humbled by the support of educators across NH.

As the NHDOE Program Approval Process moves forward, maintaining a balance between monitoring compliance requirements and results-driven approaches could be a challenge. As New Hampshire continues to target not only compliance requirements, but also look closely at the academic performance of students with disabilities and the learning gap that exists, strong support to the field will be necessary. There is much that NH schools can be proud of and we continue to be appreciative of those who work each day, committed to raising the level of learning expectations for all children.