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Bureau of Special Education FY'15 Memo #19

Date: April 1, 2015

To: Private Providers
Superintendents of Schools
Special Education Directors

From: Office of the Commissioner of Education

Division of Educational Improvement
Bureau of Special Education

Re: Monitoring Review for Continued Approval of Private/Nonpublic Special Education Programs

The New Hampshire Department of Education (NHDOE), Bureau of Special Education (Bureau), in conjunction with input from Private Provider stakeholders, has transformed the process for the Monitoring Review for Continued Approval of Private/Nonpublic Special Education Programs.

There are six main components to this process which includes professional development opportunities, the application for continued special education approval, three appendices, a self-assessment data collection tool showing evidence of the implementation of federal and state requirements, the on-site visit, and follow-up visits to show evidence of correction of findings.

The monitoring review for continued approval of special education programs begins with an option of professional development offered by the NHDOE. During this first year, the Bureau offers training to each private provider who is involved in the monitoring process. Training encompasses writing Measurable Annual Goals, Written Prior Notice, understanding the self-assessment data collection tool, and a topic selected by the private provider based on a current need. In the spring of this first year, the NHDOE provides technical assistance to the administration and staff, as well as an orientation for the process.

At the beginning of the second year, the private provider will complete an application for continued special education approval by the Bureau. The application includes appendices with requirements for elementary, middle, and high school curriculum. Evidence of where the program standards can be found in the current curriculum should be indicated on each appendix for the grade levels in which approval is being sought. Any textbooks, supporting materials, including copyright dates for curriculum resources, should also be listed. Private providers will also send the program's policy and procedure manual and any special education forms that are used by the private program. During this time, the NHDOE will continue to offer and provide technical assistance to the administration and staff.

Administration will be provided with a list(s) of New Hampshire students for the IEP compliance monitoring file review. The list(s) is a representative sample of the special education population of the program based on gender, grade, disability and special education teachers. The NHDOE will provide two additional students per list to account for the possibility of students moving or being discharged prior to the on-site visit. The private provider staff will then complete the self-assessment data collection tool for each of the students on the list(s) provided by the NHDOE. A schedule for the day will be developed by the NHDOE, and be provided to the administration and staff prior to the visit.

Following a review of the documents that private providers sent to the NHDOE, the monitoring team will schedule an on-site visit with administration. During the on-site visit, student files are examined utilizing the completed self-assessment data collection tool for evidence of implementation of the policies and procedures through the special education process. In addition, the private provider will choose one of the student's files from the list provided by the NHDOE to complete a Case Study Presentation.

The monitoring team will consist of two to six NHDOE trained staff, including at least one special education administrator from another private school who has been trained in the monitoring process by the NHDOE. Additionally, the NHDOE will offer private providers an option to include at least one local special education director from outside of the private provider's area to participate in the on-site team file review who has been trained in the monitoring process. The NHDOE will select the visiting special education administrators, from both public and private schools, to participate on the monitoring team, and will notify the private provider of this selection prior to the on-site visit.

Following the on-site visit, the NHDOE will develop a comprehensive report that will provide a summary of the compliance and improvement monitoring process. The report will include participating monitoring team members, the program's approval status, a section summarizing the policies, procedures, and effective implementation of practices, any noteworthy practices and areas in need of refinement, a review of personnel, and any findings of noncompliance will be noted along with corrective actions and timelines for corrections. The NHDOE will meet with administration to discuss the summary report prior to the report being posted on the NHDOE website. Follow-up technical assistance, professional development, and subsequent on-site visits will be scheduled in order to assist private providers.

For further clarification, please contact Lori Noordergraaf: lori.noordergraaf@doe.nh.gov or 271-3750.

Enclosures:
Application for Continued Approval of NHDOE Special Education Approval/Nonpublic School Approval
Private Provider Self-Assessment Data Collection Form
Curriculum Appendices for Elementary, Middle, and High School