

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

**THE BIRCHTREE CENTER
SUMMARY REPORT**

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Site Visit Conducted on December 10 & 11, 2013
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I. TEAM MEMBERS

Visiting Team Members:

NAME	PROFESSIONAL ROLE
Chairperson: Maryclare Heffernan	Education Consultant
Colleen Sliva	Special Education Director
Jennifer Pomykato	Director of Student Services
Mary Lane	NHDOE Education Consultant

Building Level Team Members from The Birchtree Center:

NAME	PROFESSIONAL ROLE
Sandra Pierce-Jordan	Executive Director/Program Director
Shelly Fagan	Director of Special Education
Rebecca Walsh	Behavior Analyst
Emily Hall	Special Education Case Manager
Dylan Goettlich	Special Education Case Manager
Justine Mariano	Speech/Language Assistant
Debbie Patten	Transition Coordinator
Vanessa Bond	Senior Clinical Instructor
Erin Conlan	Board Certified Behavior Analyst (BCBA)
Kristen Driscoll	Special Education Case Manager
Nicole Sheaf	Occupational Therapist
Naomi Diaz	Clinical Instructor
Sarah Stranger Stein	Clinical Instructor
Kelly Amlaw	Clinical Instructor

II. INTRODUCTION

Private school description:

The Birchtree Center is private, non-profit year round day school approved to enroll male and female students identified with Autism, Multiple Disabilities or Developmental Delay ages 2 through 21 and grades preschool to 12. The Birchtree Center meets the requirements of non-public school approval through the NHDOE. At the time of this December 10 & 11, 2013 NHDOE Program Approval visit, the school enrolled 36 students across 8 classroom programs. On December 10, 2013, the majority (33) of students were identified with a primary disability of Autism, the remaining 3 students were identified with Multiple Disabilities. Of the students currently enrolled, 22 students are NH residents, while 8 students are from Maine and 6 students from Massachusetts. The NH students represent 15 different school districts.

The Birchtree Center, in its 11th year of operation, has experienced an evolution in program development and instructional design over time. The school focuses on providing highly individualized instruction and behavior supports to students with significant disabilities. The curriculum is aligned with New Hampshire College- and Career-Ready Standards (NH CCRS) and the faculty and staff provide access to the curriculum to all students at their level of learning. Additionally the use of Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) through the use of discrete trials and the school's focus on generalizing both academic and social/behavioral skill development attributes to the well designed and effective programming that is established at The Birchtree Center. The frequent and relevant use of the community experiences creates opportunities for students to learn and practice new skills.

The well organized staffing patterns within the school includes: Special Education Administrator, 3 Special Education Case Managers, 6 Board Certified Behavior Analysts (BCBA), 1 Transition Coordinator, 1 Speech/Language Pathologist, 2 Speech Assistants and 1 Occupational Therapist, Transition Coordinator, Outreach Coordinator, as well as a number of Clinical Instructors. Content certified educators include English, Physical Education, Elementary Education and Special Education. All remaining content areas required by the NH Minimum Curriculum Standards are supported by a cadre of certified consultants.

Guiding Principles for The Birchtree Center:

The Birchtree Center submitted the following Guiding Principles adopted during their recent Strategic Planning Process in the NHDOE Application Materials.

Our Mission:

Birchtree exists to promote independence, engaging relationships and productive lives for children and youth with autism at school, home and in the community.

Our Vision:

Birchtree is a leader in the field of autism providing education, treatment, research and advocacy.

Our Values:

- Respect
- Integrity

- Commitment
- Honesty
- Teamwork

We Believe:

- Teachers, parents and LEAs must have high expectations (academic and social) for all students
- Instruction, curriculum and assessment must meet the needs of all students
- Students must feel safe, emotionally and physically inside and outside of school
- Instruction must fit different learning styles
- Principles of Applied Behavior Analysis represent “best practice” for students with autism
- Parents must be active members of their child’s IEP team, informed about behavior support plans, and academic skills development and supported to ensure generalization of skills into the home and community
- Daily living skill and social skill development is an integral part of school learning
- Students must have a communication system which is intelligible to others both inside and outside of school
- Transition planning is essential to assure community use and re-integration of students into their community based schools
- Students must have access to the general education curriculum
- Assessments and progress reports must be data driven
- Learning must be fun and self-motivating
- Least restrictive environment is an achievable goal given appropriate modifications and accommodations

SCHOOL DEMOGRAPHICS	2012-2013	2013-2014
Student Enrollment <u>as of October 1</u>	33	36
Do you accept out-of-state students? If so, list number from each state in 2013-14	Yes; NH (22), ME (8), MA (6)	
Number and Names of Sending New Hampshire LEAs (as of October 1, 2013)	15 LEAs: Dover, Exeter, Hampstead, Manchester, Milton/Wakefield, Oyster River, Portsmouth, Raymond, Salem, Sanborn Regional, Seabrook, Somersworth, Tamworth, Timberlane, Winnacunnet	
# of Identified Students Suspended One or More Times	0	0
Average Length of Stay for Students	3.48 years	3.59 years
STAFF DEMOGRAPHICS		
Student/Teacher Ratio (as of October 1, 2013)	1:1	1:1
# of Certified Administrators	1	1
# of Certified Teachers	4	5
# of Current Teachers with Certification through Alt 4	2	4
# of Related Service Providers	2	2
# of Paraprofessionals	36	35
# of Professional Days Made Available to Staff	11	11

SPECIAL EDUCATION PROGRAM DATA <i>(please put NA if not approved for the disability)</i>		
Primary Disability Types:	2012-2013	2013-2014
Autism	31	33
Deaf / Blindness	NA	NA
Deafness	NA	NA
Developmental Delay	0	0
Emotional Disturbance	NA	NA
Hearing Impairment	NA	NA
Intellectual Disability	NA	NA
Multiple Disabilities	2	3
Orthopedic Impairment	NA	NA
Other Health Impairment	NA	NA
Specific Learning Disabilities	NA	NA
Speech or Language Impairment	NA	NA
Traumatic Brain Injury	NA	NA
Visual Impairment	NA	NA

III. 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 Birchtree Center on December 10&11, 2013 for the purpose of reviewing the present status of programs and services made available to children and youth with educational disabilities. Program Approval Visits are conducted 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 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

As part of this compliance review, students were randomly selected by the NHDOE prior to the visit, and staff was asked to present these students' case studies at the visit to determine compliance with state and federal special education rules and regulations.

Other 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 NHSEIS verification reports
- All data collected during the visit

The New Hampshire Department of Education provided a visiting team of professional educators to work collaboratively with staff in each of the schools in conducting the Case Study Compliance

Review and the varied data collection activities. Throughout the entire review process, the visiting team worked in collaboration with the staff of The Birchtree Center. Their professionalism, active involvement in the process and cooperation were greatly appreciated and well recognized.

Evidence of the work conducted 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 programs (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, 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 following pages, outline identified areas of strength and areas needing improvement for each school reviewed.

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

Based on review of the January 31, 2012, NHDOE Special Education Program Approval Report, the following patterns were identified as needing improvement:

Findings of Noncompliance	Status as of January 23, 2013	Status as of December 10&11, 2013
<p>ED 1114.05 (f) Program Requirements The Birchtree Center has accepted a student with a disability for which the program is not approved.</p>	MET	<p>MET As a result of the Case Study Compliance review, the data revealed that all of the students enrolled at Birchtree were identified in one or more of the disabilities listed on the approval letter. There were no students accepted for which the program is not approved.</p>
<p>ED 1114.05 (g), CRF #300.320 Program Requirements Access to equal educational opportunities. Access and ability to progress in general curriculum. The Birchtree Center's preschool to grade 8 curricula is not sufficient to enable students enrolled to have access to equal education opportunities and to progress in the general curriculum.</p>	MET	<p>MET The Birchtree School continues to have a fully developed curriculum that meets all requirements. The curriculum is being implemented and monitored on a regular basis and all students have full access and participation in the curriculum.</p>

V. DECEMBER 10 & 11, 2013 CASE STUDY COMPLIANCE REVIEW RESULTS

Data collection is an important part of the NHDOE Special Education Case Study Compliance Review Process. 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 look deeply into the data that surrounds the three primary aspects of the Case Study Review. This process takes time, and the entire team working with the child being reviewed must be involved in collecting and analyzing the data, as well as presenting and summarizing the data with the visiting team. As such, NHDOE works with private schools to determine the number and type of case studies to be prepared and presented, and to ensure that building teams are not inundated with more data than can be fully analyzed, allowing them to reflect upon and generalize their newly found knowledge of their programs, practices, policies and procedures.

Two NH students were randomly selected for the case studies presented by the Birchtree Center teams. The Case Studies included a 10 year old 4th grade student and a student at the school since 2011, as well as an 18 year old 11th grade student who has attended the school for a number of years beginning in 2004. Both students are identified with a disability of Autism.

LEA SURVEYS

Private schools provide necessary options to New Hampshire students with educational disabilities. Effective partnerships with LEAs are an important part of establishing and implementing successful private special education programs that improve student outcomes. By surveying LEA perceptions of current program(s), private schools can self assess these relationships and determine if there are areas in need of improvement. To this end, The Birchtree Center distributed the LEA Survey to the contact people in all LEAs that have students currently enrolled in the school. They received a 69% response from the LEAs.

SUMMARY REPORT OF SENDING LEAs

Name of Private School: The Birchtree Center		
Total number of surveys sent:16	Total # of completed surveys received:11	Percent of response:69%
Number of students placed by: LEA: 17	Court: 0	Parent: 0

SCALE 4 STRONGLY AGREE 3 AGREE 2 DISAGREE 1 STRONGLY DISAGREE

	4	3	2	1	No Answer
1. The private school has a curriculum fully aligned to NH Curriculum Frameworks/Common Core State Standards.	5	6	0	0	0
2. I am satisfied the student has made progress in the educational curriculum at the above school.	5	6	0	0	0
3. There is evidence of effective instruction aligned with fidelity to the curriculum.	6	5	0	0	0
4. The school consistently follows special education rules and regulations.	8	2	0	0	1
5. The school has developed and implemented effective policies and procedures for management of student behavior including the use of aversives.	8	2	0	0	1

6. The school has an effective behavioral management program.	10	1	0	0	0
7. I am satisfied with the special education, related and other supplementary aids and services provided by the school.	9	2	0	0	0
8. The school implements all parts of students' IEPs including accommodations and modifications in both instruction and assessment.	9	2	0	0	0
9. The school effectively uses data to measure academic growth and to inform instruction.	9	2	0	0	0
10. The school uses data to measure behavioral growth and to inform instruction.	9	2	0	0	0
11. A mid-year review and annual evaluation of the child's progress relative to the IEP are conducted.	6	4	0	0	1
12. The school has a comprehensive progress monitoring system that is communicated and provided to LEA and parents at least as often as the sending district (minimum 3 times per year).	8	3	0	0	0
13. The progress monitoring 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.	8	3	0	0	0
14. I am satisfied with the way the school communicates students' progress to the parents and the LEA.	9	2	0	0	0
15. The school actively plans for future transition to a less restrictive environment.	5	5	0	0	1
16. The school implements all aspects of the transition services needs for students turning 14 during the IEP service period and Transition Services as outlined in Indicator 13 (16 years).	4	5	0	0	2
17. 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.	2	4	0	0	5
18. The school team sets meeting times that are convenient for both parents and the LEA.	10	1	0	0	0
19. I would enroll other students at the school.	8	3	0	0	0

Analysis of LEA Responses by The Birchtree Center:

Each Private School is asked to review and analyze the survey results and identify areas of strength and areas in need of improvement. The following is the Birchtree Center's analysis.

Analysis of the completed LEA surveys resulted in significant district acknowledgement of the ongoing positive practices evidenced by The Birchtree Center. [Please note that due to the lack of first-hand experience with Question #17 about changing and/or terminating placement, many LEAs did not answer that question (and some referenced that reasoning). Given that detail, the results of this question were not included in our narrative analysis.]

All answers were either marked by "strongly agree" or "agree" revealing LEA recognition of Birchtree's capacity to deliver quality programming to our students. One LEA commented, "*The Birchtree Center has provided quality programs, services and a FAPE to our district students who have been placed there over the past few years.*" It is noteworthy that the answers with documented "strongly agree" marks dramatically outnumbered the answers with documented "agree" marks for the majority of the questions on the survey. Given our close partnership with each sending LEA, these marks, as well as corresponding comments, were appreciated. We often receive anecdotal feedback in the context of informal communication as well as during formal meetings, however positive

recognition in the context of formal written surveys is considered quite invaluable here at The Birchtree Center. Birchtree’s leaders accept this LEA recognition with an understanding that our success is a result of both commitment to those practices that will best meet the needs of our students as well as collaboration with parents and LEAs who place each student in our educational program.

There were no “disagree” or “strongly disagree” documented from the LEA surveys, and this most likely represents LEA perspective that The Birchtree Center is unquestionably meeting their students’ needs. One LEA wrote in the Comments section, “*Birchtree is an exemplar private school. Their data collection goes above and beyond any other school I work with. Their transition programming has taken off and their community inclusion is top notch. Communication is beyond professional – I love to attend meetings with Birchtree.*” Another LEA wrote, “*It is an extremely professional staff to work with and they do an amazing job maintaining and managing the IEP.*”

In summary, based on analysis of the data documented in the current LEA Survey compared to the survey completed in 2011, there is consistent and comprehensive evidence of continued and increased LEA satisfaction with Birchtree’s ongoing practices in the delivery of all program components associated with meeting the needs of the students at Birchtree.

PARENT PARTICIPATION

One of the defining features of effective schools is strong parent/community relations and open communication. Having parents as active stakeholders 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 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 this Case Study Compliance Review.

SUMMARY OF PARENT SURVEY DATA

Name of Private School: The Birchtree Center		
Total number of surveys sent: 24	Total # of completed surveys received: 16	Percent of response: 67%

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

ACCESS TO THE GENERAL CURRICULUM:	3	2	1	No Answer
1. I am satisfied that my child has access to the general education curriculum (Academic IEP goals and school curriculum aligned with Common Core State Standards /NH Curriculum Frameworks).	13	1	0	2
2. My child has opportunities to interact with non-disabled peers on a regular basis unless the IEP team has determined that the interaction is not appropriate/reasonable.	9	3	4	0
3. I am informed on a regular basis and with clear evidence of my child’s progress in the general education curriculum.	16	0	0	0

4. I understand that a variety of information (observations, test scores, results of evaluations, school work samples, behavioral data, etc) was considered in developing my child's IEP for this placement.	15	0	0	1
5. I am satisfied that there is a direct connection between my child's needs and the components of his/her IEP and the supports and services ("reasonably calculated to provide educational benefit").	15	0	0	1
6. I am satisfied that the sending school district has fully considered the Least Restrictive Environment in recommending this placement for my child (to the maximum extent appropriate, my child is educated with non-disabled peers).	13	2	0	1
7. I know whom to contact if I have questions about my child's placement or progress in this program.	16	0	0	0
8. I am satisfied that the staff of this placement worked collaboratively with my school district in developing my child's current IEP.	16	0	0	0
9. I have been involved in the development of my child's IEP.	15	0	0	1
10. I am satisfied that my child is making progress toward his/her IEP goals.	15	1	0	0
FOR PARENTS OF HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS ONLY:				
11. My child earns credits toward a regular high school diploma in all of his/her classes.	0	2	1	2
12. My student will graduate with a high school diploma	0	2	1	2
TRANSITION:				
13. I am satisfied with the planning and support provided for my child as he/she moves from grade to grade, school to school, public school to private school.	9	1	0	6
14. All of the people who are important to my child's transition were part of the planning (grade appropriate).	8	1	0	7
15. All of the people/agencies who are required to be part of transition planning for my child were part of the transition process.	7	2	0	7
16. FOR PARENTS OF STUDENTS AGE 16 OR OLDER ONLY:				
I am satisfied that my child's IEP meets all the requirements of Secondary Transition: measureable post-secondary goals, necessary supports and services, age-appropriate transition assessments, specific invitation to the Transition meeting, etc. (DOE Indicator #13)	2	2	0	1
17. I am satisfied that the post-secondary Transition Goals for my child are reviewed on a regular basis, have the necessary supports and services to be accomplished, are connected to annual IEP goals, and can lead my child to productive participation/activities post-graduation or post-21 years as appropriate.	3	1	0	1
BEHAVIOR STRATEGIES AND DISCIPLINE:				
18. My child's classroom behaviors affect his/her ability to learn. <i>If the answer is yes, please answer the next two questions. If no, skip to OTHER.</i>	YES		NO	
	3	2	1	No Answer
19. I have been involved in the development of behavior interventions, strategies and supports for my child.	15	0	0	1
20. I am satisfied with the way the school is supporting my child's behavioral, social and developmental needs.	15	1	0	0
OTHER:				
21. I fully participate in special education decisions regarding my child.	13	0	0	3
22. I have been provided with a copy of the procedural safeguards (parental rights) at least once a year.	16	0	0	0

Analysis of Parent Survey Responses by The Birchtree Center:

Each Private School is asked to review and analyze the survey results and identify areas of strength and areas in need of improvement. The following is The Birchtree Center's analysis organized around the three areas of focus.

There were significant areas of relative strength identified by Birchtree parents in each of the three focus areas: Access to General Curriculum, Transitions, and Behavior Strategies and Discipline. There were also survey results that may provide direction for The Birchtree Center's continued growth and development. These results, including areas of relative strength and areas for continued growth, are summarized below.

Access to General Curriculum

For nine of the ten questions in the *Access to General Curriculum* section, answers were either marked by "completely" or "partially" revealing strong parent recognition of Birchtree's capacity to deliver quality programming to our students relative to access to general curriculum. In addition, the answers with documented "completely" marks significantly outnumbered the answers with documented "partially" marks for each of the nine questions. The one remaining question, focused on opportunities to interact with non-disabled peers, still had a much greater number of "completely" responses in addition to a lower number of responses marked "partially" and "not at all" (this was the only question with a marked "not at all"). This is clear documentation of parent acknowledgment of Birchtree's improvement over the past few years relative to our school providing increased opportunities for a variety of students to interact with non-disabled peers. Although there has been growth and progress at The Birchtree Center relative to a numerous integrated opportunities, such as the presence of peer mentors and interns at The Birchtree Center as well as the inclusion of our students into public schools and community settings for specific activities, there are still additional opportunities and experiences that would be worthwhile for us to explore. Our goal would be for The Birchtree Center to continue to expand these opportunities both in terms of frequency and diversity of these experiences; LEA and parent collaboration would be very valuable to this process.

Transitions

For each of the five questions in the *Transitions* section, answers were either marked by "completely" or "partially" revealing parent recognition of Birchtree's capacity to deliver quality programming to our students relative to transition planning. In addition, the answers with documented "completely" marks significantly outnumbered the answers with documented "partially" marks for these questions which focused on the planning, process, and people involved in the transition process, whether it be a child's transition to community-based activities on a daily basis to the monumental transition from The Birchtree Center to adult services. It is important to note that The Birchtree Center has put an incredible amount of time, energy, training and support to identify, develop and expand our Transition Program for students aged 14 and older: *Students Achieving Independence for Life (SAIL)*. As part of this program, our autism experts work closely with students' families and local agencies to develop individualized plans to promote independence for life. The SAIL Program includes intensive, year-round instruction in four essential areas: vocational skills, community participation, lifelong learning and independent living. Parents are aware of the strengths evident at The Birchtree Center relative to transition supports and services, and this awareness is illustrated by the strong ratings on the parent surveys. Parental omission of answering questions in the Transition section of the survey is indicative of possible respondent misunderstanding of the definition of transition services relative to special education. Almost 50% of the parents skipped answering questions in this section, and these parents were almost all parents of elementary aged students; it is hypothesized that these parents considered transition services applicable only to older students.

Behavior Strategies and Discipline

For both of the questions in the Behavior Strategies and Discipline section, there was an overwhelmingly majority of answers with “completely” ratings (15 out of 16 respondents), revealing parent recognition of Birchtree’s capacity to deliver quality programming to our students relative to behavior strategies.

Summary

As a result of the above-described data analysis from the parent surveys, certain areas of focus could be targeted when considering the development of an action plan based on this survey data. Overall, the information from the Parent Survey provides a platform for developing an action plan for program development and advancement. There were two definite topics worthy of attention and involvement in an action plan: 1) continue to plan and expand opportunities for Birchtree students to interact with non-disabled peers on a regular basis and 2) improve systems of communication with Birchtree parents so they better understand the definition and application of transition planning and supports. It is important to note that these above-listed topics – participation in activities with community peers and communication with parents about transition experiences – have each been identified as an area of priority in recent discussions at the management level at Birchtree as well as during discussions with participants during the development of our active, current Strategic Plan.

Only three parents included narrative comments on their survey. Each one of these comments was another indication of parent satisfaction with their child’s education delivered by The Birchtree Center: *“I am completely satisfied with the goals they set for my son and his learning tools”, “there is nothing that comes to mind”* (when asked what are your suggestions for improvement), and *“Keep up all the great work you do for my child and all the children you service. My husband and I know that our son is at the best school for him.”*

In summary, based on analysis of the data documented in the Parent Survey, there is consistent and comprehensive evidence of parent satisfaction with Birchtree’s ongoing practices in the delivery of program components associated with meeting the needs of the students at Birchtree. In addition, there is information generated that provides insight into possible areas for continued development. All of this information combined is highly valuable to the leadership team at Birchtree, and it will be used to guide continued growth with program development and advancement.

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

Access to the General Curriculum

Implementation of Individualized Education Programs (IEPs)

Provision of Non-Academic Services

Full Access to the District’s Curriculum

Equal Education Opportunity

The Birchtree Center has implemented a newly updated curriculum that is aligned with the NH College and Career Ready Standards since the NHDOE Program Approval visit in December 2012. The adoption of the curriculum has created new opportunities for the Birchtree students to access the curriculum standards in an authentic, individualized and relevant way. The visiting team saw evidence of instruction provided to students in individual or small group activities as well as observation of the application of newly learned skills in the community setting. The staff is creative and thoughtful in

designing instructional experiences for students that include developmentally and age appropriate learning paths as well as intentional opportunities for the application and practice of new skills in real life settings. The philosophy that guides the program development is one of genuine access to learning and mastery and generalization of skills to a variety of settings.

The Individualized Education Programs reviewed during the Program Approval visit reflect individualized, detailed program with formative assessments and relevant student outcome data used to inform progress. The video clips of student instruction and therapy activities, shown as part of the Case Study presentation, revealed significant gains in student learning over time for the two students. The two parents interviewed expressed strong satisfaction and provided specific examples of the academic gains their student had made at the Birchtree Center.

Observation of the classrooms found the school program to be well equipped with appropriate instructional, sensory and life skill materials including iPads and white boards.

Transition

Transition Planning

Process: Provision of Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE)

Transition Services

The Birchtree Center focuses on student transition needs from the time of enrollment and ongoing throughout each student's time in the school. Transition services, supported by Annual Measurable Goals, focus on the practical and realistic expectations for individual student participation in post-school education and experiences. The use of the Assessment of Functional Living Skills (AFLS), a "criterion-referenced assessment, skills tracking system, and curriculum guide for the development of essential skills for achieving independence", provides specific information on student Basic Living Skills, Community Participation, School Skills, Specific Targets for Instruction and Parent Input. The school team utilizes the results as well as academic and other student information to develop highly detailed and closely monitored transition plans.

The need for Birchtree Center students to transfer and generalize skills developed within the school setting to community, home, local school is intentionally planned for and practiced while the student attends the Birchtree Center. Students have frequent access and engagement in a wide range of community settings and are closely supported in their navigation of new experiences by the clinical instructors and the Transition Coordinator. The successful gradual fading of supports to encourage improved independence was evident in the Case Studies reviewed by the visiting team.

The school's transition service for student's ages 14 through 21 is organized around a Birchtree Center designed process they have named Students Achieving Independence for Life (SAIL). SAIL provides intensive year round programming that focuses on four essential areas of Vocational Skills, Community Participation, Lifelong Learning, and Independent Living. Students sample a variety of job experiences at the Birchtree Center such as acting as cashiers at the school store, delivering notices, or volunteering in the school library. The vocational experiences students are provided through SAIL are authentic and relevant to increasing individual post-school independence.

Transition support is provided on-site to students when they transition back to their home school with a BCBA working in the classroom as an "aide" to demonstrate behavior strategies with a gradual fading of support when the school is ready to take over.

Behavior Strategies and Discipline

The Birchtree Center develops comprehensive Positive Behavior Support Plans for each student at the time of enrollment. During the IEP process behavior plans are designed, highly individualized and closely monitored for progress. Adjustments are made based on student needs and review of ongoing outcome data. The Birchtree Center employs 6 Board Certified Behavior Analysts (BCBA) who oversee the design and implementation of each student's behavior plan. Plans include expected behaviors in the course of the school day, identified reinforcers, target behaviors, predictors of behavior (e.g. being asked to perform a task), antecedent based strategies (e.g. making choices, visual supports), consequential strategies (e.g. positive reinforcement for engaging in appropriate or replacement behaviors) and appropriately reactive procedures when a behavior occurs. The result of the individual behavior plans has been positive in supporting new appropriate behaviors in students' who present with significant and often self-injurious behaviors. The two Case Studies reviewed demonstrated the vast improvement in student behavior and an ability of transfer of new behaviors to home and out of school settings. The school's Outreach services available to all students serve as a bridge between the school and home to support parent understanding and implementation of positive behavior techniques for their student.

The climate and culture within the school was observed by the visiting team members as child-centered and focused on learning. There was a calm and positive environment observed in the common areas as well as within each classroom and therapy setting and a school-wide culture of collaboration and shared responsibility.

SPECIAL EDUCATION POLICIES/ NHDOE BUREAU OF SCHOOL APPROVAL NON-PUBLIC SCHOOL APPLICATION MATERIALS

In addition to the above noted focus areas for the case study presentations, material submitted as part of the application for program approval included: Health/Fire Facility Inspection Reports, the Private School Self Study, Special Education Policies and Procedures, Administrative Policy and Procedures, Current Program Information, and Personnel Roster and Consultant Roster Review and verification of these documents found The Birchtree Center to be in compliance with all applicable New Hampshire Rules and the Education of Students with Disabilities and requirements for Non-Public Approval.

COMMENDATIONS

As a result of the two-day visit to the Birchtree Center, including presentation of 2 Case Studies, classroom observations, interviews with parents, administrators, staff, LEA representatives, and a review of the supporting documents the NHDOE visiting team makes the following commendations.

1. The Birchtree Center administrators and staff are commended for the collective vision, leadership and ongoing commitment to continuous improvement and high quality programming for children and youth with Autism. The culture of high quality and professionalism is evident throughout the school.

2. There is a clear spirit of community and collaboration at Birchtree Center among all staff that results in a collective responsibility for successful student outcomes. This spirit described by staff is “no one is more important than anyone else, everyone here is valued for the work they do”.
3. The implementation of curriculum that is newly aligned with the NH CCRS is well done with clear standards based learning progressions established for the two Case Study students reviewed. Relevant learning activities designed to meet the standard and a well designed process for monitoring and reporting student learning.
4. The process of regular feedback is found in all aspects of the school’s work. This culture of feedback creates an expectation for ongoing reflection of effective practices system-wide and adjustment or improvement when needed. The staff are provided with feedback on their work with students and students are provided feedback on their work as a student etc. Additionally, the use of meaningful data to monitor and adjust student behavior and daily instructional plans is consistent and commended.
5. The staffing patterns at the school are well designed to provide related services, behavior analysis and support as well as access to general education curriculum in a functional and meaningful manner to each student.
6. The school has developed and maintained positive and productive relationships with sending school districts. The two district representatives interviewed indicated that they see Birchtree as an effective setting for some students with Autism but also value the technical assistance and consultation provided by the school staff to the school district.
7. The Positive Behavior supports provided to each student is well supported by BCBA’s and other relevant staff. The positive behavior plan is communicated well to parents with in-home support provided to family members as well. One parent expressed satisfaction with the behavior support offered to him by saying the staff “demystified our son’s behaviors and gave us the tools for how to respond and support new learning”.
8. There are extensive supports provided to parents/families in any aspect of student learning required. Parents interviewed reported a high level of satisfaction with the daily communication, sense of partnership, regular access to at home support and other ongoing consultations as needed as well as the trainings and social activities provided by Birchtree Center.
9. The consultation and technical assistance provided to school districts described by the two LEAs supports local school district capacity for the inclusion of students in their home school as well as smooth transitions back to the local school
10. The Birchtree Center provides students with frequent and relevant access to the local community (e.g. grocery store, restaurants, library) and has developed positive working relationships with community partners and businesses in the area.
11. The Birchtree Center staff has provided pro bono support to community groups via technical assistance and training offerings in understanding and supporting students with Autism.

12. The Birchtree Center has a supportive and active Board of Directors who has helped navigate the school toward today's high standard of performance and continues to set new goals for future support of children with autism and their families. Interview with the Board Chair found appreciation and recognition of the strong and effective leadership currently in place and commitment of the Board's ongoing support of the Birchtree Center.
13. The school has established a staff-driven and managed Family Support Fund to provide financial support to parents/families.

Number of Cases Reviewed During The Birchtree Center, December 10&11, 2013, NHDOE Compliance Visitation

Preschool	
Elementary School	1
Middle School	
High School, Age Below 16	
High School, Age 16 or Above	1
Number of Noncompliance for Indicator 13	0
Total Number of Case Studies Reviewed	2

FINDINGS OF NONCOMPLIANCE IDENTIFIED AS A RESULT OF THE DECEMBER 10&11, 2013 CASE STUDY COMPLIANCE REVIEW

Findings 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. Findings of noncompliance 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 findings of noncompliance 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.**

This section will need to include any findings of noncompliance noted in the three focus areas, issues of significance, building summaries or general review of policy, procedures, personnel roster, etc.

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.

Child Specific Findings of Noncompliance to be Addressed by Both the LEA and Private School

Setting: Please Note: *The NH Department of Education, Bureau of Special Education requires that Child Specific Findings of Noncompliance be addressed and resolved within 45 days of notification.*

There were **no Child Specific Findings of Noncompliance** identified at the Birchtree Center during the December 10 and 11, 2013 NHDOE Program Approval visit.

Systemic Findings of Noncompliance to Be Addressed by the Private School Setting

Please Note: *The NH Department of Education, Bureau of Special Education requires that Systemic Findings of Noncompliance be addressed in a corrective action plan and met within one year of the date of the report; a template and instructions for such planning will be provided.*

There were **no Systemic Findings of Noncompliance** identified at the Birchtree Center during the December 10 and 11, 2013 NHDOE Program Approval visit.

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.** It should be noted that, in the Building Level Data Summary Report on the following pages, any suggestion made by a visiting team member that is actually a finding of noncompliance, has an asterisk (*) before it, and it is also listed above with the findings of noncompliance.

1. Consider additional ways to formalize the aggregation of program outcomes so that data is available to identify thro patterns and trends overtime to measure overall program effectiveness.
2. Consider use of a web-based data tool to further support the aggregation, organization and analysis of the extensive data collected by the school.
3. Consider developing a technology plan to address future infrastructure needs (e.g. Broadband access) within the facility as the expectation for use of student and staff technology continually increases.
4. Consider ways to formalize the effective practices that The Birchtree Center has developed and refined through the development of communication such as articles, newsletters, blog posts, professional development offerings etc. The need to increase understanding and support for students with a diagnosis of Autism is evident and the expertise in effective instructional and behavioral practices of The Birchtree Center staff would be beneficial to many schools and families in NH.

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: Birchtree Center	Date: 12/11/13	
Programs: Autism Program	Number of Cases Reviewed: 2	
Recorder/Summarizer: Colleen Sliva	Number of students reviewed age 16+: 1	Number of students age 16+ cited for Indicator 13: 0

CLEARLY PRINT NAMES OF ALL COLLABORATIVE TEAM MEMBERS

Name: Jennifer Pomykato	Position: Director of Student Services	Building Level or <u>Visiting</u> (circle one)
Name: Sandra Pierce-Jordan	Position: Executive Director	<u>Building Level</u> or Visiting (circle one)
Name: Shelly Fagan	Position: Director of Special Education	<u>Building Level</u> or Visiting (circle one)
Name: Colleen Sliva	Position: Director of Special Education	Building Level or <u>Visiting</u> (circle one)
Name: Emily Hall	Position: Special Education Case Mngr.	<u>Building Level</u> or Visiting (circle one)
Name: Sarah Stranger-Stein	Position: Special Education Case Mngr.	<u>Building Level</u> or Visiting (circle one)
Name: Mary T. Lane	Position: NHDOE	Building Level or <u>Visiting</u> (circle one)
Name: Erin Conlan	Position: Behavior Analyst	<u>Building Level</u> or Visiting (circle one)
Name: Rebecca Walsh	Position: Behavior Analyst	<u>Building Level</u> or Visiting (circle one)
Name: Maryclare Heffernan	Position: Education Consultant	Building Level or <u>Visiting</u> (circle one)

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 in the areas of: **Access to the General Curriculum, Transition and Behavior Strategies and Discipline.**

SUMMARIZE YOUR BUILDING LEVEL DATA

ACCESS TO THE GENERAL CURRICULUM STATEMENTS

Fill in the combined <u>number</u> of times a statement is marked on all Data Collection Forms for this school or building.			
	YES	NO	N/A
1. There is evidence that when developing the IEP the IEP Team considers: the strengths of the child; (ii) The concerns of the parents for enhancing the education of their child; (iii) The results of the initial or most recent evaluation of the child; and (iv) The academic, developmental, and functional needs of the child ¹ .	2		
2. There is evidence of a system among <i>all</i> staff members who provide direct services for the child, including instructional and residential, of their participation in the process of planning for that child and knowing the contents of the IEP and all other reports and evaluations, as appropriate to their roles and responsibilities ² .	2		
3. There is evidence that the Team uses multiple measures to design, implement and monitor the student's program ^{3,4} .	2		
4. All IEP goals are written in measurable terms ⁵ .	2		
5. Student's IEP has at least one functional goal (as applicable) ⁶ .	2		
6. There is evidence that the student has made progress in IEP Goals over the past three years ^{7, 8} .	2		
7. There is evidence that the special education, supplementary aids and/or related services described in the IEP have been delivered ⁹ .	2		
8. There is evidence that NH Minimum Standards for required subjects (credits) are met and provided to the student ¹⁰ .	2		

¹ Ed 1109.03 When an IEP Is in Effect; IEP Meetings; Development, Review, and Revision of an IEP; Transition Services; 34 CFR 300.324 Development, review, and revision of IEP

² Ed 1114.05(h) Program Requirements

³ Ed 1109.01 (a)(1) Elements of an Individualized Program; 34 CFR 300.320 (a) Definition of IEP

⁴ Ed. 1109.01 Elements of an Individualized Program; 34 CFR 300.320 (3)(i)(ii); Definition of IEP

⁵ Ed. 1109.01 Elements of an IEP; 34 CFR 300.320 Content of IEP

⁶ Ed 1102.01(u) Definitions Functional Goal *Functional goal* means a measurable outcome that is developed by the IEP team to address a need detailed in the analysis of the student's functional performance

⁷ Ed 1109.01 Elements of an IEP

⁸ Ed 1109.03 When an IEP Is in Effect; IEP Meetings; Development, Review, and Revision of an IEP; Transition Services; 34 CFR 300.324 Development, review, and revision of IEP

⁹ Ed 1109.04 (b) Copies of the IEP and evidence of implementation

¹⁰ Ed 1114.05 (g) Program Requirements 34 CFR 300.320 Content of IEP

9. There is evidence the student <u>has access to, is participating and progressing in the general education curriculum (aligned with NH Curriculum Frameworks/CCSS)</u> ¹¹ .	2		
10. There is evidence that the accommodations ¹² and/or modifications ¹³ , as described in the IEP allows the student to access, participate and show progress in the general curriculum ¹⁴ .	2		
11. There is evidence in the IEP of individual accommodations necessary to measure academic achievement or functional performance in state, school-wide or classroom assessments ^{15, 16} .	2		
12. There is evidence that supports and accommodations are provided to this student to allow participation in extracurricular and other non-academic activities ¹⁷ .	2		
13. There is evidence that the IEP team made the placement decision based on Free and Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) in the Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) ¹⁸ .	2		
14. There is evidence the student's IEP is reasonably calculated to result in educational benefit.	2		
For High School Students:			
Student is earning credits toward a regular high school diploma ¹⁹ .		1	
IF YES: within 4 years?			1
Student will earn an IEP diploma or a certificate of completion ¹⁹ .	1		
IF YES: within 4 years?		1	
Does this school have a clear policy for earning a high school diploma ²⁰ ?	1		

¹¹ Ed 1113.08 Curricula; Ed. 1109.01 Elements of an IEP; 34 CFR 300.320 Content of IEP

¹² "Accommodation" means any change in instruction or evaluation determined necessary by the IEP team that does not impact the rigor and/or validity of the subject matter being taught or assessed.

¹³ "Modification" means any change in instruction or evaluation determined necessary by the IEP team that impacts the rigor and validity or rigor or validity, of the subject matter being taught or assessed.

¹⁴ Ed 1113.08 Curricula; Ed. 1109.01 Elements of an IEP; 34 CFR 300.320 Content of IEP

¹⁵ Ed 1109.01 Elements of an IEP; 34 CFR 300.320 Content of IEP

¹⁶ Ed 1109.01 Elements of an IEP; 34 CFR 300.320 (6)(i) Definition of Individualized Education Program

¹⁷ Ed 1113.08 Curricula; Ed 1109.01 Elements of an IEP; 34 CFR 300.320 Content of IEP

¹⁸ Ed 1111.02 Placement Decisions; 34 CFR 300.116 Placements

¹⁹ Ed 1113.13 Diplomas (a)(b)(c); 34 CFR 300.102 Limitation-Exception to FAPE for certain ages

²⁰ Ed 1114.05 Program Requirements (a)(b)

Access Strengths	Access Suggestions for Improvement
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The Birchtree Center has an updated curriculum aligned with the NH CCRS that is implemented with consistency. 2. The school has a high quality professional staff. 3. The school has high standards for quality professional practice and supports all practitioners with ongoing, embedded, relevant and research based professional learning opportunities. 4. Academic learning tasks are designed as highly functional and integrated, aligning with general education curriculum standards. 5. The school's staff is highly creative in using various tools and differentiation to ensure access to the general education curriculum for each individual student. 6. The use of data to inform instructional decisions and measure outcomes is well designed. 7. There is a highly comprehensive system of supervision, mentoring, induction and ongoing professional support for all staff. Frequent feedback and professional dialogue and problem solving are a well - established part of the school's professional culture. 8. The school extends access to the student's home and community through regularly structured at home support and ongoing communication with parents and family. 9. There is an intentional focus on supporting student generalization of newly acquired skills and strategies so that learning extends to other settings and activities outside of the classroom or school. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Present level of performance descriptions should be more clearly aligned with the individual student goals. 2. Explore other options for providing Birchtree students with increased opportunities for access and engagement with typically developing peers. 3. The school currently uses a great deal of technology but as the field develops they are encouraged to continue to explore and utilize new and assistive technology for teaching and learning.

TRANSITION STATEMENTS²¹

Fill in the combined <u>number</u> of times a statement is marked on all Data Collection Forms for this school or building.		
	YES	NO
1. There is evidence that at the time of transition the evaluation summary and other related documents were received in a timely manner ²² .	2	
2. There is evidence and documentation that special education, supplementary aids and/or related services described in the IEP were delivered at the time of transition ²³ .	2	
3. There is evidence that the information on this student has been shared between each transition including school to school, grade to grade and teacher to teacher including academic and behavior ²⁴ .	2	
4. There is evidence that the placement decision is made at least annually by the IEP team with consideration that the student is placed in the least restrictive environment ²⁵ .	2	
5. There is evidence that there is collaboration between the LEA and the non-public school in the development, review and revision of the IEP ²⁶ .	2	
6. There is evidence of a collaboration process between general and special education staff in the development, review and revision of IEPs, including transition planning for this student ²⁷ .	2	
7. There is evidence that the student and parents have been involved in transition discussions and activities ²⁸ .	2	
8. If the student turned 14 during the IEP period (or younger if determined by the IEP team), there is evidence that the IEP includes a statement of transition service needs that focuses on the students courses of study ²⁹ .	2	

²¹ This includes movement from (a) Early Supports and Services (ESS) to preschool, b) preschool to elementary school, or (c) age 16 or older, as well as from grade to grade and school to school.

²² 34 CFR 300.323(g) Transmittal of records

²³ Ed 1114.06 Responsibilities of Private Providers of Special Education or Other Non- LEA Programs in the Implementation of IEPs.

²⁴ Ed 1114.05 Program Requirements

²⁵ Ed 1111.02 Placement Decisions; 34 CFR 300.116 Placements

²⁶ Ed 1109.05 IEPs for Children Placed in Private Providers of Special Education or other non-LEA Programs by Public Agencies; 34 CFR 300.325 Private school placements by public agencies

²⁷ Ed 1103.01 IEP Team; 34 CFR 300.321 IEP Team

²⁸ Ed 1103.01 IEP Team; 34 CFR 300.321 IEP Team

²⁹ Ed 1109.01 (10) Elements of the individualized education program

9. If the student turned 16 during the IEP period, there is evidence that the transition plan is designed within a results-oriented process focused on improving academic and functional improvement to facilitate his or her movement from school to post-school goals and activities ³⁰ .	2	
10. There is evidence that outside agencies who are involved with this student's transition have participated in transition planning (e.g. DCYF, DJJS, and Area Agency) ³¹ .	2	

TRANSITION STATEMENTS	YES	NO
(Transition questions must be answered Yes or No, not N/A)		
For a student who will turn age 14 during the IEP service period (or younger if determined appropriate by the IEP team): The IEP includes a statement of the transition service needs that focuses on the student's course of study, such as participation in advanced-placement courses or a vocational education program	1	
For students under age 16, answer only the first 4 statements above. Then skip to the next page. If the student is age 16 or older during the course of the IEP, answer all statements on this page. (required data for federal statistics purposes)		
1. Is there an appropriate measurable postsecondary goal or goals that covers education OR training AND employment, and, as needed, independent living?	1	
<i>Can the goal(s) be counted? Will the goal(s) occur after the student graduates from school? Based on the information available about this student, does (do) the postsecondary goal(s) seem appropriate for this student? • If yes to all three, then check Y OR if a postsecondary goal(s) is (are) not stated, check N.</i>	1	
2. Is (are) the postsecondary goal(s) updated annually?	1	
<i>Was (were) the postsecondary goal(s) addressed/ updated in conjunction with the development of the current IEP? • If yes, then check Y OR If the postsecondary goal(s) was (were) not updated with the current IEP, check N.</i>	1	
3. Is there evidence that the measurable postsecondary goal(s) were based on age appropriate transition assessment?	1	
<i>Is the use of transition assessment(s) for the postsecondary goal(s) mentioned in the IEP or evident in the student's file? • If yes, then check Y OR if no, then check N.</i>	1	
4. Are there transition services in the IEP that will reasonably enable the student to meet his or her postsecondary goal(s)?	1	

³⁰ Ed 1109.01 (a)(10) Elements of an IEP; 34 CFR 300.320 Definition of an IEP (b); 34 CFR 300.43 Transition Services (a)(1)

³¹ Ed 1103.01 IEP Team; 34 CFR 300.321 IEP Team

Is a type of instruction, related service, community experience, or development of employment and other post-school adult living objectives, and if appropriate, acquisition of daily living skills, and provision of a functional vocational evaluation listed in association with meeting the post-secondary goal(s)? • If yes, then check Y OR if no, then check N.	1		
5. Do the transition services include courses of study that will reasonably enable the student to meet his or her postsecondary goal(s)?	1		
Do the transition services include courses of study that align with the student's postsecondary goal(s)? • If yes, then check Y OR if no, then check N.	1		
6. Is (are) there annual IEP goal(s) related to the student's transition services needs?	1		
Is (are) an annual goal(s) included in the IEP that is/are related to the student's transition services needs? • If yes, then check Y OR if no, then check N.	1		
7. Is there evidence that the student was invited to the IEP Team meeting where transition services were discussed?	1		
8. For the current year, is there documented evidence in the IEP or cumulative folder that the student was invited to attend the IEP Team meeting? • If yes, then check Y OR if no, then check N.	1		
Only the following statement may be answered N/A if appropriate. <u>All statements above must be answered Yes or No.</u>	YES	NO	N/A
9. If appropriate, is there evidence that a representative of any participating agency was invited to the IEP Team meeting with the prior consent of the parent or student who has reached the age of majority?	1		
10. For the current year, is there evidence in the IEP that representatives of any of the following agencies/services were invited to participate in the IEP development including but not limited to: postsecondary education, vocational education, integrated employment (including supported employment), continuing and adult education, adult services, independent living or community participation for this post-secondary goal? Was consent obtained from the parent (or student, for a student the age of majority)? • If yes to both, then check Y. • If no invitation is evident and a participating agency is likely to be responsible for providing or paying for transition services and there was consent to invite them to the IEP meeting, then check N. • If it is too early to determine if the student will need outside agency involvement, or no agency is likely to provide or pay for transition services, check NA. • If parent or individual student consent (when appropriate) was not provided, check NA.	1		
11. Student is informed prior to age 17 of his/her rights under IDEA ³² .	1		
12. Does the IEP meet the requirements of Indicator 13? (Check one) Yes (all Ys or NAs for each item (1 – 10) on the Checklist or No (one or more Ns checked)	1		

³² Ed 1120.01 Applicability; Transfer of Rights 34 CFR 300.320 (c) Transfer of Rights at age of majority

13. There is evidence of the 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 goals³³.

1

³³ Ed 1109.04 Copies of the IEP and Evidence of Implementation (c) 34 CFR 300.305 (e)(2)

Transition Strengths	Transition Suggestions for Improvement
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The Birchtree Center has developed thoughtful, detailed, step-by-step transition plans for all aspects of transition (e.g. from local school to Birchtree; from homebound student to school, from Birchtree to local school, etc.). 2. Birchtree students who transition to community for shopping or work develop skills to increase independence in navigating the world outside of school. 3. Every student is seen as an individual and transition plans clearly reflect the unique learning and life skills for each student. 4. The philosophy and practice observed of The Birchtree Center is to support students' return to their local school and community as much as possible, when relevant. Consultation to the public schools at all transition points is effective in helping support students in their local general education setting. 5. The Transition Portfolios developed for each Birchtree student are a highly valuable and practical record of student academic, social, communication, employment and daily living experiences and skills that provide a bridge from school to post-school experience. 6. The Assessment of Functional Living Skills provided by the school to each student is a meaningful assessment and helpful in transition planning. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Continue the good work currently done to extend and increase community partnerships.

BEHAVIOR STRATEGIES AND DISCIPLINE

Fill in the combined <u>number</u> of times a statement is marked on all Data Collection Forms for this school or building		
	YES	NO
1. There is evidence that, where it has been determined that a child's behavior impedes learning, the use of positive behavioral interventions and supports, and other strategies to address that behavior have been implemented ³⁴ .	2	
2. There is evidence that data are used to determine impact of student behavior on his/her learning.	2	
3. There is evidence that the IEP team conducted a functional behavior assessment of the student's behavior ³⁵ .	2	
4. If appropriate, there is evidence that the IEP team developed a behavior intervention plan that described strategies and supports ³⁶ .	2	
5. There is evidence that the interventions, strategies and supports have been developed to address the student's behavior ³⁷ .	2	
6. There is evidence that positive interventions, strategies and supports been communicated to the student, parents and key school personnel ³⁸ .	2	
7. There is evidence that professional development, and specialized training has been provided to staff, parents, providers and others as appropriate to support the implementation of the behavior plan and strategies ³⁹ .	2	
8. If aversive behavioral interventions were used, there is evidence that they were authorized in writing by a physician, and the IEP team, and included in the student's IEP ^{40,41} .	2	
9. There is evidence that that the team uses data to demonstrate the results of the behavioral interventions, strategies and supports ⁴² .	2	
10. A school-wide behavior intervention model exists.	2	

³⁴ Ed 1114.07 Behavioral Interventions; Ed 1109.01 Elements of an IEP; 34 CFR 300.320 Content of IEP

³⁵ Ed 1124.01 (f)(1)(i)(ii) Disciplinary Procedures; 34 CFR 300.530 Authority of school personnel

³⁶ Ed 1102.01 Definitions (n)

³⁷ Ed 1114.07 Behavioral Interventions

³⁸ Ed 1114.05 Program Requirements

³⁹ Ed 1114.10 Qualifications and Requirements for Instructional, Administrative, and Support Personnel

⁴⁰ Ed 1113.06 (a)(b) Use of Aversive Behavioral Interventions "Aversive Behavioral Interventions" mean (1) A non-medical mechanical restraint that physically restricts student's movement; and (2) physical restraint, not in response to a threat of imminent, serious, physical harm.

⁴¹ Ed 1114.09 Use of Aversive Behavioral Interventions

⁴² Ed 1114.07 (a) Behavioral Interventions

Behavior Strategy Strengths	Behavior Strategy Suggestions for Improvement
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The Birchtree Center provides detailed, data driven individualized behavior plans designed to meet the unique behavioral needs of each student. The plans are reviewed on a regular ongoing basis and adjustments are made based on student outcome results. 2. The staffing patterns at the school include Board Certified Behavior Analysts who provide essential and effective supports to each student's team of teachers and therapist and parents/family members. 3. The school-wide positive behavior supports and interventions are an embedded part of the school's culture and is reflected in the calm, orderly, focused learning environment established within the school. 4. The well-constructed Functional Behavior Analyses are done in a comprehensive and thoughtful manner. 5. The school provides parents/families with consistent and well designed parent training sessions and in-home support in the area of positive and effective behavior supports and management techniques and plans. 6. The ongoing system of communication within the school among all staff and from school to home is commendable. Frequent communication results in ongoing monitoring of student progress and making adjustments to student programming in a timely and meaningful manner. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Continue to provide the highly effective consultation services to sending school districts as a way of supporting access to the general curriculum for students with Autism, transition planning and building local capacity for the successful inclusion of students in their local setting.