



STATE OF CONNECTICUT
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION



TO: Dale Hoyt, Chief Administrator
Ädelbrook-The Learning Center of Manchester

FROM: Colleen Hayles, Education Consultant/Coordinator
Bureau of Special Education

DATE: May 28, 2019

SUBJECT: PRELIMINARY EVALUATION REPORT
Approval Review of a Private Special Education Program

On April 11, 2019, an evaluation team visited the special education program Ädelbrook-The Learning Center of Manchester (Ädelbrook-Manchester) to conduct an on-site review for reapproval. The team consisted of:

- Colleen Hayles, Education Consultant/Coordinator, Bureau of Special Education (BSE);
- Catherine Tower, Director of Education, Northwest Village School; and
- Carole Swift, Director of Special Education and Pupil Services, Milford Public Schools.

During a previous on-site visit on April 4, 2019, Colleen Hayles reviewed the education files of five students as well as personnel files. In addition, Ms. Hayles has reviewed the application materials submitted to the BSE by Ädelbrook-Manchester administration.

At the exit conference on April 11, 2019, the evaluation team shared its impressions and preliminary findings. The following areas of the special education program have been reviewed:

- governance;
- administration;
- fiscal management;
- admissions;
- individual student records;
- program requirements;
- evaluation of student progress and reporting responsibilities;
- student management techniques;
- qualifications and requirements for instructional, administrative, and support personnel;
- health and safety; and
- termination of enrollment.

Commendations:

- The small size of the program enhances the individualization of each student's program and creates a culture and climate conducive to student growth. The program provides a low teacher-student ratio that is additionally supported by individual instructional assistants in each classroom, and where appropriate, 1:1 aides.

- The program provides a range of components and services to appropriately address the needs of the identified population of the students served. In addition to highly qualified special and early childhood educators and the related services of an occupational therapist and speech-language pathologist, the program employs the services of a supervising board certified behavior analyst, full- and part-time behavior associates, a full-time and part-time social worker, a music therapist, and consultation from an Ädelbrook school psychologist and consulting psychiatrist. Students also benefit from services of a certified physical education teacher.
- A review of individualized education programs (IEPs) revealed well-developed and clearly articulated summaries describing a student's present level of performance as well as evidence of proposed goals and objectives that are designed to improve individual student performance.
- The facility is bright, cheery, welcoming, and well furnished. Spaces are well thought out and provide for sensory motor opportunities as well as a space with an observation window that provides opportunities for observation, data collection, and oversight of individualized instruction. The building also supports the availability of space for music and art instruction. A large multipurpose room provides space for school-wide activities, presentations, and productions.
- A well-designed outdoor play area for students has been extended (at the recommendation of students) and also allows for access to areas in which the students can participate in expanded activities such as gardening.
- The culture and climate of the program is best described as inclusive, accepting, warm, respectful, and supportive.
- The leadership has cultivated an effective team of educators and support personnel who work collaboratively utilizing an integrated approach in response to students' social and emotional needs while addressing communication, language, and learning needs.
- The director of education has spearheaded several initiatives to enhance the learning experience of students through community networking and the acquisition of grants to support various projects. Integrated enrichment activities like tapping into connections with a local museum, a master puppeteer, and a music and dance therapist, enhance the learning experiences of students.
- Project-based learning is supported by an array of curriculum resource materials including, but not limited to, Creative Curriculum, New2You, Head Sprout, Go Math and Touch Math, Nancy Larson Science, and Spire.
- Parents and other members of the community at large, are provided with various opportunities for learning and training related to addressing the needs of the children served. Individual support to parents is also available.
- The program has partnered with the Connecticut Parent Advocacy Center to provide an eight-week program that focuses on collaboration between professionals and parents.

- Ädelbrook-Manchester has adopted the “bucket filling” philosophy throughout the program in an effort to promote a positive culture—increasing kindness, respect, and courtesy. The school community has embraced this character building initiative that is reflected in the overall climate and culture.
- Throughout the course of the visit there was clear evidence that staff felt well supported by administration, implement a consistent positive approach with students, and reflect the passion and commitment to student growth modeled by the director of education.
- Program staff benefit from the provision of comprehensive professional development (PD) opportunities through the Learning Academy operated by Ädelbrook Behavioral and Developmental Services.
- A monthly professional learning community is accessed by professional/certified staff.
- Student files were well organized and maintained.

Standard Deficiencies:

The following standard deficiencies must be rectified:

Standard F: Program Requirements – A private facility shall have a written description of the IEP for each student that should include as appropriate, a behavior intervention plan (BIP); the student success plan; the language and communication plan; and transition goals and objectives that move the student toward college or career readiness, including opportunities to work and interact in the community; and shall have a written curriculum and sufficient instructional materials, supplies, and equipment in accordance with state requirements for educational programs for full implementation of the IEP.

Issue: In five of five IEPs reviewed, a required element of the IEP was not accurately reflected. The provision of related services was not clearly articulated on the service grid, specifically related to the setting in which the service is to be provided (within a small group versus individual), leading to an absence of clarity of how to meet the needs of the individual student.

Corrective Actions Required: Develop a procedure for close scrutiny upon receipt of the IEPs developed at the district’s planning and placement team (PPT) meeting to ensure that related services are accurately reflected in the service grid. Provide copies of the next three IEPs, developed by a district PPT for students currently enrolled. Ensure that each IEP reflects accuracy in articulating the delivery of related services indicating whether the service is to be provided within a small group setting or within an individual session. When necessary, attach a written notification to the district that the IEP document has been reviewed and that it requires revision (specify) and maintain that notification as a cover page for the current IEP until such time that the appropriate corrections are made.

Recommendations:

The following recommendations are offered to Ädelbrook-Manchester:

- Continue to develop and maximize the use of technology with students for instructional purposes as well as a mechanism for teachers and staff to collect maintain and utilize data.

- Increase available planning time for teachers and provide more frequent opportunities for teachers to meet with the teacher assistants to cooperatively plan effective implementation of student's IEPs.
- Ensure that the conduct of monthly crisis drills includes a drill other than a fire drill every third month throughout the course of the year including during the extended school year program. Ensure that the type of drill conducted is accurately documented in the log.
- Review the contents of BIPs developed by the program to ensure that a threshold for requesting a PPT meeting to review or revise the BIP and/or a schedule to review the interventions in place (to assure that the interventions are producing positive outcomes and changes in targeted behaviors).
- Consider providing, to all staff, PD activities that specifically address differentiation of instruction. Provide support to teachers related to the management and oversight of teacher support specialists' and one-to-one aides' work.
- Consider expanding participation in organizations such as the Connecticut Association of Private Special Education Facilities and the Connecticut Council of Administrators of Special Education to include the director of education in order to remain current with activities, issues, and solutions impacting approved private special education programs across the state.

Within 15 working days from the date of this preliminary evaluation report, please indicate in writing to the BSE whether your program agrees with the report and accepts the delineated corrective action plan. Please be advised that a recommendation for continuous approval through June 30, 2024, will be submitted to the Commissioner of Education once written acceptance of the report in its entirety is received.

Upon such approval, the following will be applicable to Äedelbrook-Manchester:

- Approved Ages:** 3–11 years old
- Approved Grades:** PK–3
- Approved Capacity:** 30 students
- Approval Expiration Date:** June 30, 2024

cc: Cathy Danielczuk, Director of Education