



STATE OF CONNECTICUT
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION



TO: Maryann Campbell
Chief Administrator
The Glenholme School

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

DATE: May 14, 2018

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

On April 19, 2018, an evaluation team visited the special education program, The Glenholme School (Glenholme) in order to conduct an on-site review for continuous approval from the Connecticut State Department of Education. The team consisted of:

- Colleen Hayles, Education Consultant/Coordinator, Bureau of Special Education (BSE);
- Georgette Nemr, Education Consultant, BSE;
- Gwen Killheffer, Principal/Director of Education, CCMC School; and
- Jolene Piscetello, Director of Pupil Services, Stafford Springs Public Schools.

During a previous on-site visit on April 12, 2018, Ms. Hayles and Ms. Nemr reviewed the education files of five students as well as personnel files. In addition, Ms. Hayles also reviewed the application materials submitted to the BSE by Glenholme administration.

At the exit conference on April 19, 2018, 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.

1. Commendations:

- The leadership, specifically the director of education, was identified by staff as approachable, available, supportive, and in touch with the academic and behavioral needs of both students and staff.
- An outstanding level of collaboration, communication, and consistency relative to the development and implementation of appropriate social, emotional, behavioral, and academic programming for each student enrolled, was noted by all staff interviewed. The program implements a system of positive behavior supports, which is integrated with the provision of social skills instruction. Academic achievement, the development of sound study habits, and the promotion of self- and home-care skills are identified as areas of focus throughout the program.
- Glenholme implements a positive behavioral interventions and supports model across settings, which provides a strong foundation for the implementation of the treatment plan developed for each student and articulated through an individualized behavior support plan. Behavior support plans identify the schoolwide motivational and instructional approach, which includes a “token economy” to foster prosocial behaviors. Tiered or leveled interventions are designed to provide instruction related to, and reinforcement of, desired behaviors, the teaching of new skills or behaviors, and the extinction of problem behaviors. Additional supports are available based on data and the need for supplemental supports and services within the milieu.
- Students were observed being engaged in their instruction and demonstrated a willingness to take risks. A positive culture and climate has been established and is evidenced by positive respectful relationships among students and between staff and students.
- Each student is equipped with a personal laptop computer within the instructional setting. Internet protocols are in place to prevent inappropriate or unauthorized use of social media outside of the school environment and to protect student privacy.
- The program is invested in strengthening the home-school partnership and encourages consistency between home and school. Parent “gatherings” are designed and scheduled in various geographic areas to afford parents every opportunity to align with program staff in providing the best possible outcomes for students. Parent weekends are sponsored during the year by the program and family support/therapy/in-home consultation is available to parents via video conferencing.
- The program provides strong collaboration, consistency, and carryover to the residential component for those students requiring a residential milieu or treatment setting.

The program setting and facilities are welcoming and well equipped. Specialized areas to provide coursework, extracurricular activities, and incentives are varied. These specialized areas include, but are not limited to, a recording studio, music rooms, a dance/exercise studio, a hair salon, a new arts building, a riding stable, and an onsite restaurant operated by students.

- As a means of retaining staff primarily in the residence, the program provides incentives to staff such as tuition assistance and support.
- All newly hired staff participate in a 1-2 week orientation, providing training and a gradual introduction to the provision of actual instruction. Areas of training cover topics such as implementation of positive behavior supports with fidelity, mindfulness, Quantum Learning, and the use of rubrics.

- The program implements a comprehensive professional development (PD) learning plan. The plan is designed to promote new learning of teachers, the application of new skills by teachers, and the analysis of the impact of teachers' PD on student outcomes.
- The program is effective and efficient in utilizing the two paraprofessionals assigned to support the needs of all students and staff during the course of the school day.
- Discharge planning begins on the day of admission for each student enrolled and is provided in writing to the student/family and local education agency (LEA) as part of the overall treatment plan within the first month of enrollment.

2. **Standard Deficiencies:**

Standard F: Program Requirements - A private facility shall have a written description of the individualized education program (IEP) for each student and should include as appropriate, a behavior intervention plan (BIP); the student success plan; the language and communication plan; and as appropriate, 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: While efforts to appropriately articulate related services models on page 11 of the IEP were evident, one or more required elements of the IEP was not accurately reflected or the IEP document was not complete, prohibiting the program from fully implementing the IEP. Errors and omissions included the following:

- Clarity related to the delivery of specific related services such as speech/language and occupational therapy (OT) was not provided on page 11. For example, speech/language was identified as required for one hour per week and was noted as being provided in a 1:1/small group setting in four of six IEPs reviewed. The implementation of such services as articulated leaves service delivery undefined and open to interpretation. Similar documentation was also used to describe the setting for the implementation of OT and counseling goals and objectives.
- Page 10 of the IEP does not adequately articulate the level of need for students and the strategies, interventions, and behavioral supports needed to address behaviors that are impeding their learning. Necessary schoolwide supports, services, and strategies appropriate to the student's need and if determined necessary, individual BIPs based on the conduct of a functional behavioral assessment, are not indicated on page 10 of the IEP.
- Staff of Glenholme was not accurately or appropriately identified according to his/her role as attending the planning and placement team (PPT) meeting on page 1 of the selected IEPs reviewed.

Corrective Action Required: Develop and document a process to review IEPs developed by the PPT to ensure that they accurately reflect the consensus of the PPT, are complete and accurate, reflect the current level/intensity of the student's needs, and are able to be implemented by the program as written. Additionally, where there exists a discrepancy, provide the process that will document that the program has appropriately notified the LEA of the necessary changes or additions. On or before June 15, 2018, submit to the BSE a copy of the process/procedures developed to review IEPs and the manner of notification to be used to inform the districts.

3. **Recommendations:**

It is recommended that your program consider taking the following action:

- Consider expanding PD opportunities to include the impact of sensory needs of students whose spectrum disorder may have an influence on behavior. Additionally, educator-driven PD activities or those topic areas identified through the educator evaluation system, are recommended to enhance teacher effectiveness and improve student outcomes.
- Consider expanding extracurricular activities and electives to focus beyond the arts (i.e., robotics) and provide additional opportunities for students to develop their leadership skills.
- Revise the staffing practices and policies within the residential program to reduce or eliminate the need for teaching staff to be pulled from their teaching assignments to cover students within the residential programs.
- Create additional “real world” community-based activities and opportunities for students enrolled.
- Maintain the Professional Development and Evaluation Committee to assist in reviewing and implementing with fidelity the educator evaluation plan in place and to provide input into the ongoing PD plan.
- Ensure that staff receive written feedback of formal observations and as appropriate informal observations.

Within 15 working days from the date of this preliminary evaluation report, please indicate in writing to the BSE whether Glenholme agrees with the report and whether the program accepts the delineated corrective action plan, if applicable. Upon receipt of Glenholme’s acceptance of the report in its entirety, a recommendation for continuous approval through June 30, 2023, will be submitted to the Commissioner of Education.

Upon such approval, the following will be applicable to the special education program:

Approved Ages to Serve: ages 9–21 years old

Approved Student Capacity: 105

cc: Sharon Murphy, Director of Education