



STATE OF CONNECTICUT
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION



TO: Dr. Stephen Swartzlander, Chief Administrator
Dr. Mark Depot, Chief Administrator
The Bradley School–New London Regional/Windham County

FROM: Dr. Dori Papa, Education Consultant *DP*
Bureau of Special Education

DATE: March 24, 2022

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

On November 4, 2021, an evaluation team visited The Bradley School–New London Regional (The Bradley School) to conduct an on-site review for reapproval. The team consisted of:

Dr. Dori Papa, Education Consultant, Bureau of Special Education (BSE);
Dr. Judy Benson Clarke, Director of Special Education, Scotland Public Schools; and
Ms. Katie Cyr, Education Director, Aspire Living and Learning.

During a previous site visit on November 2, 2021, Dr. Papa reviewed the education files of students as well as personnel files. In addition, Dr. Papa has reviewed the application materials submitted to the BSE by your administration.

At the exit conference on November 4, 2021, 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
termination of enrollment

Commendations:

Teaching and related service staff interviewed shared that they feel highly valued by administration and administration fosters a strong and collaborative team.

Preliminary Evaluation Report: The Bradley School–New London Regional/Windham County
Approval Review for a Private Special Education Program
March 24, 2022

The school provides a safe, intimate learning environment in which all staff are committed to high academic and behavioral expectations for students. A focus on collaborative problem solving and relationship building are the foundation of successful outcomes for students.

The staff demonstrates a strong commitment to the well-being of each student. The team observed an excellent rapport between teachers and students as evidenced through smile exchanges, laughter, and positive comments. The observation team shared, “it is clear that the staff love the students.”

Staff has an appreciation of the need for collaboration. There are weekly interdisciplinary meetings, including teachers, paraeducators, a speech/language therapist, a clinical psychologist, and social workers—to review specific student needs, discuss individualized education program (IEP) goals, and monitor progress.

The Bradley School provides educational and therapeutic supports and affords a schoolwide, behavior support program to students. The school also provides more individualized strategies and supports appropriate for the needs of students throughout their day.

The school utilizes various social-emotional learning programs to meet the behavioral learning needs for the wide age range of its student population (ages three through twenty-two). Programs include, Second Step, Yale RULER Approach, Jed Baker’s Social Skills Program, Michelle Garcia-Winner’s Social Problem Solving, Cognitive Behavioral Therapy, Dialectical Behavior Therapy, Model Me Kids, Coping Power Program, Interpersonal Cognitive Problem-Solving, Strong Kids, Incredible 5-Point Scale, Acceptance and Commitment Therapy, and Mindfulness.

The school has invested in technology that supports teachers in their instruction and students in their learning. The school also recently hired a full-time educational technology specialist dedicated to provide teachers technical assistance and to enhance the use of available technology. There is an abundance of interactive, online curriculum programs available to meet students’ individual academic programming. Classrooms are equipped with interactive Smartboards, Chromebooks for each student, desktop computers, tablets, iPads, projectors, and Elmos visual document presenters.

Classrooms were described as spacious, bright with natural light, and decorated appropriately—not overstimulating to students. The high school classroom had individual carrel areas providing students with the option of working independently or on a group basis.

A program strength is school and home communication. Families are integrally involved in the IEP development process. Extensive work is done to support families—to ensure they are connected with needed outside resources.

Students are grouped by age. Staff demonstrate a strong set of skills ranging from the ability to appropriately differentiate and scaffold academic instruction, and develop and implement effective instructional/behavioral strategies. Teachers had identified goals and objectives clearly

stated and posted during the course of the lesson. Lesson content was aligned to the Connecticut Core Standards. The students were engaged in instruction and demonstrated a willingness to take risks.

The program uses a blended learning curriculum aligned with Connecticut Core Standards. Students receive direct instruction and engage in a diverse online learning curriculum. A multi-sensory approach to instruction includes the provision of traditional textbooks, hands-on opportunities, and experiential learning.

The school affords teachers and related service personnel with opportunities to access off-site professional development activities of individual interest at no cost.

Standard Deficiencies:

The following standard deficiencies must be rectified:

Standard E: Individual Student Records

A private facility shall maintain a written record for each student, which shall include administrative, treatment, and educational data from the time of admission until the time the student leaves the facility. A student's individual record shall contain, but not limited to, the following:

at least two reports per year of student progress toward achieving the objectives in the IEP dated documentation that the progress reports were forwarded appropriately

Issue(s): In three of five student files reviewed, IEPs and progress reports were evident in the file; however, there was no documentation indicating that progress reports were appropriately forwarded to the placing local education agencies (LEAs).

Corrective Action: On or before June 30, 2022, submit to the BSE an index or organizational format that will be consistently used for student files—to ensure that all required components are contained in each student's education record. In addition, the format must allow easy access and reference for administrators, teachers, related service personnel, LEAs, parents, and others who may need access, to gain insight of the students served and to ensure implementation of a student's individual program with fidelity.

Standard F: Program Requirements

The local school district is responsible for the development and appropriateness of a student's IEP and any changes made in that IEP. The IEP shall serve as the basis for each student's instruction. The IEP presented by the LEA serves as the basis for admission and should identify the current performance levels of the student, the appropriate specialized instruction, and required related services. Each private facility should participate in the planning and placement team (PPT) meeting, which discusses and determines placement in the facility prior to student enrollment. Each private facility shall request from the placing LEA an IEP prior to student enrollment and at least annually thereafter. For students placed by other agencies, the private

facility should obtain an IEP after placement, as soon as feasible, from the district having educational jurisdiction.

Issue: In one of five IEPs reviewed, the related services identified on page eleven were not reflected appropriately—services were not clearly identified as being provided individually or within a small group.

Issue: In two of five IEPs reviewed, the special education teacher listed on page one was not identified as a representative of The Bradley School.

Corrective Action: Implement a procedure to utilize upon receipt of an IEP after participating in a PPT meeting. Said procedure shall ensure that all the information in the IEP is complete and accurate and The Bradley School can implement the supports and services outlined in the document as written (i.e., require clarification of all related service whether it is provided individually or within a group setting). Said procedure is to document a process to ensure that IEPs accurately reflect the consensus of the PPT and are complete and accurate. The review and any subsequent communication with the responsible district must be done in a timely manner and must then be reflected in the student file. It is strongly recommended that written documentation of requested changes in the IEP be attached to the current IEP—to ensure that the IEP can be implemented with fidelity. Submit to the BSE copies of the next three IEPs developed by the LEA’s PPT for students enrolled. The copies shall demonstrate careful review for accuracy and completeness, and if needed, illustrate the implementation of written notification to the district requesting necessary changes.

Standard J: Health and Safety

A private facility shall conduct monthly emergency drills that include one crisis response drill other than a fire drill once every three months.

Issue(s): In reviewing emergency drill records, fire drills were documented to occur monthly. However, there was no evidence that every third drill was a crisis drill.

Corrective Action: On or before June 30, 2022, submit to the BSE attestation that the program will maintain emergency drill documentation evidencing that every third drill will be a crisis drill.

Recommendations:

The following recommendations are offered to The Bradley School:

Maintain documentation of all professional development and training participation in individual personnel files (including the date, topic, and duration of each activity as well as employee signature of attendance and certificates of completion if provided)—in addition to the current practice of maintaining an administrative professional development record.

Continue to explore an alternative location for physical education.

Move forth with the plan to hire additional board-certified behavior analysts.

Preliminary Evaluation Report: The Bradley School–New London Regional/Windham County
Approval Review for a Private Special Education Program
March 24, 2022

Develop and circulate a survey to education and related service personnel for the purpose of soliciting professional development and training topics of interest specific to their discipline. Align professional development and training topics to teacher and related service personnel evaluation results identifying areas of continued growth.

Provide opportunities for teachers and related service personnel to visit and observe public school classrooms as well as other nonpublic school settings where students may transition to upon a PPT recommendation. A clear understanding of the expectations, (academic and social-emotional) instructional models, and level of expected self-advocacy will assist in preparing students for this transition.

Ensure completion of fingerprinting for criminal background checks in a timely manner and include in each staff file upon hiring.

Within fifteen 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. Upon receipt of The Bradley School’s written agreement and acceptance of the entire report, a recommendation for program approval through June 30, 2027, will be submitted to the Commissioner of Education.

Upon such approval, the following will be applicable to The Bradley School–New London Regional:

- Approved Ages to Serve:** Three to twenty-two years old
- Grades approved to Serve:** Pre-K through twelve
- Approved Student Capacity:** Seventy-two students (New London site)
Forty students (Windham County site)
- Approval Expiration Date:** June 30, 2027

cc: Ms. Laurie Cherrick, Education Director