



State of New Jersey
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
PO Box 500
TRENTON, NJ 08625-0500

CHRIS CHRISTIE
Governor

KIM GUADAGNO
Lt. Governor

DAVID C. HESPE
Commissioner

February 11, 2016

Mr. Eugene Brown, School Administrator
Jersey City Community Charter School
128 Danforth Avenue
Jersey City, NJ 07305

Dear Mr. Brown:

The New Jersey Department of Education has completed a review of funds received and disbursed from one or more federal programs by the **Jersey City Community Charter School**. The funding sources reviewed include titled programs for the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). The review covered the period July 1, 2014 through October 31, 2015. The resulting report is enclosed. Please provide a copy of the report to each board member. All issued Consolidated Monitoring Reports will be posted on the department's website at <http://www.state.nj.us/education/finance/jobs/monitor/consolidated>.

Utilizing the process outlined in the attached "Procedures for Charter Schools Response, Corrective Action Plan and Appeal Process," the Jersey City Community Charter School Board of Trustees is required, pursuant to N.J.A.C. 6A:23A-5.6, to publicly review and discuss the findings in this report at a public board meeting no later than 30 days after receipt of the report. Within 30 days of the public meeting, the board must adopt a resolution certifying that the findings were discussed in a public meeting and approving a corrective action plan which addresses the issues raised in the undisputed findings and/or an appeal of any **monetary** findings in dispute (emphasis added). A copy of the resolution and the approved corrective action plan and/or appeal must be sent to this office within 10 days of adoption by the board. Direct your response to my attention.

Also, pursuant to N.J.A.C. 6A:23A-5.6(c), you must post the findings of the report and the board's corrective action plan on your school's website.

By copy of this report, your auditor is requested to comment on all areas of noncompliance and recommendations in the next certified audit submitted to the New Jersey Department of Education. If you have any questions, please contact Steven Hoffmann at (973) 621-2750.

Sincerely,

Robert J. Cicchino, Director
Office of Fiscal Accountability and Compliance

RJC/SH/dk:Jersey City Community Charter School Cover Letter/consolidated monitoring
Enclosures

Distribution List

David Hesse
Robert Bumpus
Susan Martz
Michael Yapple
Anne Corwell
Karen Campbell
John Worthington
Kimberly Murray
Sandy O'Neil
Harold Lee
Steven Hoffmann
Monica Tone
Stephen M. Eells

**STATE OF NEW JERSEY
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
PO BOX 500
TRENTON, NJ 08625-0500**

JERSEY CITY COMMUNITY CHARTER SCHOOL
128 DANFORTH AVENUE
JERSEY CITY, NJ 07305
PHONE: (201) 433-2288



New Jersey K-12 Education

**CONSOLIDATED MONITORING REPORT
FEBRUARY 2016**

District: Jersey City Community Charter School
County: Hudson
Dates On-Site: November 9 and 10, 2015
Case #: CM-021-15

FUNDING SOURCES

Program	Funding Award
Title I, Part A	\$ 483,694
IDEA Basic	119,121
IDEA Preschool	3,033
Title II, Part A	30,258
Total Funds	<u><u>\$ 636,106</u></u>

**JERSEY CITY COMMUNITY CHARTER SCHOOL
CONSOLIDATED MONITORING REPORT
FEBRUARY 2016**

BACKGROUND

The Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) and the Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA) and other federal laws require local education agencies (LEAs) to provide programs and services to their districts based on the requirements specified in each of the authorizing statutes (ESEA and IDEA). The laws further require that state education agencies such as the New Jersey Department of Education (NJDOE) monitor the implementation of federal programs by sub recipients and determine whether the funds are being used by the school for their intended purpose and achieving the overall objectives of the funding initiatives.

INTRODUCTION

The NJDOE visited the Jersey City Community Charter School to monitor the school's use of federal funds and the related program plans, where applicable, to determine whether the school's programs are meeting the intended purposes and objectives, as specified in the current year applications and authorizing statutes and to determine whether the funds were spent in accordance with the program requirements, federal and state laws, and applicable regulations. The on-site visit included staff interviews and documentation reviews related to the requirements of the following programs: Title I, Part A (Title I); Title II, Part A (Title II); and IDEA Basic and Preschool for the period July 1, 2014 through October 31, 2015.

The scope of work performed included the review of documentation including grant applications, program plans and needs assessments, grant awards, annual audits, board minutes, payroll records, accounting records, purchase orders, a review of student records, classroom visitations and interviews with instructional staff to verify implementation of Individualized Education Programs (IEP), a review of student class and related service schedules, interviews of child study team members and speech-language specialists and an interview of the program administrator regarding the IDEA grant, as well as current district policies and procedures. The monitoring team members also conducted interviews with school personnel, reviewed the supporting documentation for a sample of expenditures and conducted internal control reviews.

EXPENDITURES REVIEWED

The grants reviewed included Title I, Title II, and IDEA Basic and Preschool from July 1, 2014 through October 31, 2015. A sampling of purchase orders and/or salaries was taken from each program reviewed.

**JERSEY CITY COMMUNITY CHARTER SCHOOL
CONSOLIDATED MONITORING REPORT
FEBRUARY 2016**

GENERAL DISTRICT OVERVIEW OF USES OF TITLE I AND IDEA FUNDS

Title I Projects

The school is utilizing Title I funds for teacher salaries and benefits. In addition, funds were used for instructional supplies.

IDEA Projects

The school utilized FY 2015-2016 IDEA funds to offset the cost of salaries and benefits for special education teachers, professional services for evaluations, and instructional supplies.

DETAILED FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Title I

Finding 1: The school did not have a documented Title I parental involvement program that reflected the requirements of the Title I legislation. The Title I parental involvement policy the school provided was last reviewed and/or adopted by the Board of Trustees in June 2012. In addition, the school did not provide evidence that its parental involvement policy and the school-parent-student compact were developed in conjunction with Title I parents/guardians. The exclusion of parents/guardians in the development of these documents did not offer them the opportunity for full participation in their child's educational program.

Citation: ESEA §1118(a)(2): Parental Involvement (Local Educational Agency Policy); ESEA §1118(d): Parental Involvement (Shared Responsibilities for High Student Academic Achievement).

Required Action: The school must provide evidence that Title I parents/guardians and other associated stakeholder groups are included in the development and annual review of the parental involvement policy and school-parent-student compact. The school must provide the NJDOE with evidence of the development and annual review of these documents with parent/guardian input (e.g., meeting announcements, meeting notes, and sign in sheets). In addition, the school must submit copies of a recently board approved parental involvement policy, including minutes from the board meeting, to the NJDOE for review.

Finding 2: The school failed to provide evidence that the 2015-2016 school year Title I written parental involvement policy was distributed to the parents/guardians of their students.

Citation: ESEA §1118(b): Parental Involvement (School Parent Involvement Policy).

Required Action: For the 2015-2016 school year, the school must ensure that it distributes the written parental involvement policy to parents/guardians of all students and submit the letter and documentation of distribution to the NJDOE for review.

**JERSEY CITY COMMUNITY CHARTER SCHOOL
CONSOLIDATED MONITORING REPORT
FEBRUARY 2016**

Finding 3: The school did not provide evidence of convening its annual Title I parent meeting. In a Title I Schoolwide program, all parents/guardians are entitled to be informed about the school's Title I program, legislative requirements, and how they can be actively engaged in helping their child/children succeed academically.

Citation: ESEA §1118(c)(1): Parental Involvement (Policy Involvement).

Required Action: The school must provide evidence that the FY 2015-2016 annual parent meeting was held by providing the NJDOE with current documentation. The school must submit evidence of the meetings (e.g., invitational letter/flyer, agenda, detail meeting minutes, and sign in sheets) to the NJDOE for review. In addition, the school must ensure that its future Title I meetings for the parents/guardians of its students will be held no later than mid-October each year.

Finding 4: There was no evidence that the school distributed the Parents' Right to Know Highly Qualified Teacher (HQT) letter to all parents for the current school year. The issuance of this letter informs all parents of their right to ask about the qualifications of their child's teachers.

Citation: ESEA §1111(h)(6): State Plans: Reports - (Parents' Right-to-Know).

Required Action: Annually, the school must distribute the Parents' Right-to-Know letter no later than October 15th of the school year. A template of the letter can be found at: <http://www.state.nj.us/education/title1/hqs/rtk.htm> .

Finding 5: The parents' section of the school's web page did not contain the required ESEA/NCLB information and notifications for parental involvement.

Citation: ESEA §1111(h)(2)(E): State Plans: Reports (Annual Local Agency Report Cards).

Required Action: The school must review and update its parental involvement web page containing required annual notifications and documents to meet the broader ESEA/NCLB dissemination requirement. The district must submit the link for the updated web page to the NJDOE for review.

Finding 6: The school did not comply with required timekeeping standards for federally funded grants. Employees with 100 percent of their salary paid with grant funds must complete a semi-annual certification attesting to their performance of grant related duties. Employees with less than 100 percent of their salary paid with grant funds must complete monthly personal activity reports.

Citation: EDGAR, PART 80 – *Uniform Administrative Regulations for Grants and Cooperative Agreements to State and Local Government*, Section 20, Standards for financial management systems.

**JERSEY CITY COMMUNITY CHARTER SCHOOL
CONSOLIDATED MONITORING REPORT
FEBRUARY 2016**

Required Action: The school must ensure that employees submit personal activity reports that have been verified by supervisors, as required.

Finding 7: The school did not provide consistent evidence of conducting Schoolwide Stakeholder Committee meetings. The school reported having quarterly meetings, however the monitor was provided copies of three meeting agendas, one sign in sheet, and one set of meeting minutes. In addition, the dates on the documents provided did not mirror the dates of the meeting provided.

Citation: ESEA §1114(b): Schoolwide Programs (Components of a Schoolwide Program).

Required Action: The school must provide the NJDOE with copies of the supporting documentation for all Schoolwide Stakeholder Committee meetings held for FY 2014-2015 and FY 2015-2016 to include letter of invitation, agenda, detailed minutes and sign in sheets to include each member's title/affiliation.

Finding 8: The school failed to provide board resolutions to verify that its Board of Trustees formally appointed all individuals charged to the federal program.

Citation: EDGAR, Part 80 – *Uniform Administrative Requirements for Grants and Cooperative Agreements to State and Local Government*, Section 20, Standards for financial management systems.

Required Action: The school provided copies of a memo dated April 21, 2015 and a copy of Resolution No. 1377 "...to extend the contracts of staff members for the 2015-2016;" however, the staff members were not listed in the resolution as required. In the absence of a valid copy of the board minutes, the school will be required to reverse all salaries paid with Title I funds and provide evidence of the adjusting journal entries to the NJDOE for review.

Title II

Finding 9: For the FY 2015-2016, the school expended Title II funding for license renewals for management, evaluation system, including the following expenditures: Techscape Reflect with Video Annual License (PO# 201600140P, \$2,223.00); Focus for Observers Annual License (PO# 201600266P, \$399.00); Focus for Observers /Calibration (PO# 201600266P, \$597.00); and, Activation Fee (PO# 201600266P, \$49.80). Total non-allowable Title II expenditures \$3,268.80. The expenditures are unallowable under the federal cost principles.

The school could not provide evidence that the license renewals were tied to and intended for allowable Title II usages (i.e. to inform decisions on professional development, promotion, retention, compensation, and tenure). Title II funds must supplement and not supplant state/local funding.

**JERSEY CITY COMMUNITY CHARTER SCHOOL
CONSOLIDATED MONITORING REPORT
FEBRUARY 2016**

Citations: ESEA §1112, §1119, §2122-§2123: Professional Development Activities. Supplement Not Supplant, ESEA §1120A (b): Fiscal Requirements (Federal Funds to Supplement: Not Supplant. Non-Federal Funds). EDGAR, PART 80---*Uniform Administrative Requirements for Grants and Cooperative Agreement to State and Local Governments*, Section 20, Standards for financial management systems.

Required Action: The school must reverse the FY 2015-2016 unallowable Title II expenditures totaling \$3,268.80 and charge them to state/local funding. The school must provide evidence of the adjusting journal entries to reverse the expenditures to the NJDOE for review.

IDEA (Special Education)

Finding 10: The school did not consistently provide parents of students referred and/or eligible for special education and related services and students referred and/or eligible for speech-language services notice of a meeting for identification, eligibility, and reevaluation planning meetings.

Citation: N.J.A.C. 6A:14-2.3(k)3,5; 20 U.S.C. §1414(b)(1); and 34 CFR §300.304(a).

Required Action: The school must provide parents notice of a meeting in writing early enough to ensure they have an opportunity to attend. In order to demonstrate correction of noncompliance, the school must conduct training for child study team members and speech-language specialists and develop an oversight mechanism to ensure compliance with the requirements in the citation listed above. A monitor from the NJDOE will conduct an on-site visit to interview staff, review meeting documentation for meetings conducted between June 2016 and October 2016, and to review the oversight procedures.

Finding 11: The school did not consistently conduct identification meetings within 20 calendar days of receipt of a written request for evaluation for speech-language services to determine if an evaluation was warranted.

Citation: N.J.A.C. 6A:14-2.5(b)6; 3.3(e) and 3.6(b).

Required Action: The school must ensure identification meetings are conducted within 20 calendar days of receipt of a written request for evaluation. In order to demonstrate correction of noncompliance, the school must conduct training for speech-language specialists and develop an oversight mechanism to ensure compliance with the requirements in the citation listed above. A monitor from the NJDOE will conduct an on-site visit to interview staff, review documentation from meetings conducted between June 2016 and October 2016, and to review the oversight procedures.

Finding 12: The school did not consistently provide to students beginning at age 14, written invitation to meetings where post-school transition was being discussed.

**JERSEY CITY COMMUNITY CHARTER SCHOOL
CONSOLIDATED MONITORING REPORT
FEBRUARY 2016**

Citation: N.J.A.C. 6A:14-2.3(k)2x and 3.7(e)13, 3.7(h); 20 U.S.C. §1414 (d)(1)(A)(i)(1)(VIII); and 34 CFR §300.322.b(2).

Required Action: The school must ensure each student with an IEP, age 14 or above is provided with a written invitation to any IEP meeting where transition to adult life will be discussed. In order to demonstrate correction of noncompliance, the school must conduct training for child study team members and develop an oversight mechanism to ensure compliance with the requirements in the citation listed above. A monitor from the NJDOE will conduct an on-site visit to interview staff, review copies of invitations to IEP meetings to students age 14 and above for meetings conducted between June 2016 and October 2016, and to review the oversight procedures.

Finding 13: The school did not consistently document all required considerations and statements in the IEPs of students eligible for speech-language services. IEPs did not consistently include:

- participation in schoolwide assessments; and
- approved accommodations and modification on school and statewide assessments.

Citation: N.J.A.C. 6A:14-3.7(e) 1-17, and (f); 20 U.S.C. §1414(d)(3)(A)(B); and 34 CFR §300.324(a)(1)(2).

Required Action: The school must ensure each IEP contains the required considerations and statements. In order to demonstrate correction of noncompliance, the school must conduct training for speech-language specialists and develop an oversight mechanism to ensure compliance with the requirements in the citations listed above. To demonstrate that the school has corrected the individual instances of noncompliance, the school must conduct annual review meetings and revise IEPs for specific students whose IEPs were identified as noncompliant. A monitor from the NJDOE will conduct an on-site visit to interview staff, review the revised IEPs, along with a sample of IEPs for students whose annual review meetings were conducted between June 2016 and October 2016, and to review the oversight procedures. For assistance with correction of noncompliance, the school is referred to the state IEP sample forms which are located at: www.state.nj.us/education/specialed/forms.

Finding 14: The school did not consistently ensure that the required participants were in attendance at identification, eligibility, and reevaluation planning meetings for students eligible for special education and related services and for students eligible for speech-language services.

Citation: N.J.A.C. 6A:14-2.3(k); 20 U.S.C. §1414(d)(1)(B); and 34 CFR §300.321(a).

Required Action: The school must ensure meetings are conducted with required participants and that documentation of attendance and/or written parental consent to excuse a member of the team is maintained in student records. In order to demonstrate correction of noncompliance, the school must conduct training for child study team

**JERSEY CITY COMMUNITY CHARTER SCHOOL
CONSOLIDATED MONITORING REPORT
FEBRUARY 2016**

members and speech-language specialists and develop an oversight mechanism to ensure compliance with the requirements in the citation listed above. A monitor from the NJDOE will conduct an on-site visit to interview staff, review documentation from meetings, including sign in sheets, for meetings conducted between June 2016 and October 2016, and to review the oversight procedures.

Finding 15: The school did not consistently provide parents written notice that contains all required components, within 15 calendar days following identification and reevaluation planning meetings, to parents of students referred and/or eligible for special education and related services and students referred and/or eligible for speech-language services.

Citation: N.J.A.C. 6A:14-2.3(f-i); 20 U.S.C. §1414(b)(1); and 34 CFR §300.304(a).

Required Action: The school must ensure that parents are provided written notice of a meeting that contains all required components within 15 calendar days of the meeting. In order to demonstrate correction of noncompliance, the school must conduct training for child study team members and speech-language specialists and develop an oversight mechanism to ensure compliance with the requirements in the citation listed above. A monitor from the NJDOE will conduct an on-site visit to interview staff, review copies of written notices provided to parents following meetings conducted between June 2016 and October 2016, and to review the oversight procedures.

Finding 16: The school did not consistently document in the IEPs of students removed from the general education setting for more than 20 percent of the school day, including students placed in separate settings, consideration of placement in the least restrictive environment. Specifically, IEPs did not consistently address:

- the supplementary aids and services considered;
- an explanation of why they were rejected;
- the comparison of the benefits provided in the regular class and the benefits provided in the special education class;
- potential beneficial or harmful effects which a placement in general education may have on the student with disabilities or the other students in the class; and
- for students in a separate setting, activities to transition the student to a less restrictive environment.

Citation: N.J.A.C. 6A:14-4.2 (a)8(i),(ii) and (iii).

Required Action: The school must ensure when determining the educational placement of a child with a disability, the IEP team considers the general education class first, and all required decisions regarding the placement are documented in the IEP for each student removed from general education for more than 20 percent of the school day. The school must also ensure that for students placed in separate settings, the IEP team identifies activities to transition the student to a less restrictive environment and document them in each IEP. In order to demonstrate correction of noncompliance, the school must conduct

**JERSEY CITY COMMUNITY CHARTER SCHOOL
CONSOLIDATED MONITORING REPORT
FEBRUARY 2016**

training for child study team members and develop an oversight mechanism to ensure compliance with the requirements in the citation listed above. To demonstrate that the school has corrected the individual instances of noncompliance, the school must conduct annual review meetings and revise the IEPs for specific students with IEPs that were identified as noncompliant. A monitor from the NJDOE will conduct an on-site visit to interview staff, review the revised IEPs, along with a sample of IEPs for students whose annual review meetings were conducted between June 2016 and October 2016, and to review the oversight procedures. The names of the students with IEPs that were identified as noncompliant will be provided to the school by the monitor.

Finding 17: The school did not consistently conduct reevaluations within three years of the previous classification date for students eligible for speech-language services and for students eligible for special education and related services.

Citation: N.J.A.C. 6A:14-3.8(a)(e); 20 U.S.C. §1414(d); and 34 CFR §300.324(b)(1).

Required Action: The school must ensure reevaluations are conducted within required time lines. In order to demonstrate correction of noncompliance, the school must conduct training for child study team members and speech-language specialists and develop an oversight mechanism to ensure compliance with the requirements in the citation listed above. A monitor from the NJDOE will conduct an on-site visit to interview staff, review documentation of eligibility meetings held between June 2016 and October 2016, and to review the oversight procedures.

Finding 18: The school did not consistently conduct an annual IEP team meeting for students eligible for special education and related service within required time lines.

Citation: N.J.A.C. 6A:14-3.7(i); 20 U.S.C. §1414(d); and 34 CFR §300.324(b)(1).

Required Action: The school must ensure IEP team meetings are conducted annually or more often if necessary, to review and revise the IEPs and determine the programs and placement of each eligible student. In order to demonstrate correction of noncompliance, the school must conduct training for child study team members and develop an oversight mechanism to ensure compliance with the requirements in the citation listed above. To demonstrate that the school has corrected the individual instances of noncompliance, the school must conduct annual review meetings and revise the IEPs for specific students with IEPs that were identified as noncompliant. A monitor from the NJDOE will conduct an on-site visit to interview staff and review the revised IEPs, along with a random sample of IEPs of students whose IEP meetings were conducted between June 2016 and October 2016, and to review the oversight procedures.

Finding 19: The school did not consistently document in the IEPs of students eligible for special education and related services the relevant factors considered in determining whether a student requires an extended school year program (ESY).

**JERSEY CITY COMMUNITY CHARTER SCHOOL
CONSOLIDATED MONITORING REPORT
FEBRUARY 2016**

Citation: N.J.A.C. 6A:14-4.3(c); 20 U.S.C. §1412(a)(1); 34 CFR §106.

Required Action: The school must ensure IEP documentation indicates a statement describing the consideration of ESY with a description of the program when ESY is required. In order to demonstrate correction of noncompliance, the school must conduct training for child study team members and develop an oversight mechanism to ensure compliance with the requirements in the citation listed above. To demonstrate that the school has corrected the individual instances of noncompliance, the school must conduct annual review meetings and revise the IEPs for specific students with IEPs that were identified as noncompliant. A monitor from the NJDOE will conduct an on-site visit to interview staff and review the revised IEPs, along with a random sample of IEPs of students whose IEP meetings were conducted between June 2016 and October 2016, and to review the oversight procedures.

Administrative

Finding 20: On several occasions, the school failed to issue a purchase order prior to goods being purchased or services being rendered (confirming order). School policy and state regulations require that a properly executed purchase order be issued prior to the purchase of goods or the rendering of services.

Citation: EDGAR, PART 80-*Uniform Administrative Requirements for Grants and Cooperative Agreements to State and Local Governments*, Section 20, Standards for financial management systems; N.J.S.A. 18A:18A(2)(v) Public School Contracts Law.

Required Action: The school must implement internal controls to ensure that purchase orders are issued to all vendors prior to goods or services being provided.

The NJDOE thanks you for your time and cooperation during the monitoring visit and looks forward to a successful resolution of all findings and implementation of all recommendations contained in this report.

If you have any questions, please contact Steven Hoffmann via phone at (973) 621-2750 or via email at steven.hoffmann@doe.state.nj.us.