



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

CHRIS CHRISTIE  
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Lt. Governor

CHRISTOPHER D. CERF  
Commissioner

October 4, 2013

Ms. Monalisa Kalina, Principal  
Dr. Lena Edwards Academy Charter School  
509 Bramhall Avenue  
Jersey City, NJ 07304

Dear Ms. Kalina:

The New Jersey Department of Education has completed a review of funds received and disbursed from one or more federal programs by the **Dr. Lena Edwards Academy 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, 2011 through June 30, 2013. 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 Dr. Lena Edwards Academy 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:Dr. Lena Edwards Academy Charter School Cover Letter/consolidated monitoring  
Enclosures

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*New Jersey K-12 Education*

**CONSOLIDATED MONITORING REPORT  
OCTOBER 2013**

**District:** Dr. Lena Edwards Academic Charter School  
**County:** Hudson  
**Dates On-Site:** July 10 and 11, 2013  
**Case #:** CM-058-12

**FUNDING SOURCES**

Program	Funding Award
Title I	\$ 451,648
IDEA Basic	71,322
Title IIA	9,260
Total Funds	<u>\$ 532,230</u>

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**BACKGROUND**

The Elementary & 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 school 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 district for their intended purpose and achieving the overall objectives of the funding initiatives.

**INTRODUCTION**

The NJDOE visited the Dr. Lena Edwards Academic Charter School to monitor the school's use of Federal funds and the related program plans, where applicable, to determine whether the 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 for the period July 1, 2011 through June 30, 2013.

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 (IEPs), 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 district personnel, reviewed the supporting documentation for a sample of expenditures and conducted internal control reviews.

**EXPENDITURES REVIEWED**

The grants that were reviewed included Title I, Title II, and IDEA Basic from July 1, 2011 through June 30, 2013. A sampling of purchase orders and/or salaries was taken from each program reviewed.

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**GENERAL DISTRICT OVERVIEW OF USES OF TITLE I AND IDEA FUNDS**

**Title I Projects**

Title I funds were used to support salaries for extended day programs, professional development and supplies.

**IDEA Projects (Special Education)**

The school utilized all IDEA funds from FY 2011-2012 and FY 2012-2013 for salaries for one special education teacher and one teacher assistant.

**DETAILED FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

**Title I**

**Finding 1:**

**Condition:** The school did not provide evidence that it consistently applied multiple measures to determine student eligibility for Title I services. The monitors were unable to verify if the school is actually serving its lowest performing students and that all students receiving services actually met the eligibility criteria.

**Citation:** ESEA §1115: *Targeted Assistance Schools*.

**Required Action:** The school must establish a tracking mechanism for proper Title I student identification. This mechanism must include documentation of which criteria were applied and how the student either met or did not meet the criteria. The school must submit its revised criteria to the NJDOE for review.

**Finding 2:**

**Condition:** The FY 2012-2013 Title I eligibility participation letters did not clearly state the multiple measures, including both entrance and exit criteria, used to identify Title I eligible students. Without this information, parents are unable to understand the reasons their child was selected to participate in the Title I program, and what is needed for their child to exit the program.

**Citation:** ESEA §1115: *Targeted Assistance Program*; ESEA §1118(c): *Parental Involvement (Policy Involvement)*.

**Required Actions:** In its FY 2013-2014 Title I eligibility participation letter, the school must include the multiple measures used to identify the students, as well as clearly defined exit criteria. The school must provide a copy of the letter to the NJDOE for review.

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**Finding 3:**

**Condition:** The school provided a list of Title I personnel and certification status, but did not provide access to personnel file information. As a result, the monitors were unable to sample selected files to verify highly-qualified status of personnel delivering services to Title I students.

**Citation:** ESEA §1119: *Qualifications for Teachers and Paraprofessionals*.

**Required Action:** The school must provide supporting documentation for FY 2013-2014 (i.e. teaching certificates, transcripts, classroom assignments) for the NJDOE to review.

**Finding 4:**

**Condition:** The school provided time and activity documents for the Title I teachers assigned to the NJ ASK preparation program, but the work performed, time frame covered, and the time Title I services occurred were not included on the documents. In addition, as of July 7, 2013, salary expenditures for the NJ ASK preparation program were not indicated on the school's Expense General Ledger Report. This information is necessary to ensure grant-funded personnel are actually performing grant-related duties consistent with the Title I funds allocated for their salary.

**Citation:** OMB Circular A-87, Attachment B, Section 8(h): *Cost Principles for State, Local and Indian Tribal Governments (Compensation for personal services)*.

**Required Action:** The school must verify the time and activity of staff charged to the grant. The school must submit a list of FY 2012-2013 Title I funded staff, associated expenditures and time sheets for the summer program to the NJDOE for review.

**Finding 5:**

**Condition:** The school does not have a parental involvement program that reflects the requirements of Title I. The school's parental involvement policy is missing legislative requirements. In addition, the school was unable to provide evidence the parent involvement policy was developed with parental input, annually reviewed and board adopted. The annual review and current board adoption of parental involvement policies allows parents and other stakeholders to impact the parental involvement process and identify the unique needs of the Title I schools and parents of Title I students.

**Citation:** ESEA §1118(a)(2): *Parental Involvement (Written Policy)*.

**Required Action:** The school must provide a written parental involvement policy that includes the legislative requirements along with evidence stakeholders participated in the development of the parental involvement policy. Copies of a recent board approved parental involvement policy must be submitted to the NJDOE for review. A template of a

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parental involvement policy can be located at:  
<http://www.state.nj.us/education/title1/program/parent/>.

**Finding 6:**

**Condition:** In FY 2012-2013, the district did not provide evidence the school-parent compact was developed in conjunction with Title I parents. The absence of parent participation in developing these required documents excludes parents from more active participation in their child's educational program.

**Citation:** ESEA §1118: *Parental Involvement*.

**Required Action:** The school must include the parents of Title I students in the development of the school-parent compact. The school must submit documentation to the NJDOE of the participation of Title I parents in the development of the FY 2013-2014 school-parent compact.

**Finding 7:**

**Condition:** The school's Programs and Curricula: Title I web page does not contain documents for the current school year that describe the Title I program being implemented. Documents that are included and need to be updated are the parental involvement policy and the participation letter. The Highly Qualified Right-to-Know Letter also needs to be included on the school's web page.

**Citation:** ESEA §1111(h)(2)(E): *Public Dissemination*.

**Required Action:** The school must review and update its Programs and Curricula: Title I web page containing required annual notifications and documents to meet the broader ESEA dissemination requirement. The school must send the link to its updated web page to the NJDOE for review.

**Title II**

A review of the expenditures charged to the Title II grant yielded no findings.

**IDEA Special Education**

**Finding 8:**

**Condition:** In the 2011-2012 and 2012-2013 grant years, the school's plan for IDEA did not match the school's use of funds. The school's funds were used for a special education supervisor and a paraprofessional but the grant indicated the funds would be used for a special education teacher and paraprofessional.

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

**Required Action:** The school must amend its application to accurately reflect how the school will utilize the funds and ensure future use of grant funds is properly aligned with the application.

**Finding 9:**

**Condition:** The school does not have a policy for the provision of students with disabilities participating in schoolwide assessments.

**Citation:** 34 CFR §300.160.

**Required Action:** The school must revise its policies and procedures to ensure that students with disabilities participate in assessments given to all students in a grade or grades. The policy must include the provision of accommodations and modifications and the provision of alternate assessments for those children who cannot participate in the regular assessment. If the school reports publicly on the schoolwide assessment, the school must also report with the same frequency and in the same detail as it reports on the assessment of non-disabled children. A monitor from NJDOE will conduct an on-site visit to review this policy revision which includes all of the required components in the citation above.

**Finding 10:**

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

**Citation:** N.J.A.C. 6A:14-2.3(k)2x; 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 district must conduct training for child study team members and develop an oversight mechanism to ensure compliance with the requirements in the citation listed above. The NJDOE will conduct an on-site visit to interview staff, review copies of invitations to IEP meetings for students age 14 and above for meetings conducted between September 2013 and January 2014, and to review the oversight procedures.

**Finding 11:**

**Condition:** 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



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those placed in separate settings, consideration of placement in the least restrictive environment. Specifically, IEPs did not consistently include:

- the supplementary aids and services considered and explanation of why the supplementary aids and services were rejected;
- comparison of the benefits provided in the regular class and the benefits provided in the special education class; and
- for students in separate settings, activities to move the student to a less restrictive environment.

**Citation:** N.J.A.C. 6A:14-4.2 (a)8.

**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. 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 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. Additionally, at the next IEP meeting for each student removed from general education for more than 20 percent of the day, the school must ensure the procedures are implemented. A monitor from the NJDOE will conduct an on-site visit to interview staff, review the revised IEPs, IEPs for students whose annual review meetings were conducted between April 2013 and June 2013, and the oversight procedures. Names of the students with IEPs that were identified as noncompliant will be provided to the school by the monitor.

**Finding 12:**

**Condition:** The school's notices of meetings did not consistently include all required components for students referred and/or eligible for special education and related services.

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

**Required Action:** The school must ensure parents are provided notice of a meeting in writing, that contains all required components, early enough to ensure the parent has an opportunity to attend. 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 and review documentation for meetings conducted between September 2013 and December 2013, and the oversight procedures.

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**Administrative**

**Finding 13:**

**Condition:** 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:** Purchase orders should be issued to all vendors prior to goods or services being provided.

**Finding 14:**

**Condition:** The school failed to formally appoint all individuals charged to the federal programs by board resolution.

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

**Required Action:** All staff charged to federal grants should be reappointed annually by board resolution.

**Finding 15:**

**Condition:** The school failed to properly record IDEA appropriations and expenditures in their general ledger. IDEA expenditures were charged to general fund accounts and not separated as required.

**Citation:** EDGAR, PART 80--*Uniform Administrative Requirements for Grants and Cooperative Agreements to State and Local Governments*, Section 20, Standards for financial management systems. Uniform Minimum Chart of Accounts for New Jersey Public Schools.

**Required Action:** The school must separate IDEA appropriations and expenditures in their general ledger in accordance with the Uniform Minimum Chart of Accounts for New Jersey Public Schools.

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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](mailto:steven.hoffmann@doe.state.nj.us).