



STATE OF CONNECTICUT
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION



TO: Jill Bourbeau
Chief Administrator
Natchaug School Clinical Day Treatment-Mansfield

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

DATE: February 13, 2019

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

On January 8, 2019, an evaluation team visited Natchaug Hospital School Clinical Day Treatment-Mansfield (Natchaug CDT Mansfield) in order to conduct an on-site review for continuous approval as a Connecticut State Department of Education approved private special education program. The team consisted of:

- Colleen Hayles, Education Consultant/Coordinator, Bureau of Special Education (BSE);
- Gavin Craig, Director of Education, Touchstone School; and
- Sarah Smalley, Director of Special Education/Pupil Services, Regional School District 4.

During a previous on-site visit on December 13, 2018, Ms. Colleen Hayles reviewed six education files of students as well as personnel files. In addition, Ms. Hayles has reviewed the application materials submitted to the BSE by Natchaug CDT Mansfield administration.

At the exit conference on January 8, 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 program meets a need to provide clinical day treatment services for students ages 5–14 in Eastern Connecticut.

- The staff exemplifies a high level of caring, compassion, and passion in their work with students attending the program. The focus of the staff lies in engaging and inspiring students to achieve their individual potential.
- The staff exemplifies a high level of caring, compassion, and passion in their work with students attending the program. The focus of the staff lies in engaging and inspiring students to achieve their individual potential.
- The educational staff demonstrates a strong set of skills differentiating and scaffolding instruction and implementing effective instructional and behavioral strategies.
- It was noted that every activity and action initiated by staff reflected a definite teachable moment.
- Staff indicated that the professional development (PD) opportunities offered by the program and those provided through Hartford Hospital are appropriately focused on the population of students served and promote the development of positive mental health.
- The program has developed a unique educator evaluation system tailored to the roles of educators and related service staff through a lens specific to the population served and expected student outcomes. Administrators and educators are well-versed in the process.
- The director of education and principals provide a positive, supportive, and responsive environment fostering effective teaching and engaged student learning.
- Implementation of a “daily huddle” provides an effective mechanism for staff support, problem solving and decision-making.
- The implementation of the “management board” supports weekly goal setting and assists in keeping an accurate record of student performance, overall trends, and big picture ideas and innovation.
- The program utilizes Star 360, as a schoolwide pre/post progress-monitoring assessment. In addition, Class DoJo, an online tool designed to foster a positive class/school culture, gives students a voice and allows students and teachers to share positive achievements with parents. Teachers can encourage students to develop any skill or goal whether it be schoolwide or individualized. Students can showcase and share their learning by adding photos and videos to their own portfolios. Parent engagement is fostered by live sharing (highlights of positive classroom moments). The program tracks individual student positive achievements as well as the expectations and criteria for success in school. The expectations are aligned to the positive behavioral interventions and supports goals and in large mirror expectations within the classroom of a public school in an effort to promote readiness for transition to a less restrictive environment.
- A high level of student engagement and instructional rigor was observed in classrooms across both sites. Teachers demonstrated effective classroom management, the use of higher order questioning skills, strong content knowledge of subject matter taught, and implementation of programwide strategies that benefit all (i.e., SLANT).

- The program engages in activities such as peer-to-peer observations, ongoing collaboration among teachers and between teachers and the social workers in order to best address the needs of the individual student.
- The Green Valley site maintains unique positive characteristics as it offers services within in a general education setting and may afford opportunities to provide students with instruction alongside their non-disabled peers.

Standard Deficiencies:

The following standard deficiencies must be rectified:

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 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 to fully implement the IEP.

Issue: In six of six IEPs reviewed, one or more required elements of the IEP was not accurately reflected or the IEP document was not complete. Errors and omissions included the following:

- The setting in which related services are to be provided is not appropriately specified.
- Time with non-disabled peers was inaccurately represented in the IEP.
- In three of the six IEPs reviewed, the implementation of a BIP that requires the conduct of a functional behavioral assessment (FBA) was indicated on in the *Special Considerations* section, as the means to address behavioral concerns. However, a formal BIP informed by an FBA was not attached as part of the IEP.
- In one of six IEPs reviewed, a diagnostic placement was noted in the annual review document, but the requirements related to a “placement for diagnostic purposes” were not indicated in the file.

Corrective Actions Required: Develop a consistent and timely procedure to be utilized upon receipt of an IEP after participating in a planning and placement team meeting, to ensure that the information in that document is complete and accurate, and that the program can implement the supports and services outlined in the document as written. (i.e., require clarification of whether a related service such as “counseling” is provided individually or within a group setting). Submit to the BSE copies of the next three IEPs developed by a local education agency (LEA) to provide documentation that the program has consistently implemented the IEP audit process of conducting a careful review of the district prepared IEP. If needed and as appropriate, provide evidence that the program has notified the LEA that the IEP requires revision in order for the approved private special education program to implement the IEP fully.

Recommendations:

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

- Submit to the Connecticut State Department of Education Talent Office, Bureau of Certification, an application for a durational shortage area permit (DSAP) for the position currently identified as “principal” at the Manchester site. Upon receipt of such permit, submit a copy to the BSE. In the event of a denial of the issuance of a DSAP, the chief administrator will contact the BSE to determine alternative action.

- Review technology access in both sites and ensure that equal access is available to students in both settings.
- Make available PD activities that address subject area content and consider providing opportunities for staff to observe and/or collaborate with teachers within a public school environment.
- Mirror the processes, documentation, and procedures in both settings (i.e., utilize Mansfield site's process for documenting that progress reports have been sent to parents and LEAs).
- Develop a mechanism to share resources between sites and within the Hartford Hospital organization to provide equal access to resources such as nursing services at Mansfield.
- Review student learning-objective development within the Performance Evaluation Advisory Committee to increase focus on more abstract strengths and successes.

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, if applicable. Upon receipt of Natchaug CDT Mansfield's acceptance of the report in its entirety, a recommendation for program approval through June 30, 2024, will be submitted to the Commissioner of Education.

Upon such approval, the following will be applicable to Natchaug CDT Mansfield:

Approved Ages:	5–14 years old
Approved Grades:	K–8
Approved Capacity:	56 students
Approval Expiration Date:	June 30, 2024

cc: Shawn Cyr, Director of Education