

Rhode Island Department of Education  
Office of Student, Community and Academic Supports

School Support System Report and Support Plan

The Groden Center Inc.  
March 20-21, 2013

# **SCHOOL SUPPORT SYSTEM**

## **A Collaborative System of Focused Monitoring**

### Introduction

The purpose of the School Support System (SSS) is to provide a means of accountability for delivery of programs and services for students with exceptionalities. The School Support System model is designed to promote the involvement of the whole school district, general educators as well as special educators and parents. It is designed to learn if the district meets the regulations and what effects programs and services have on student outcomes. Finally, the SSS develops a school support plan for training and technical assistance.

To accomplish this the SSS includes these components:

- **The Orientation Meeting** The Rhode Island Department of Education (RIDE) staff meets with the Local Education Agency (LEA) to plan the site review and identify issues or initiatives that may influence programs or service delivery.
- **Data Analysis Meeting** The RIDE staff meets to review LEA demographic information on selected reports including: the LEA annual plan, census information, and information collected through record review, staff questionnaires and parent interviews. To ensure that the child is at the Center of the study, all analyses begin with the child. Thus, a sample of approximately 30 students with exceptionalities is selected; the records of these students are reviewed; their parents, teachers and related service providers are interviewed, and their classrooms are observed. The result is an in-depth, unified examination of the actual provision of programs and services for students with exceptionalities. The RIDE staff compiles a preliminary summary of their analyses of this data.
- **Presentation by the LEA and School Site Review** The on-site review begins with a presentation of programs by teachers and staff. The presentation provides the review team with general and specific information on delivery of programs and services to students. Following this presentation, on-site reviews to all schools are made. The team members interview school administrators and teaching staff. Parents and central office staff are also interviewed. The team gathers sufficient information and works with the LEA personnel to generate a report, covering the following:
  - The district's compliance with the state and federal regulations, relative to the education of students with exceptionalities.
  - The quality and effectiveness of programs and services provided by the district.
  - The need for professional development and technical assistance that will enable the LEA to improve programs and services.
- **The Support Plan** The RIDE team, LEA central office and building administrators meet to review the data and complete a report of results. The group designs a professional development/technical assistance support plan with timelines for implementation. This plan enables the school and district to correct areas of non-compliance and to strengthen promising programs and correct areas of weakness in order to improve services and programs for all students.
- **The SSS Report** The report summarizes the findings from the various data sources. The format of the report uses four divisions: Indicators, Findings, Documentation, and Support Plan. Indicators describe either performance or compliance. Findings can include a variety of some six categories, from School Improvement to Free Appropriate Public Education in the Least Restrictive Environment. The documentation section of the report distinguishes the source of the finding. The support plan reflects the response to the described findings. The support plan describes the corrective action required by the district as well as resources and time lines to improve programs and services.

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**THE GRODEN CENTER INC.  
SCHOOL SUPPORT SYSTEM REVIEW**

**TEAM**

**Team – Jane Keane and Susan Wood**

1. FREE APPROPRIATE PUBLIC EDUCATION IN THE LEAST RESTRICTIVE ENVIRONMENT (FAPE/LRE)					
Indicator		Findings	Documentation	Support Plan	Follow-up Findings
		The RIDE, Office of Student, Community & Academic Supports School Support System process was facilitated to provide a means of accountability for delivery of programs and services to improve outcomes for students with disabilities. The following pages reflect the findings of that process.	IDEA Overview Data Analysis Observation Interviews		
Result	1	<p><b>Program Overview</b></p> <p>The Groden Center is a private, nonprofit, treatment and educational center for children and youth with autism and related disabilities addressing communication and behavior. The Groden Center offers year round day treatment programs which provide intensive educational, behavioral and clinical supports and services for children and youth and their families. In addition the center provides early intervention services, over- 21 programs, multidisciplinary evaluations, individualized consultation and 4 community based group residences.</p>	IDEA Overview Data Analysis Interviews		
Result	2	<p><b>Intake, Assessment and Evaluation Planning</b></p> <p>Sending LEA's are responsible for assuring evaluations and reevaluations are facilitated and completed. If however the team determines that the Groden Center complete the evaluations, clear articulation of responsibility has been established.</p> <p>Typical assessments include initial intake evaluations, behavioral evaluations, clinical, psychological and psychiatric evaluations, speech and language, educational and vocational evaluations, social histories and medical examinations.</p> <p>Students identified for potential placement at the Groden Center are approved through a diagnostic or interim (6-8 weeks) IEP. Intake assessments are facilitated and recommendations are provided to the IEP team for further discussion and determination of placement.</p> <p><b>Curriculum and Instructional Strategies</b></p> <p>The curriculum design at the Groden Center incorporates the major life domains of functional skill development. The overarching goal of the curriculum maximizing a students' potential of being fully integrated environmentally and effectively functioning within a relevant social network.</p> <p>The major life domains are infused in the specially designed instruction identified through the students individual education plan. Academic instruction focuses on teaching skills that will be functional and relevant for students to live independently and</p>	IDEA Overview Data Analysis Interviews		

		<p>in natural environments.</p> <p>Specialized instruction may address readiness skills, written and spoken language, literacy in reading and writing, math skills that include telling time, following schedules, money management, measurement along with basic operations and more; general knowledge in science and social studies as appropriate, communication skills, everyday living skills, socialization and leisure as the competencies embedded within the major life domains. Most students utilize multi-purpose assistive technology to enhance communication throughout their day. In addition, the curriculum may be supplemented by other published materials such as: Connecting Math, Distar Reading, and Hand Writing Without Tears. Materials developed by the center are additionally utilized.</p> <p>Additional instruction is incorporated as identified for adaptive daily living experiences, behavior therapy and applied behavior analysis, social skills training, stress management, adaptive and or corrective devices, occupational and physical therapy and vocational instruction.</p> <p>A Curriculum Development Team meets once a month to discuss current research based learning strategies, structure and alignment to the current alternate assessment grade span expectations and opportunities for improving student outcomes.</p>			
Result	3	<p><b>Student Support and Intervention</b></p> <p>Each class team is comprised of the classroom/unit supervisor, a special educator, treatment coordinators (one who has an additional role as a speech and language liaison to the speech language pathologists and one who has as an additional role as a vocational planning liaison to the Associate Director for Transition and Vocational Services) and as appropriate treatment teachers/paraprofessionals. Each class team meets weekly to discuss student progress, curriculum development, problem solving strategies and interventions. Special educators additionally meet with their class/unit supervisor once a week.</p> <p>A clinical supervision team meets weekly. Meetings have an established agenda which addresses curriculum development, analyzing the positive psychology/social emotional learning model, case reviews and is currently addressing methods and process development for collecting data through the discrete trial teaching process for all areas of learning.</p> <p>Social emotional learning at the Groden Center is facilitated through the Positive Psychology Approach model. Faculty and staff assist students in realizing their resilience, their sense of optimism, to recognize and enjoy humor and kindness received</p>	IDEA Overview Data Analysis Observation Interviews		

		<p>and shared (good deeds) and to increase student self-efficacy skills and experiences.</p> <p><b>Clinical Supports and Services</b>  An array of clinical supports and services are provided through the school for both students and their families. Services include social skills training, relaxation and cognitive therapies, imagery-based procedures, and individual/group counseling as appropriate.</p> <p>Behavior therapy is inherent to the school-wide program. A wide range of empirically validated behavioral analyses and interventions are facilitated and managed by both the teachers and clinicians to enable learned skills and behaviors to be practiced and reinforced throughout the students' daily activities and within numerous environments.</p>			
Result	4	<p><b>The Groden Center School Based Program Continuum</b></p> <p>The <b>Livingston Preschool Center for Early Childhood Education</b> is an inclusion program for young children with autism and their typically developing peers. The preschool serves children with diagnoses of autism, pervasive developmental disorder (PDD), or other challenging behavioral problems between the ages of 3 and 6. Children who are developing typically range in age from 3 to 5. The preschool population is currently comprised of 10 students. Of that population 4 are students with special needs and 6 students are typically developing peers. All children participate in the same general routines and activities throughout the day. IEP objectives are woven into the daily events and are practiced during both structured and incidental teaching opportunities. Individual programs and support for students in the classroom are provided by a specialized team comprised of supervisors, directors, special and early childhood educators, a speech and language pathologist; an adaptive physical education teacher; a nurse; and an occupational therapist with expertise in sensory integration. Consultants (behavioral psychologist, a pediatric physical therapist, a pediatrician, and a child psychiatrist) are available to help treatment teams develop the most appropriate program for children in the Preschool.</p> <p><b>Day Programs</b>  <b>Groden Center North and South</b>  <b>(For Students Three To Twenty-One years of age)</b>  There are currently two day programs established by the Groden Center (Groden Center North and South) providing instruction and support for students with developmental disabilities, significant communication needs, autism, emotional/behavioral disabilities and or psychiatric disorders. Although each program may have some similarities in design and service provision, they are emerging individually to support the population</p>	<p>IDEA Overview  Data Analysis  Observation  Interviews  Record Review</p>		

	<p>they are currently serving.</p> <p>Students are assigned to classes according to their age, cognitive level, adaptive skills, programmatic needs, and behavioral characteristics. Each classroom is staffed by a team of direct care teachers, a supervisor and a director. The direct care teachers include certified special educators and 2 to 3 treatment teachers/paraprofessionals. All team members work with each student in the classroom to implement the various IEP objectives. Instruction is provided in functional skill development, communication, emotional and social development, physical and recreational skills, domestic responsibilities, community awareness, adaptive living skill and vocational education.</p> <p>The <b>Day Program North</b> provides 52 students ages 3 through 21 with an elementary, middle and high school program.</p> <p>The <b>Day Program South</b> though offers a specialized program for student's ages 3-21, its current student population is serving 41 students at the elementary, middle and high school level.</p> <p>An additional aspect of the overall program includes opportunities for students to integrate in their natural environments to better retain, practice and experience generalization of skills/ behaviors learned. Weekly specialized activities are planned for to support individual student learning needs. Student's experiences goal specific community instructional activities at a variety of sites such as but not limited to local retail stores, restaurants, recreation facilities, banks and public transportation.</p> <p>All students participating in the day school are eligible for the Rhode Island Alternate Assessment (RIAA).</p>			
5	<p><b>Continuum of Programs and Services</b></p> <p><b>Livingston Center's Early Intervention Program</b></p> <p>The <b>Early Intervention Program (EIP)</b> provides families of children birth to three years age who have a diagnosis of autism, pervasive developmental disorder (PDD), or other behavioral/developmental challenges with appropriate services as specified in their Individual Family Service Plans (IFSPs).</p> <p>A <b>Residential Program</b> provides an out of home placement for adolescent's ages 12 thru 21 with developmental disabilities, autism, behavioral disorders, and other at risk challenges.</p>	<p>IDEA Overview Data Analysis Observation Interviews Record Review</p>		

		<p><b>Community Support Services</b> are provided to children, youth and their families who have developmental, behavioral, or learning disabilities. Specialized services and supports assist individuals in becoming successful in their homes, schools, jobs, and communities.</p> <p><b>The Asperger's Center</b> provides social groups for children and adolescents with Asperger's Syndrome. The groups focus on providing children and adolescents with the opportunity to meet and interact with peers who have similar strengths and challenges. Skills training focuses on the development of skills needed to promote friendship development and stress management.</p> <p><b>Home Based Therapeutic Services (HBTS)</b> are provided to children and youth with developmental disabilities by partnering with families to provide effective therapeutic services and learning opportunities which promote greater independence in home and community settings.</p> <p>Additional Home Based Therapeutic Services include the following.</p> <p>The <b>Children's Intensive Treatment</b> provides one on one behavioral programming with a focus on skill acquisition is provided to children 30 months of age and up until they begin a full day school program.</p> <p>The <b>In-Home Support and Training</b> program helps families develop practical behavioral strategies that are effective with their children who may be challenged by serious behavioral concerns.</p>			
Result	6	<b>Adaptive Physical Education</b> is provided as directed by individual education plans.	IDEA Overview Data Analysis Observation Interviews Record Review		
Result	7	<b>Extended School Year (ESY)</b> The Groden Center provides extended school year (ESY) per the student's IEP.	IDEA Overview Data Analysis Record Review		
Result	8	<b>Disciplinary Policies and Procedures</b> The Groden Center has a comprehensive approach when responding to challenging behaviors. Faculty and staffs collaborate with parents and other professionals in the use	IDEA Overview Data Analysis Observation		

		<p>of positive, proactive teaching strategies for students. These strategies include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clearly articulated rules and expectations</li> <li>• Skill building</li> <li>• Structuring the environment</li> <li>• Reinforcing appropriate behaviors</li> <li>• Responding to disruptive or aggressive behaviors</li> </ul> <p>In addition, behavioral expectations along with disciplinary action protocols and policies are comprehensively defined in a student/parent/guardian handbook.</p>	Interviews		
Result	9	<p><b>Parent Engagement</b> Family engagement is an integral treatment partnership. Special educators communicate daily with families through daily logs, email, phone calls and home school notes.</p> <p>A Family Services Program has been established to provide families with personalized training and management techniques and strategies, parent to parent opportunities for support and guidance, individual family services to assist in the application of behavioral interventions aligned to the center’s strategies and a personalized communication plan in supporting parental partnerships and positive relationships with the center.</p> <p><b>Additional Family Engagement Opportunities:</b></p> <p><b>Connecting Children and Families</b> provides information and resources opportunities that are community based, such as small structured play groups, experienced therapists, home visits and parent to parent opportunities.</p> <p>A <b>Respite Program</b> is provided to families for planned and/or emergency relief, to assist in crisis prevention and reduction of family stress, and thus supporting families’ ability to continue caring for their children at home.</p> <p>The <b>Groden Network Parents &amp; Friends Association (PFA)</b> is an organization comprised of family members, Groden Center friends and staff. The group focuses on providing support and information through topical presentations which include communication, stress management, transition and adult services, SSI, and many more.</p> <p><b>Professional Family Living Arrangement (PFLA)</b> is a therapeutic foster care program to assist children and adolescents in a less-restrictive home setting while working to achieve an individual’s full potential.</p>	IDEA Overview Data Analysis Observation Interviews		

2. EVALUATION/ INDIVIDUAL EDUCATION PROGRAM (IEP)					
Indicator		Findings	Documentation	Support Plan	Follow-up Findings
Result/ Compliance	1	<p>Records of approximately 11 students were reviewed prior to the on-site review by the team leaders. The record review process identified that information on the IEP's addressing present levels of performance; goals, and objectives though very detailed, will require re-formatting to align with regulatory requirements assuring measurability and quantifiable progress monitoring.</p> <p>(RI Regulations Subpart D Evaluations, Eligibility Determinations, Individualized Education Programs and Educational Placements)</p>	<p>IDEA Overview Data Analysis Interviews Record Review</p>	<p>Assurances will be provided to the Rhode Island Department of Education, Office of Student, Community and Academic Supports, that compliance issues are addressed and rectified. This Support Plan is applicable for all compliance findings in this section.</p> <p>Timeline: Immediately and ongoing. Progress check: December 2013</p>	<p>Issues resolved and verified.</p>
Result/ Compliance	2	<p><b>Re-Evaluation</b> Though the Groden Center facilitates individual student assessments both standardized and informal for progress monitoring and instructional planning, the three year re-evaluation (triennial assessment) process is not consistently facilitated.</p> <p>The team meets and determines which evaluation(s) (for reevaluation purposes are needed). Consent is obtained, reevaluations are conducted and the results are sent to the appropriate parties (parent, LEA, etc). Unless the LEA wants a reevaluation meeting there is no meeting held along with continuation of eligibility documentation. RIGL 300.303</p>	<p>IDEA Overview Data Analysis Record Review</p>	<p>Special education administration will review and refine reevaluation procedures and protocols to adhere to RI regulatory requirements. Staff will receive training in these revisions and refinements.</p> <p>Timeline: Immediately and ongoing. Progress check : December 2013</p>	<p>Special Education Director, Vice President of Day and Residential Services and Program Director met with a consultant from June through October to determine action steps. Re-evaluation guidelines and review process were documented and forms were developed and/or modified. In addition, all forms were reviewed and revised to meet RIDE requirements. (all new or modified forms have been forwarded). A</p>

					<p>letter was sent to each LEA outlining their responsibilities. Supervisors received training from a consultant on 10/9/13 and the Special Ed Teachers received training from the Supervisors on 10/30/13 (Coventry) and 11/5/13 (Providence). Attendance for all trainings has been forwarded. An additional training for special education teachers and resource staff was conducted on January 29, 2014 by a consultant. The agenda was the same as that which was done for the Supervisors in October. Attendance of all participants has been forwarded.</p>
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3. TRANSITION					
Indicator		Findings	Documentation	Support Plan	Follow-up Findings
Result	1	<p><b>Transition Exit Planning</b>  Student exit planning to a least restrictive environment is always in the fore front of the individualized education plan and design. As appropriate the Groden Center will provide a number of supports for continued educational success for all students transitioning from the Center specific programs.</p> <p>For students who may be experiencing significant physical and or behavioral issues</p>	<p>IDEA Overview  Data Analysis  Interviews</p>		

		that impact the physical safety of both the student and/ or others, the Groden Centers multidisciplinary team will work with the appropriate LEA/parent and or guardian while an alternative setting is determined.			
Result	2	<p><b>Vocational Education Program</b>  Vocational planning is planned for from the beginning of a student's enrollment at the Groden Center. Students IEPs goals are infused with the major life domains of functional skill development. Those that address a student's personalized integrated learning experience may incorporate homemaking, school/vocational, community participation and leisure.</p> <p>A comprehensive vocational evaluation is facilitated for students turning 14 years of age and at triennial intervals. The evaluation addresses referral source and historical perspectives, medical information, evaluations reviewed, behavioral and educational status, results (work readiness skills) vocational sampling and work experience (maintenance, clerical/computer, food service, plant care/horticulture, materials management and reading-free vocational interest inventory results) work adjustment skills (communication, grooming, safety, self-preservation, work routines, work quality duration of work) social skills and overall summary and recommendations.</p> <p>The goal of the vocational education program is to prepare students for their employability into the world of work. This is addressed through comprehensive training in specific job competencies and work related skills which are necessary for employment success.</p> <p>The program provides both center based and community based instruction. The center based component includes assessment activities beginning at age 14, and exposure to both real and simulated work routines to promote skill development and to assess preferences and aptitudes. Community based learning occurs in the context of both volunteer and compensated activities. The program maintains community placement opportunities in office, hospital, greenhouse, and factory settings. Community based volunteerism includes hot meal delivery and part beautification programs.</p> <p>Following evaluations and preparation, students begin working at job sites which are carefully selected based on client aptitude and interest, along with specific job characteristics. Each employment site has an identified supervisor who maintains communication with the center staff assuring student progress and independence.</p> <p><b>Transition to Adult Services</b></p>	IDEA Overview Data Analysis Observation Interviews Record Review		

		Formal transition planning is coordinated through the IEP meeting for/with students at age 19. Students and their families, as appropriate, work with the Office of Rehabilitative Services and or the Department of Developmental Disabilities in planning for the transition adult life services and supports.			
Result	3	A Discharge/Summary of Performance is coordinated by the student's specific team and the Associate Director for Transition and Vocational Services. This summary encompasses a student's reason for discharge, summary of entry status, summary of client progress at time of discharge along with recommendations.	IDEA Overview Data Analysis Interviews Record Review		