



## **PRELIMINARY ANNUAL REPORT ON INCLUSION OF STUDENTS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS IN THE AMERICAN DIVISION**

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### **PART I: ACTIVITIES CONDUCTED BY THE DEPARTMENT DURING THE ACADEMIC YEAR 2004- 2005**

#### **1. Assessments and IEP:**

The Woodcock Johnson: Tests of Cognitive Abilities and Achievement, Wechsler Intelligence Scale for Children, Behavior Rating Scales, and classroom observations were all conducted during the month of September of the year 2004 for 19 students covering the Elementary, Middle and High School. The purpose of these evaluation procedures was to determine the pull-out level of each student, to determine the classroom accommodations and modifications, and to formulate their Individualized Education Plans. From the end of September until mid-October, IEP (Individualized Education Plans) meetings with parents, teachers, administrators, and the specialists of students with disabilities were conducted. Issues such as evaluation results, strengths and weaknesses of the student, present level of educational performance, the subjects that he/she can take in class with the rest of the students, when he/she will be pulled out for one-to-one sessions in the resource room, accommodations, and classroom modifications needed for this student to be mainstreamed effectively in school, were all discussed with the IEP team members during the IEP meeting. IEPs' annual goals and educational short-term objectives were written and ready at the end of the month of October. Each student had an individual schedule whereby it outlined exactly when he/she was supposed to enter the resource room and when he/she should be in class. Moreover, IEP documents that included the student's annual goals and short-term



objectives were submitted to his/her class teachers and to the resource room teachers. A workshop given by the School Psychologist for the resource room teachers was conducted at the end of the month of October, whereby each objective for each student was explained. Moreover, the special education techniques and the resources needed to teach these students were also explained and provided to resource room teachers.

Resource Room teachers had two to three students in one class period to teach and the sessions were conducted on the basis that the short-term objective was introduced for 15 minutes, followed by an activity for 5 minutes, then repeating the short-term objective again for the last 15 minutes of the class period. Activities such as stressing on fine-motor skills, gross motor skills, or educational games were conducted during the sessions. The purpose of such activities was to enhance the student's motivation and attention level during his/her one-to-one sessions.

The first IEP progress report for each student with special needs was submitted on December 21, 2004 to parents. The IEP progress report was attached to the student's report card. These progress reports contained information such as the extent of progress for each short-term objective for each subject matter, the score that the student received for each short-term objective, and the next date of review. Moreover, students received NA (not applicable) on their report cards next to the subject area that they do not take in the regular education classroom.

Besides the IEP progress reports that are sent every quarter, and which serve as an informal assessment to parents, weekly lesson plans and weekly reports were written by each resource room teacher and signed by the resource room coordinator, were sent home. The weekly lesson plan which stated what will be covered during the week, and homework that will be given was sent home on Sundays, and the weekly report which stated what has been actually covered during the week, and the students' scores on each short-term objectives was sent home on Thursdays. In addition, a home-school connection book where homework and daily comments were written down was sent home on a daily basis to ensure that parents know their children's progress on a daily progress. Parents also had the right to set up appointments with the School Psychologist if any problems arise.

## **2. Referral of New Students:**



Two kinds of referral sheets were given to teachers; one that had to do with students that are suspected of having personal problems and need to be referred for counseling and the other had to do with the student's poor academic performance. Teachers had to fill out these referral sheets and hand them to the person responsible; that is if it is for counseling, then to Ms. Salima Barakat, and if it is poor academic skills then to Ms. Reham Al Mellawani. The procedures taken after the referral sheet has been submitted to the department are as follows:

A. Counseling:

1. An IQ assessment and semi-structured interview
2. Counseling sessions that are conducted either once or twice a week depending on the severity of the case
3. On-going assessment to determine the progress of each student
4. A report is submitted to the School Psychologist by the School Counselor on a quarterly basis where the names of students, a brief summary on the nature of their problems, the dates of sessions, and the type of therapy conducted are all included.

B. Poor academic performance:

1. Classroom observations conducted
2. The Woodcock Johnson III and the Wechsler Intelligence Scale for Children are administered
3. Psycho-educational report on the student is issued
4. Meeting with the teachers and the parents is conducted
5. Classroom accommodations are discussed
6. A follow up on the student's performance in class after the accommodations have been applied is conducted. This is usually through classroom observations

**3. Thursday Assembly Hours:**

The department is in charge of the assembly hours conducted every Thursday from 11:22 am to 12:12 pm. Topics such as Substance Abuse, Nutrition, Body Awareness,



Eating Disorders, Social Skills, Conflict Resolution, Test Anxiety, Environmental Awareness, Protocol and Manners, CPR and First Aid, Peace Education, Minority rights, the 7 Habits of Highly Effective Teens, Character Building, Smoking etc are chosen, and the material for each topic is submitted to the person who will conduct the assembly hour. The department determines which teachers will conduct the assembly hour, and the guest-speakers that the school might invite.

The topics that are left for the department to cover before the academic year ends are:

1. Environmental Awareness: May 5, 2005
2. Protocol and Manners: May 26, 2005, June 2, 2005
3. Test Anxiety: May 26, 2005, June 2, 2005

#### **4. Workshops Conducted for Resource Room Teachers:**

Two workshops were conducted for Elementary Resource Room Teachers. The first one was towards the end of the month of October and it was targeted towards explaining the annual goals and short-term objectives, and introducing new special education techniques. The second workshop was in December 2004, and it tackled Autistic Spectrum Disorders and the Applied Behavioral Analysis technique.

Two more workshops were conducted for Middle/High School Resource Room Teachers. The first one was conducted in November 2004 to discuss the various short-term objectives of each student, and the special education techniques needed to teach these objectives. The second one was a follow up workshop in January targeting towards various special education techniques.

Unfortunately, though, only one workshop was conducted for general education classroom teachers and that was during the Orientation in August 2004. It was on the different kinds of disabilities and the classroom accommodations and classroom management techniques used to accommodate these students in the general education classroom.

Moreover, weekly meetings with the School Psychologist are scheduled for the Elementary Resource Room teachers on Sundays from 2:00-3:00 pm. As for the Middle/High School Resource Room Teachers, their weekly meetings with the School Psychologist are scheduled on Wednesdays from 2:15-3:00 pm. Moreover, a meeting is conducted every Wednesday from 8:30-9:30 am with the Middle/High School



Coordinator (Ms. Dina Rashed) and the School Counselor (Ms. Salima Barakat) to discuss any current issues and to follow up on IEP students, and students referred to counseling. Tuesdays from 9:00-10:00 am is when the School Psychologist meets with the Elementary Resource Room Coordinator for an update on the activities conducted in the Resource Room.

As for workshops conducted in other organizations, The Learning Disabilities Association conducted a 3 day workshop on Dyslexia. This was an overall excellent workshop, but it lacked the necessary organizational skills. As for the second workshop, it was the one conducted in The Right to Live Association, which tackled the Topic of Inclusion. Some teachers found it very difficult to follow through with the workshop due to it being conducted in Arabic. One class teacher, Ms. Suzi Metwalli tried to go on Thursday, April 14, 2005, but could not follow, therefore the department sent an elementary resource room teacher, Ms. Ola Attia, to attend the lectures held on Sunday April 17, 2005, and Monday 18, 2005.

### **5. The Elementary Resource Room:**

The resource room was rearranged so that each student would have his/her own working area. The working area consists of: 1. a desk, 2. a chair, 3. a four-shelf rack, and 4. a bulletin board where all of the student's work is placed. The room is decorated in an educational and functional way whereby a Word Wall, a Synonyms and Antonyms Chart, Nouns Chart, Verbs Chart, exercises to enhance fine/gross motor skills chart. etc are posted in the resource room. The room was supplied with a trampoline, two therapy balls, and a door trapeze. These are used as part of the sensory integration activities conducted during the transitional 5 minutes between the academic activities of the one-to-one sessions. Moreover, four rugs (100X140 cm) for floor group activities have been added in the room. Books were also supplied for the resource room. The valuable collection we have is the following:

1. The Out-of-Sync Child: Activities for children with poor sensory integration skills
2. Central Auditory Processing Disorder: Strategies, and Ready to Use Material for students with CAPD
3. Behavior Intervention Strategies for Autistic Children



4. Teach Me Language: A manual for every language disorder
5. Alpha to Omega: The A-Z of teaching reading to writing to spelling
6. Speed Up: A manual for grapho-motor skills (handwriting)
7. Mr. Bugs Phonics:
8. Facilitated Word Recall:

In addition, a computer was set up in the resource room to enhance students' auditory processing skills. Programs that have been recommended by the best audiologists are now available at the resource room. They are:

1. Earobics Step 1
2. Earobics Step 2
3. Fast Forward Step 2

Educational toys and puzzles are also available in the resource room. Educational games such as the "Guess Who" game which enhances comprehension skills are also available. Finally, a new Arabic and English reading (Sunday System I) program for students with dyslexia has also been inserted into the overall program of the resource room.

The department decided to change the name of the resource room to ESL and Resources Room to eliminate the negative label it had amongst normal students. Normal students would tease students with special needs for spending time in the resource room. The school psychologist suggested to the Elementary Headmistress to change the name and to have normal students come in once a week to the resource room to have their ESL lesson. Moreover, a proposal which tackles the issue of bullying and teasing was submitted to the Elementary Headmistress whereby lesson plans on respecting differences were included. The purpose was to have class teachers apply these activities in the classroom to increase students' awareness and hence help eliminate any bullying or teasing issues.

Middle and High School Resource Room teachers usually get the material and the resources they need from the Elementary Resource Room. Effective collaboration between the middle/high school resource room teachers and elementary resource room teachers is also present. Furthermore, weekly meetings have been scheduled between the Resource Room Coordinator and class teachers to discuss matters such as the



student's progress in the general education classroom, the problems teachers face, and how to modify the material given to the student, hence, making the inclusion process smoother and more effective.

The department is also responsible for the SAT accommodations of students with special needs. The department had already received the approval for two high school students to receive their accommodations for the SAT exam next year. This has been one of the department's greatest accomplishments.