



STATE OF CONNECTICUT  
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION



**TO:** Ms. Liz Bryden, LCSW  
Chief Administrator  
Eagle House Education Program

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

**DATE:** April 30, 2018

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

On March 29, 2018, an evaluation team visited the special education program, Eagle House Education Program (Eagle House) in order to conduct an on-site review for continuous approval from the Connecticut State Department of Education. The team consisted of:

- Colleen Hayles, Education Consultant/Coordinator, Bureau of Special Education (BSE);
- Cathy Danielczuk, Director of Education, Ädelbrook–TLC Manchester; and
- Denise Messina, Director of Pupil Services, Somers Public Schools.

During a previous on-site visit on March 22, 2018, Ms. Hayles reviewed the education files of students as well as personnel files. She has also reviewed the application and its accompanying documents submitted to the BSE by Eagle House administration.

At the exit conference on March 29, 2018, 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.

## 1. **Commendations**

- The staff is best described as small, tight-knit, and supportive educational community of teachers and support staff who share common values, value relationships with students, and demonstrate a strong investment in the needs of each student.
- Staff are well supervised by a director of education who is characterized by staff as supportive and effective in his management style. Staff find the director of education's feedback style to be positive yet constructive and totally oriented to improving student outcomes.
- There appears to be effective vehicles for communication between educational, related service, and residential staff. Tuesday Clinical Rounds and weekly Team Meetings were identified by staff as key elements of effective communication. Instruction is highly personalized and differentiated. Students were viewed as productive and engaged in their learning.
- Eagle House implements a highly coordinated treatment program within a therapeutic milieu. A trauma-informed model of care is implemented within the overall program, which is characterized as "sub-acute" and typically a step down from a previous hospitalization.
- Enrollment is short term and focuses on building relationships with students in order to stabilize them, help them improve overall functioning, and build the skills necessary to transition into a more permanent educational environment and family situation.
- The CARE model is implemented throughout the residential and school environments. This model ensures that evidence-based principles, which are relationship driven, developmentally focused, trauma informed, competence centered, and geared toward family involvement, are implemented with fidelity.
- The program utilizes a curriculum, which aligns with the Connecticut Core Standards and implements evidence-based progress monitoring tools such as the Developmental Reading Assessment and Northwest Evaluation Association assessments.
- Classroom teachers are engaged in professional development activities associated with the needs of the population served. Activities are documented in the staff files.
- The program provides weekly theme-based community education experiences related to the curriculum. Identified as the "classroom in the community," these opportunities assist students in broadening their experiences as they seek stabilization and reentry into their homes and community/school settings.
- Discharge planning for each student begins the day of admission. The team focuses on developing goals and objectives to be addressed during enrollment as well as recommendations for the program, supports, and services at discharge.

- Weekly community meetings are held that include students, educational staff, related service personnel, residential counselors, and nursing staff.
- A level system that focuses on the development of appropriate social and school behaviors is implemented and coordinated across the school and the residential settings.
- Each student file contains a summary report developed by the director of education upon admission to the Eagle House sub-acute program. This summary provides an overview of the student, his/her educational history, and current social emotional issues, pertinent contacts, and status of the student's individualized education program (IEP).

## **2. Standard Deficiencies:**

The following standard deficiencies must be rectified:

**Standard F: Program Requirements** – A private facility shall have a written description of the IEP for each student, which should include as appropriate a behavior intervention plan; the student success plan; the language and communication plan; and as appropriate, 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 for full implementation of the IEP.

**Issue:** While efforts to appropriately articulate related services models on page 11 of the IEP were evident, one or more required elements of the IEP was not accurately reflected or the IEP document was not complete, prohibiting the program from fully implementing the IEP. Errors and omissions included the following:

- Clarity related to the delivery of occupational therapy (OT) as a related service was not provided on page 11. OT was identified as required for 30 minutes per week and was noted as being provided in a 1:1/small group setting. Implementation of such services as articulated leaves service delivery undefined and open to interpretation.
- In one of the five IEPs reviewed, time with non-disabled peers was indicated on page 11.
- In two of the five IEPs reviewed, accommodations outlined on page 8 of the IEP did not reflect the accommodations needed by the student within the current Eagle House placement (i.e., 1:1 aide, regular education staff consultation, and supports to general education staff).
- Page 10 of the IEP does not adequately articulate the level of need of students and the strategies, interventions, and behavioral supports needed to address behaviors that are impeding their learning. Necessary schoolwide supports, services, and strategies appropriate to the student's need and if determined necessary, individual BIPs based on the conduct of a functional behavior assessment, are not indicated on page 10 of the IEP.

**Corrective Action Required:** Develop and document a process to review IEPs developed by the planning and placement team (PPT) to ensure that they accurately reflect the consensus of the PPT, are complete and accurate, reflect the current level/intensity of the student's needs, and are able to be implemented by the program as written. Additionally, where there exists a discrepancy, provide documentation that the program has appropriately notified the local education agency of the necessary changes or additions.

On or before June 15, 2018, submit to the BSE a copy of the process/procedure developed to review IEPs and provide copies of the next three IEPs developed by the district's PPT where the review process has been implemented by Eagle House and appropriate district notification, if needed, has been provided.

### **3. Recommendations:**

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

- Explore additional opportunities for teachers to benefit from collaboration with educators outside of the agency to ensure that they remain current in the implementation of the Connecticut Core Standards and other best practices. Observation of general education or special education settings to which students might transition will promote the development of realistic and targeted goals for students enrolled.
- Ensure that the employment verification form now required for approved private special education programs, is implemented in the future, should new or additional professional staff be hired.
- Capitalize on the expertise of the occupational therapist by creating opportunities for "push in" services and foster carry over of sensory activities throughout a student's day and have the teacher assistants who escort the child to the session remain, and observe strategies that can be integrated throughout the student's school day.

Within 15 working days from the date of this preliminary evaluation report, please indicate in writing to the BSE whether Eagle House agrees with the report and whether your program accepts the delineated corrective action plan, if applicable. Upon receipt of Eagle House's acceptance of the report in its entirety, a recommendation for continuous approval through June 30, 2023, will be submitted to the Commissioner of Education.

Upon such approval, the following will be applicable to the special education program:

**Approved Ages to Serve:** ages 5–13 years old

**Approved Student Capacity:** 16

cc: Randy Adams, Director of Education