

April 15, 2008

Michael T. Duffy
Executive Director
52 Chambers Street
New York, New York 10007

Dear Mr. Duffy:

On behalf of the International Leadership Charter School Board of Trustees, the school's leadership, students and parents, we submit our reply to your letter dated 3/28/08 that contains the 3/13/08 annual site visit report. In our response, we specifically address the concerns noted in your cover letter with regard to compliance with the provision of special education services, particularly in ensuring that SETSS be provided by a certified special education teacher as a matter of priority. In this response we also clarify concerns and make factual corrections that were raised during the visit with regard to the maintenance of Individualized Education Program and the provision of mandated services.

Attached to this letter you will find our response to other areas found within the body of the Quality Review Report that requires factual correction. Please also note that the quality statements and the assigned scores do not appear to be aligned with some of the findings as presented at the exit conference as well as in the attached protocol with the corresponding ratings.

It is our expectation that the information that we have provided in our response, will be incorporated into our school's annual site visit report and that the appropriate amendments will be included in the written version. Please feel free to contact me directly should there be any questions with regard to the content or details of our response.

Sincerely,
Dr. Dori Collazo-Baker
Board Chair

Cc: ILCS Board of Trustees
Dr. Elaine Ruiz Lopez
Ed Vidal, Esq.
Garth Harries
James Merriman

Plans to Hire a Certified Special Education Teacher

Prior to the Annual Site Visit on 3/13/08 we have conducted an active and ongoing search for a certified special education teacher. We have posted this position on national as well as local websites. We have retained Carney Sandoe and Associates to assist us with this search. We have also posted job announcements at numerous local colleges and universities. Prior to your visit, we attended the National job fair sponsored by CSA on February 27; February 28 and March 1, 2008. In addition, we attended the Charter Schools job fair on Saturday, March 8, 2008 at Teacher's College and collected resumes and met potential candidates. We have since invited candidates to the school for a visit and subsequent interviews. We have a finalist for this position who was invited to teach a model lesson on April 11, 2008. We made an offer to this candidate to join our faculty subsequent to the observation of model lesson. We were advised that she is scheduled for other interviews and requested the courtesy of a response by April 25th. In the meantime we have continued our search and review of resumes.

Our interim plan for SETSS is as follows:

We will continue providing instructional support for one hour per day in the area of English and Mathematics which in most cases far exceeds the amount of time that is required in the IEPs for our special needs students. Our interim team includes two highly qualified teacher assistants who are also Saturday academy teachers. From the start of the academic year there is also a "push in" by a former special education teacher on a daily basis in English, Math, Science and Global History who works with groups of special needs students.

As pointed out in the report, it is correct that Dr. Lopez is the only certified special education teacher at ILCS. Dr. Lopez is very dedicated to ensuring the provision of related services to all students who are eligible and that a search for a full-time special education teacher is completed as soon as a viable candidate accepts the school's offer to join its faculty. In the interim, Dr. Lopez will continue to supervise and coordinate the delivery of related services to all of our special needs students as well as supervise the instructional support program that have been ongoing since the start of the academic year.

Concerns Re IEPs and Provision of Mandated Services

On the date of the site visit Mr. Fred Lisker from the NYCDOE visited the school as part of the review team. As of the annual visit, we had 18 special needs students on our roster. He addressed the IEPs for the 8 students listed below. One student, [REDACTED] is a general education student. Note: Next to each students name below, we have provided the stated concern per Mr. Lisker followed by the factual corrections for each case based on updated information received from CSE at Region One. We have also attached documentation to support the facts noted in this reply.

[REDACTED]
Concern: Mr. Lisker noted that this student had an IEP and that we were not providing services. He stated that she had been previously classified as MIS III (Speech Impaired). Mr. Lisker also stated that we were out of compliance in providing services to this student.

Factual Correction and Clarification: According to the CSE this student was indeed a special needs student and discharged 10/1/01 and decertified since then. Therefore, this student is a general education student and we are neither out of compliance or deficient in providing services.

[REDACTED]
Concern Mr. Lisker noted that student was decertified. On 1/8/08.

Factual Correction and Clarification: According to correspondence from Myra Wild at CSE Region One, a review was held at the CSE and she was declared 'Non-handicapped' however another review was scheduled by CSE on 4/10/08 to add speech and language services.

[REDACTED]
Concern: Mr. Lisker stated that this student had not received the required annual review and that the IEP was outdated.

Factual Correction and Clarification: As of the time of site visit this student's IEP had a previous conference date of 9/5/07. The IEP is current and will be updated with an annual review by 9/08.

[REDACTED]
Concern: Mr. Lisker stated that this student had not received speech and language services and that she was no longer a special needs student due to case closing in '06 therefore concluded we were improperly billing for this student.

Factual Correction and Clarification: According to the CSE case with regard to SL, services was closed for this student on 12/6/06 due to of student not arriving for testing. (See documentation attached from CSE) As of the date of site visit, SL portion was closed however student at time of enrollment is and continues to be a special needs student with a SETSS category and we billed for this student correctly. In addition, the parent was sent an RSA for services. Therefore we are not out of compliance in this case and we are billing appropriately.

[REDACTED]
Concern: Mr. Lisker stated that this student's IEP was outdated (June '05).

Factual Correction and Clarification: As of visit this student's IEP last conference date was 6/22/07. IEPs are outdated after one full year after conference. The next annual review is scheduled for 6/1/08 therefore this student's IEP is current.

[REDACTED]
Concern: Mr. Lisker stated concern that this student's IEP was outdated (11/22/07).

Factual Correction and Clarification: IEPs are outdated after one full year after conference. This case is scheduled on 11/2/08 for an annual review and update. This student's IEP is current.

[REDACTED]
Concern: Mr. Lisker's stated that this student had an IEP for 15:1:1 and we were out of compliance and that the school needed to hold a conference to request that his service category be changed to SETSS or refer parent back to CSE for an appropriate placement.

Factual Correction and Clarification: Our social worker met with parent in September and again in November 2007 and advised that we did not have services at our school for 15:1:1. Parent was advised to find another placement for her son. The parent insisted that this was not necessary as she desired a charter school and believed that her son would do well in a small personalized setting. The parent voluntarily discharged son on 3/24/08. On 4/2/08 subsequent to the parent's discharge of student CSE advised ILCS that his case was closed since the mother never signed for placement and the student never sat in seat. Documentation is attached.

[REDACTED]
8. Concern: Mr. Lisker stated that this student's IEP listed *Team Teaching* as the service category.

Factual Correction and Clarification: The school's counselor met with the parent and advised that we did not have services at our school and referred parent back to the CSE. Numerous requests for meetings with parent and letters are attached to assist with another placement. This student has had numerous absences.

Provision of Mandated Services

Factual Correction Counseling Services:

All twelve 9th and 10th grade special needs students who have counseling as a related service on their IEPs are receiving this service consistently as we have two counselors on staff.

Student names

[REDACTED]

Factual Correction Speech and Language Services:

All parents of the 5 students who have Speech and Language listed on their IEPs have been issued RSAs by the CSE Region One since November of 2007. (See attached documents)
We requested that the CSE resend so that we can ensure that parents have received this document. The names of students who are legally entitled to receive speech and language services and who have received RSAs are as follows.

[REDACTED]

—CSE to issue RSA shortly

What the school needs to improve:

- Develop teacher's skills in using the available data to track individuals, groups and cohorts.

Response and Clarification

The Director of Instruction will continue to work with teachers as well as seek outside and our data consultant to further develop the teachers' understanding of data and how to effectively interpret and use data to track, individual, groups and cohorts. We have had several ongoing professional development workshops on this topic and plan to continue providing teachers with tools and practical ways in which data can be used to differentiate instruction.

- Address the weaker performance of boys in English Language Arts that is revealed in the data.

Response and Clarification

The Director of Instruction will continue to work with teachers to close the literacy gender gap by identifying best practices such as “Reciprocal Teaching”, whereby the teacher explicitly teaches and models the use of four comprehension strategies: asking questions, and summarizing. In addition, the schools Literacy Coach will also work with teachers in the areas of clarifying and making predictions for cultivating the reading and writing habits for boys across all subject areas. Lastly, our teachers will provide enjoyable high interest reading and writing opportunities across the curriculum and ensure that reading and writing assignments engage the young men as well as young ladies and offer boys consistent opportunities to achieve success.

- Finances

Response and Clarification

Large Variance Explanation: The Leadership/Supervision/Support was incorrectly categorized. This category title will be renamed to *Administration Expenses*. Also the Security Officer line will be moved from Salaries to OTPS. This service is outsourced. The total amount of the journal entry is \$72,268.94. The negative high variance is due to Accounting Fees and Teacher Recruitment Cost. A budget modification for FY’08 budget will be completed for consistency with the actual expenditures and appropriate categories.

- School should complete its website

We are pleased to announce that we have completed our website over our school’s spring break. Please visit us at www.ilchs.org

- NYCDOE website:

We are requesting that all of the information that is found on the NYCDOE website be corrected for consistency with our organizational structure and our charter school’s model. The Office of Charter Schools website has incorrect information. The title for Dr. Elaine Ruiz Lopez is CEO/Head of School. Also the High School Directory indicates that the school provides special education services as needed. This is incorrect and has contributed to confusion among parents who wish to enroll students at ILCS who have special needs that go far beyond the SETTS services. In addition, our charter school has never had an institutional partnership with any CBO. This website lists “El Puente” as our CBO partner. We had a former board member who was affiliated with CBO. Please remove this misinformation. This correction is critical as we move forward in the development of our school’s model.

- Governance

We have attached the resolution for our newest board member for your review and approval.

