City of Derby
Board of Aldermen / Alderwomen
VARCA Building Future Use Ad-Hoc Committee

Carmen DiCenso, Stephen Iacuone, Carlo Sarmiento, Ronald Sill, and Judy Szewczyk

BOA VARCA Building Future Use Ad-Hoc Committee Special Meeting Minutes
Derby City Hall
1 Elizabeth Street, Derby, CT
December 13, 2018 6:00 PM

1. **Call to Order**
   The meeting was called to order at 5:57 PM.

2. **Pledge of Allegiance**

3. **Roll Call**
   Mr. DiCenso, Mr. Sill, and Ms. Szewczyk, Also present were Mr. Nicholas DiLuggo, Mr. Zbigniew Golonka and Mr. Coppola

4. **Public Portion**
   Tom Lionetti – He thought the senior centers of Derby and Ansonia were going to merge. He feels that would be a great idea since it's on one floor and there is more parking.

5. **Elect Chair of the Committee**
   Mr. Sill motioned to elect Mr. DiCenso as the chair of the committee, Mrs. Szewczyk seconded and the motion carried.

6. **Discuss options for future use of VARCA Building:**
   a. **Derby Governmental Entities**
   b. **Regional Governmental Agencies**
   c. **Non-profit Organizations**
   d. **For-profit businesses**
   e. **Other ideas not yet discussed**
   f. **Cost of retrofitting and upgrading code issues.**
   g. **Lease?**
   h. **Sale?**

Mr. DiCenso spoke about the senior centers merging, he stated that the school expressed interest in using the space, people have inquired to lease the space and the have people who want to purchase the property as is.

Mr. DiCenso stated that it would cost approximately $1 million to install sprinklers which would be necessary if it is a municipal building. There is no air conditioning, the roof needs repairs, boilers need to be replaced, etc. They do have a couple people who want to purchase it as is. The city would be able to collect taxes if the building was sold. The gas cost for last month was $1,000 with no one in it and the temperature set to 55 degrees. They don't know if the windows would need to be replaced. Mr. Coppola mentioned that the new field house building needs to be maintained and that is a new expense. Selling the building would bring in money to the city. Ms. Szewczyk said the BOAT would have issue with the added expense of maintaining another building. The city does not have the funds to retrofit the 26,000 sq foot building. The grant from Ansonia is $500,000. The School has $250,000 in grants. Ms. Szewczyk asked if it could be a multi-use building. Mr. DiCenso said the senior center would take up a third of the building.

Mr. DiCenso read the following letter:

THE PARTNERS

COMMERCIAL REAL ESTATE SERVICES, INC.

December 13, 2018

Carmen DiCenso
Director of economic Development
City of Derby
35 Fifth Street
Derby, CT 06418

Dear Carmen:

On behalf of Soccer & Rugby Imports, LLC, I am pleased to inform the City of Derby that there is significant interest in acquiring 5 Coon Hollow Road for their new corporate headquarters, team, design, production and distribution center. After an extensive search in Fairfield and New Haven, County, the Derby location provides a central location to their existing and planned store locations with good highway access.

Soccer & Rugby Imports opened their first store in Westport, CT in 1993. Soccer and Rugby Imports has been supplying the soccer and rugby clientele, which include clubs, universities, schools and organizations across the country and abroad for the past 25 years. The vision going forward is to expand into outfitting for all major sports.

Providing quality and a wide selection in Soccer and Rugby sportswear and equipment, in conjunction with a team outfitting department, with a full embroidery and silk-screening operation located at their corporate headquarter store in Southport, CT, sets Soccer & Rugby Imports above the rest, and virtually with no competition. In addition to their Southport location, Soccer & Rugby has locations in Greenwich (2009), Ridgefield (2005), Madison (2012) and Bronxville, NY (2014).

It is our desire to proceed as diligently as possible, so please advise us on the next steps towards making Derby the new home for Soccer & Rugby Imports.

Sincerely,

Scott R. Gance
President

cc: Gus Avalos – Managing Member – Soccer & Rugby Imports, LLC

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Soccer & Rugby Imports, LLC said they would bring in approximately 25-30 employees. They also provide internships for high school kids and would donate to the sports programs.

Mr. Lionetti said he believes they want to sell and he would like estimates done before making the decision. He is concerned about where the tax money / savings would go.

Mr. Coppola said funds go into the general fund.

Mr. Lionetti doesn't want someone to come in and steal it (the building) away from the city. Has anyone gotten quotes to repair the building?

Mr. DiCenso said Johnson Control has been in there and have advised the city that major mechanical work needs to be done.

They have spoken with Ansonia regarding other site options.

Nick DiLuggo spoke regarding RAISE academy. They looked into the cost of the outplaced students and they are looking into ways to bring them back into district. The cost of servicing special needs students is greater than the public realizes. He forwarded two proposals. (See Attached) They service 20 students from 7th – 12th. They would like to provide more services to existing special needs students to avoid the need for outplacement. They are proposing to use the bottom floor for the expansion of RAISE. Mr. DiLuggo said they haven't looked into the cost of teachers for the new teachers. Mr. Coppola asked why the weight room can't be retrofitted since the new field house building will have a weight room. Mr. Coppola said the current HS building is underutilized and asked if they looked into using that space.

7. **Recommendation to Full Board of Aldermen/Alderwomen – Discussion and Possible Action**
   No action taken. This will be discussed further at the next meeting on January 10th at 6:00 PM.

8. **Adjournment**
   Mr. Sill motioned to adjourn, seconded by Ms. Szewczyk and the motion carried at 6:59 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Terri Kuskowski

These minutes are subject to the Committee's approval at their next scheduled meeting.

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RAISE Academy

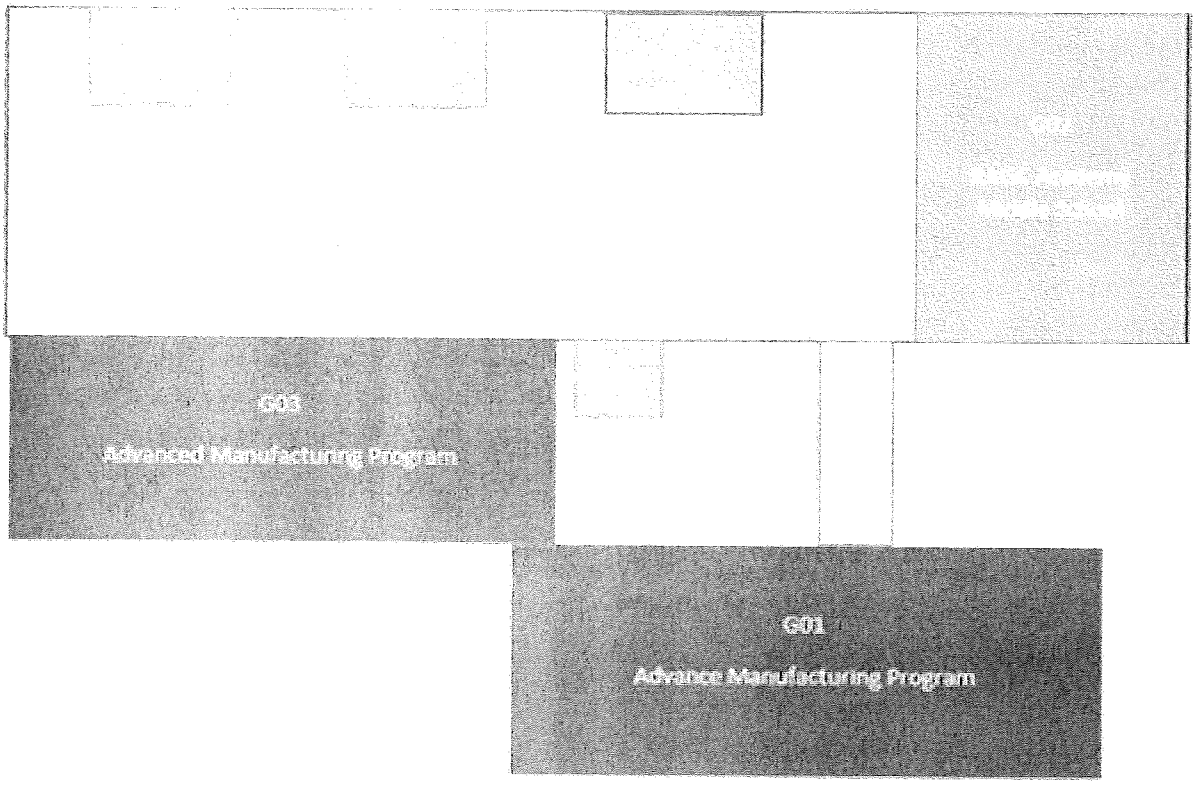
Proposal

Movement of RAISE Academy Middle School from the current Derby High School location to the VARCA Building (2nd Floor)

Rationale

Middle School students in the RAISE Academy program currently attend school at the RAISE Academy High School location within Derby High School; these students are housed within the bottom floor of the RAISE Academy Wing of DHS, occupying Room G02. The office directly in front of G02 offers additional classroom space to be utilized by RAISE Staff when appropriate, often times as an intervention room for students needing a break from group instruction. Figure 1 represents the bottom floor of the RAISE Academy Wing and how the rooms are currently being used.

Figure 1- Current Bottom Floor RAISE Academy

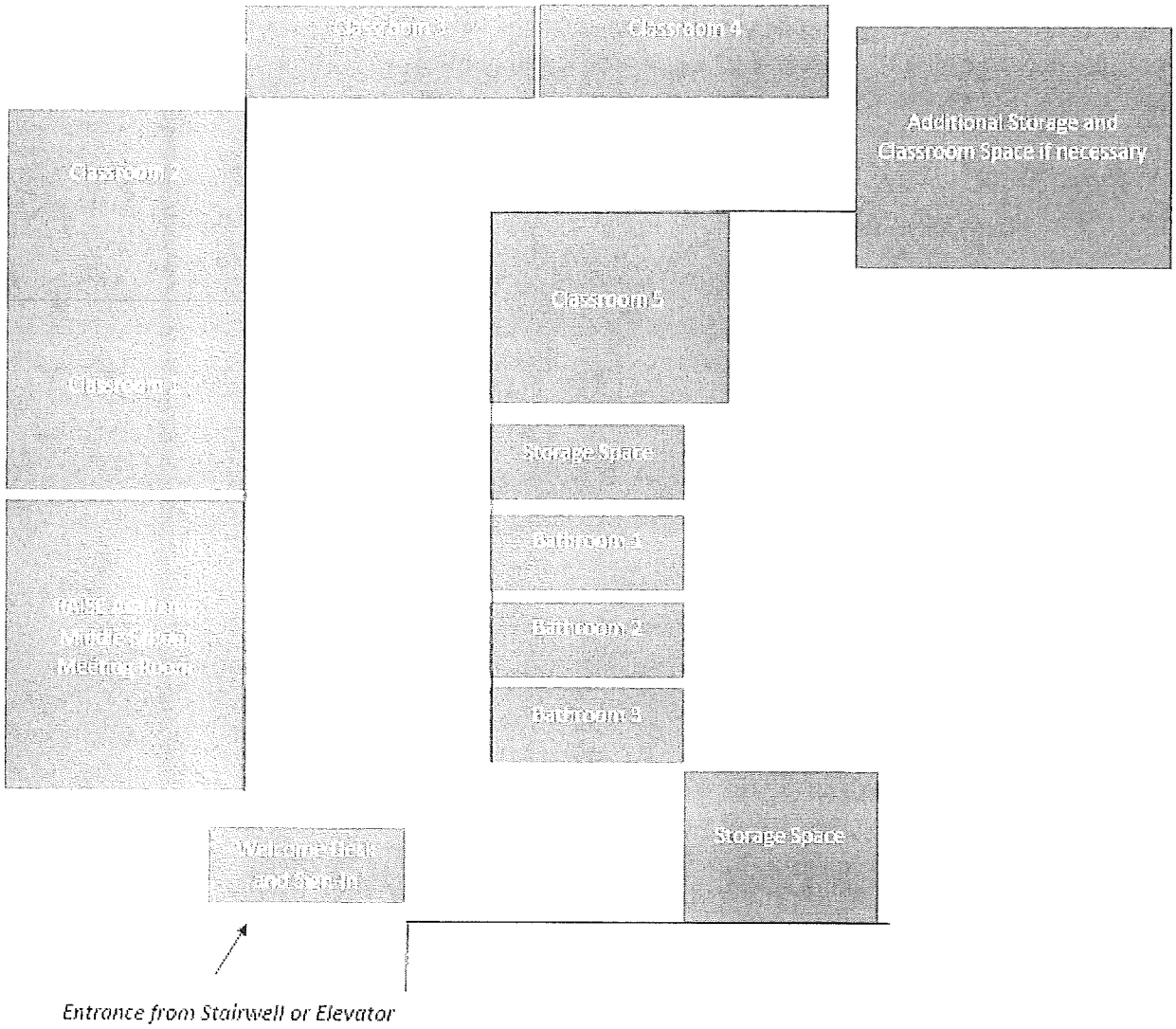


The addition of Housatonic's Advanced Manufacturing Program has reduced the amount of space available for use by RAISE Academy Staff; Housatonic is currently holding classes Monday-Wednesday from 7:30-9:00am; additional classes will be added to the program in the near future. New equipment and computers placed within G03 and G01 have rendered the space unusable for RAISE Academy. The addition of Housatonic Courses has also created a situation where our middle school population is being exposed to students much older than them.

The current organization of the RAISE Academy Middle School Area does not favor offering an increase in support of Derby Middle School students. There are currently seven Derby Middle School students enrolled in RAISE Academy; with the limited amount of space available for use in its' current location, it is unlikely that RAISE Academy can support any more than eight middle school students at one time.

The second floor of the VARCA Building offers a space that can positively impact RAISE Academy and the services it can offer both Derby High School and Derby Middle School. Figure 2 shows how the space on the 2nd floor of the VARCA building will be used as the RAISE Academy Middle School location.

Figure 2- 2nd Floor VARCA



This setup would provide a minimum of five classroom spaces, one office space, three small bathrooms, and a minimum of two storage spaces for the RAISE Academy Middle School.

Summary of Benefits to the Derby Public School District

1.) Increase in the possible number of seats available within RAISE Academy Middle School

The additional space at VARCA would allow RAISE Academy to potentially offer more seats for Derby Middle School students. The current space available inside of RAISE Academy at Derby High School is not ideal to extend such offerings.

2.) 6th grade RAISE Academy Classroom

While the RAISE Academy Middle School Program currently only offers educational supports for students in grades seven and eight, the space available on the second floor of the VARCA Building would make possible an expansion to support sixth grade students as well.

3.) Increases amount of space available to RAISE Academy High School within RAISE Academy

RAISE Academy Middle School Students being housed at the VARCA Building opens up desirable space for the RAISE Academy High School Program. The RAISE Academy High School students are currently using two small rooms (101 and 102) in the upstairs wing of the school to hold all high school level activities. G02 can be used as a primary classroom space for high school students and Rooms 101 & 102 can be transformed into multi-use space for our high school students to utilize. Additionally, the RAISE Middle School Intervention Room could be transformed into much needed office space for RAISE Academy Staff to house paperwork, make phone calls, conference with parents, and hold individual meetings with students free from disruption.

4.) Removes middle school element from Derby High School

The RAISE Academy Middle School move to the Second Floor of the VARCA Building brings a much needed separation between the two age ranges within this program. The RAISE Academy High School and Middle School students are currently in close proximity to one another; with such a significant difference in the ages of our students (youngest we've had is 11 and the oldest 21), RAISE Staff must take extra precaution to ensure minimal contact between the two groups. This becomes difficult when there are no physical dividers between the high school and middle school areas. The RAISE Middle School Program's move to VARCA would eliminate this concern and allow us to create two unique spaces designed to cater to each specific group. This move would also eliminate any potential intermingling of our middle school students with elements of the Housatonic Advanced Manufacturing Program.

5.) Offers possibilities to increase types of services available to Derby High School within RAISE Academy

With additional space made available, RAISE Academy might be able to offer more services as part of our high school program. Social Work Groups (held twice a week) could now be held within RAISE Academy, instead of having to find space in Derby High School. Additional spacing could also be used to hold parent meetings within the RAISE Academy High School Wing and to offer one-on-one services for students in the high school needing support, but not full immersion in the RAISE Academy Program.

Figures 3 and 4 below show how RAISE Academy in Derby High School would be designed if the RAISE Middle School Students are moved to VARCA

Figure 3- Future Bottom Floor RAISE Academy

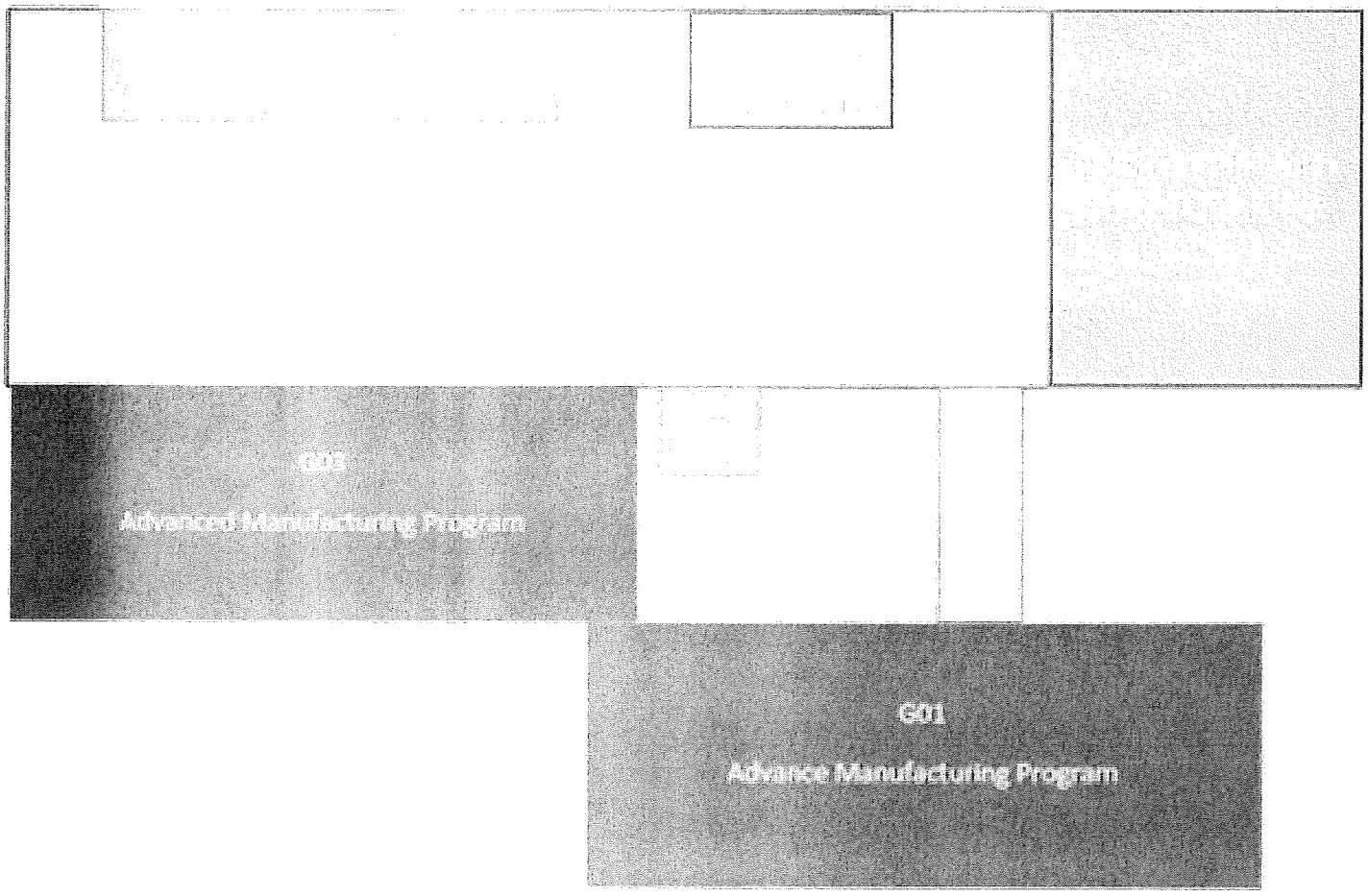
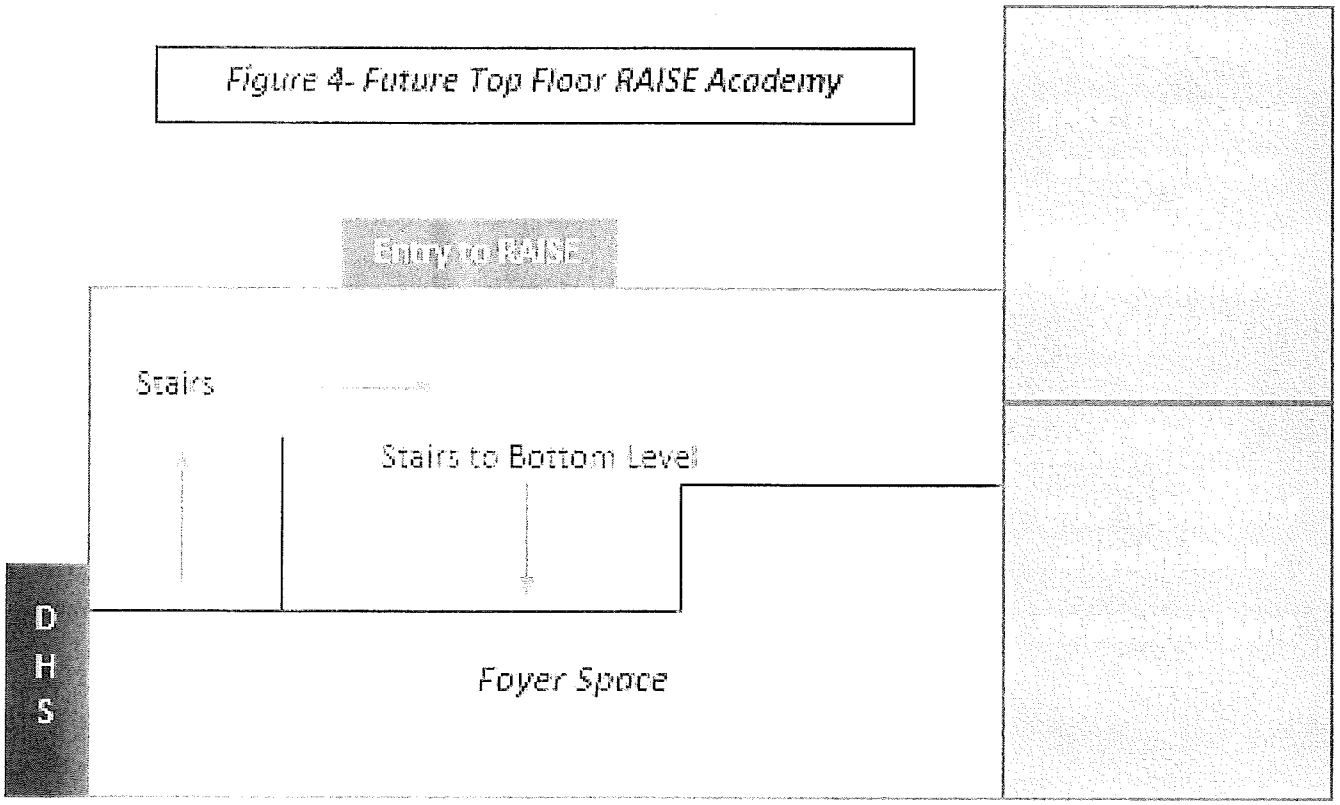


Figure 4- Future Top Floor RAISE Academy



Prepared by:
Nicholas DiLuggo
Program Coordinator
RAISE Academy (IPPI)

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Nicholas DiLuggo
Program Coordinator
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Derby Public Schools – Proposal for Therapeutic Program/School **10/15/218**

The Institute of Professional Practice, Inc. (IPPI), has been providing direct services to multiple school districts in Connecticut (e.g., Stratford, Darien, Bristol, and Old Lyme) and in our state-approved IPPI Learning Academy (IPPILA). Direct services for schools include a consultation model and an educational-behavioral clinic model. The educational-behavioral clinic model is our extension of consultation in which, based on the intensity of needs, we provide a behavioral therapist and the support of a Board Certified Behavior Analyst (BCBA) in order to increase student success. Depending on each student's needs and our success in helping each student, IPPI collaborates with districts to decide on a student's placement in a mainstream program and the level of support needed.

During the last 5 years, we have observed and experienced an increase in the number of students ages 5 to 10 years who enter public education and face the following challenges:

- Behavioral dysregulation related to their personal life situations or under-diagnosed conditions that affect their functioning in school, including a limited repertoire of skills in areas of accepting directions and sustaining effort in completing school-related activities and unevenly developed prerequisite academic skills.
- Many students referred to special education may present cognitive skills that would allow them to acquire academic knowledge but because of emotional issues and behavioral dysregulation are not able to be part of a mainstream program, or their mainstream exposure is very limited.
- There is limited collaboration between school programs and outside school mental health professionals in providing ongoing exchanges about students' progress and discussion of occurring crises or other possible factors that could affect the student's overall progress.

Currently, to address students with the above challenges, the IPPI offers admission to IPPILA at its two Connecticut locations: Stratford and Naugatuck. In addition, we offer a collaborative program within the district that addresses students' complex academic, social, and behavioral needs.

Core of the collaborative program:

The core of the program includes three components based on collaboration among the SPED teacher, the BCBA, and the social worker to include:

1. Individualized academic curricula that will allow students to gain skills given their abilities. Thus, students could still have opportunities to participate later in mainstream classes if they are able to regulate their behaviors and be successful in our program.

2. Behavioral support that would also include facilitation of appropriate social interactions and small group social activities that would allow student development and utilization of acceptable interactions among peers.

3. Support provided by a Licensed Social Worker certified to work in the schools with experience working with diverse populations of students with different mental health needs.

Program approach:

IPPI will participate in all aspects of the Planning and Placement Team, including drafting goals and objectives as well as measuring progress towards mastery of goals and objectives for all students within the program.

Classrooms would have the following IPPI staff members assigned for no more than 10 students:

a. One special education teacher per classroom.
b. Two IPPI Behavioral Therapists. In addition, one-to-one support will be provided to individual students based on their IEPs.
c. School-Certified Social Worker/Licensed Social Worker
d. Twenty hours per week of BCBA support.

Referral to IPPI Classrooms:

a. Students can be referred to the IPPI classrooms by the district team. The following information would be provided to IPPI:
    i. IEP (if applicable).
    ii. Previously completed triennial evaluations, existing behavior support plan and data, and IEP progress report.
    iii. Any additional information/assessments and evaluations relevant to the student's behavioral and academic progress.
b. Information gained from the records provided and classroom observations will assist in determining 1) appropriateness for the program and 2) supports that may be necessary upon entry.
    i. During the referral process, the IPPI team will collaborate with the referring district team to complete an entry-level service needs checklist that will determine the main reasons for referral, which may include:
        1. Primarily issues with compliance and following directions: Behavior is impacting students' ability to access their education within the classroom.
        2. Aggressive or disruptive behaviors that affect the students' ability to access their education and/or the education of other students within the classroom.
        3. Possible lack of certain pre-academic skills that affect the students' classroom behavior.
        4. Concerns with possible underlying emotional/developmental issues that are not addressed, and information about behavioral/mental health supports and services received outside of school.

2. **Initial Assessment, Data Collection, and Team Collaboration:**

a. IPPI will utilize a data collection system to measure behavioral, social, and academic progress.
b. If needed, Functional Behavior Assessments to be conducted as necessary to develop function-based interventions.
c. BCBA and social worker will collaborate with classroom staff to identify the need for staff training so that they are using the same language and strategies the social worker is recommending.
d. Social worker's assessment to identify the student's needs within the program setting and to identify possible community-based resources that the student's family can utilize. The possible areas of need may include:

i. Coordinating collaboration between school, family, and outside school providers in sharing data on progress and exchanging information about any possible factors that may affect the student's behavior.
ii. Identifying what additional individual or small group activities would be appropriate in addressing the student's needs.

3. Positive Behavior Support Model (PBS) and Emotional/Mental Health Support

a. To provide structure that is also consistent with a behavior analytic philosophy, IPPI will utilize a Positive Behavior Support (PBS) model. A PBS model emphasizes school-wide systems of support that include proactive strategies for defining, teaching, and supporting appropriate student behaviors to create positive school environments. A continuum of positive behavior support for all students within a school/program is implemented in areas including the classroom and non-classroom settings (such as hallways, buses, and restrooms). PBS is an application of a behaviorally based systems approach to enhance the capacity of schools, families, and communities to design effective environments that improve the link between research-validated practices and the environments in which teaching and learning occur. (www.pbis.org, 2013).

b. IPPI will develop and utilize a school-wide positive behavior support system that includes the following components:
   i. Explicit instruction in engaging in expected classroom behavior (using behavior skills training, specific instruction, modeling, role-play, and feedback with reinforcement for engaging in targeted behaviors).
   ii. Program staff will use similar language in addressing students' behavioral needs. Thus, all students will be treated with respect but at the same time with clear descriptions of expected behavior.
   iii. A leveled reward system that provides both immediate and delayed reinforcement for students contingent upon their engaging in expected behaviors: increased time spent on task, following directions, using appropriate language with staff and peers, and utilizing coping strategies and other alternative behaviors when experiencing frustration related to academic work and interactions with peers.
   iv. Clearly defined and taught consequences provided contingent upon students not engaging in the above-mentioned expected behaviors.

c. Support for the student's emotional and self-regulation needs will be provided by a social worker and will focus on:
   (a) Identifying the student's level of self-regulation upon arrival at school and addressing any immediate negative emotional states that would preclude the student's participation in class.
      i. Providing daily scheduled regular groups within the classroom.
      ii. Providing individual sessions as identified in the student's IEP.
      iii. Developing and maintaining positive and trusting relationships with students enrolled in the program.

4. Providing programming for students with aggression and intense disruptive behaviors:

a. Aggression between ages 5 and 10 can occur for the following reasons:
   i. Interpersonal conflicts among students.
   ii. Students' oppositional tendencies that in combination with a low frustration level can lead to explosive behaviors and possible aggression.

iii. Students' severe emotional needs that make them likely to be easily triggered to respond with physical acts.
iv. Carry-over emotional states from outside the school setting.

- When the students are placed in behavioral-based classrooms that are well-organized and run by skillful teachers, many students are successful because of the smaller classroom environment.
- However, even those students may have increased difficulty when the classroom has one or two very aggressive and disruptive students because the adults have to spend more time dealing with those students' physical and disruptive behaviors. In addition, the outliers often instigate other students or other students instigate them because they receive less attention from the adults.
- Outliers may impact the program's success and affect the overall program, and in order to address those students, we propose consideration of a Tier 1, Tier 2, and Tier 3 model of services.

b. Depending on the intensity and frequency of student aggression and those students' responsiveness to the class-wide systems in place, we suggest that the district use a Tier 1 and Tier 2 service model upon entry and during the initial week in the program in the first classroom. Students in this classroom would include those described above under A.i. (aggression triggered by interpersonal conflict). Students described under A.ii (with oppositional tendencies) will be placed based on an initial assessment of the intensity of their aggression. Aggression for a student in Tier 1 and Tier 2 will be addressed based on a classroom-consistent approach of using conflict resolution and redirecting students to use coping strategies relevant to factors that triggered the aggression. If the acts of aggression reoccur in 2 consecutive weeks, the student would move temporarily to Tier 3 services.

c. The Tier 3 service (i.e., a second classroom) would be more restrictive than Tiers 1 and 2 in the way that the student access privileges. The primary goal of the service would be to assess and provide direct intervention for aggression using the following approach:
   i. Immediate assessment of skills needed to address aggression.
   ii. Utilization of a contingency program in which access to privileges would be based on the student's accepting the adult's help, utilizing coping strategies, and using suggested replacement behaviors to deal with agitation and frustration.
   iii. Two to three weeks without aggression would allow the student to return to Tier 1/2 services.
   iv. If the student continues to engage in aggression, in collaboration with the team, we would need to consider possible additional options.
   v. Specific Emergency Guidelines will also be developed to maintain the safety of students and staff within the program (as part of the class-wide PBS system).

Note: Based on our experience, there is a small group of students in that age group who may not respond to intense behavioral intervention. This is primarily related to the severity of possible underlying conditions and the level of parent willingness and collaboration between school and outside providers. Thus upon admission, the student's parents will be notified about the option of a school clinician to establish contact with any prescribed or treating medical professional in order to provide regular updates on progress including the possible presence of the clinician at an appointment when requested. The Institute of Professional Practice operates a mental health clinic that offers medical professionals and possible outside medical support for students with a state children's health insurance

plan if needed.

5. **Social and Behavior Skills Instruction:**

    a. Through a functional assessment of behaviors, the reasoning behind certain problematic behaviors is better understood (e.g., Johnny cries when math work is hard instead of asking for help).

    b. Behavioral skill deficits can be divided into three major categories:

        i. **School Behaviors**: These are the basic skills needed to navigate successfully throughout the school day.

        ii. **Social Skills:** These are skills that will help a student interact appropriately with peers and ultimately create friendships with peers.

        iii. **Coping Skills:** These are the skills that will assist students in handling situations that are difficult for them. *At least initially, students require the most intensive instruction in this area.* Some students may require ongoing contact with a social worker to address emotional crises or trauma-related behaviors.

    c. Individual and group teaching that addresses each of the areas outlined above will include evidence-based strategies, such as the Teaching Interactions Model as outlined in Crafting Connections (Taubman, M., Leaf, R., & McEachin, J.), Zones of Regulation (Kuypers, L.), and the "Coping Cat" curriculum (Kendall, P., & Hedtke, K. A.).

    d. Classroom atmosphere will be built on positive interactions between students and adults, cultivating the predictability of adult responses, and acceptance of students regardless of individual needs.

6. **Academic Assessment and Instruction**

    a. Students will be assessed using a variety of assessments (e.g., DIBELS Next, AIMSweb) to determine academic performance relative to their prospective grade levels.
    b. Students who are found to be below grade level and/or progressing at a slower pace than what is expected within the regular education classroom may require an alternative curriculum. Recommended for these students is SRA Direct Instruction series by Siegfried Engelmann (e.g., Connecting Math Concepts, Language for Learning, Reading Mastery) and related curricula (e.g., Teach Your Children to Read Well, M. Maloney). Each of these programs is research based and can be a tool for the classroom team to close the gap between academic performance and each student's grade level.
    c. These students will be progress monitored on a bi-weekly schedule to ensure that sufficient progress is being made.

7. **Parent Communication, Consultation, and Training:**

    a. To provide the student's parents with consultation and training to facilitate skills throughout the program, parent training will be based on:
        i. Utilizing skills the student is able to use successfully in the program.
        ii. Offering parents specific training of behavior management skills based on a commercial curriculum (see attached, "Our Approach to Parent Training and Home Visits").

iii. Daily communication will be provided via a home-school communication log (details on the log to be individualized based on the student's needs).

8. **Exit/Transition Procedures**:

a. A student's progress in the program will be evaluated via individual data collection, progression within the class-wide contingency program, the non-occurrence of disruptive and unsafe behaviors, and the student's ability to apply learned coping strategies and skills.
b. In collaboration with the district team, a transition plan to return to the referring building will be developed, and assistance for school staff training will be discussed.
c. Parents will be part of the transition process and will be provided with additional suggestions about how to facilitate the child's progress in school by using learned skills and approaches that can be utilized at home.
d. The follow-up on progress of students returning back to neighborhood schools will be conducted via:
    i. Teacher/classroom staff maintaining behavioral data collection to monitor progress.
    ii. Direct communication with the teachers/case managers on any presenting problems and challenges they are facing after the student transitions back.

Prepared by: Zbigniew Golonka, Ph.D., BCBA-D, Licensed Psychologist, LBA, Director Behavior Service
Elizabeth L. Sellinger, Ph.D., BCBA-D, LBA, Director of Education and Behavior Analysis Services
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Michelle Faugono Fico, State of Connecticut School Social Worker, Licensed Master Social Worker