



**Indiana State Board of Education
Request for Freeway School Accreditation
Board Date: June 5, 2013**

School: Willowglen Academy of Indiana DOE B807

Education Director: Ms Lillian Eldridge

Address: 308 E 21st Avenue
Gary, Indiana

Grade Span: 6-12

Public/Private: Private

Current Enrollment: 10

Targeted Population: Willowglen Academy is a residential treatment facility for adolescents.

Identity: As a residential facility, the Academy exists to provide continued educational opportunities for the students housed. The academy works with local school districts to assist in transferring credits earned at the academy back to their home school.

Curriculum: Willowglen Academy follows the Common Core academic standards.

Testing History: Students at the academy are very transient and test scores are normally not attributed to Willowglen.

Staffing: Willowglen utilizes Indiana licensed teachers in their academic program.

Waiver Requests: The school requests flexibility in selection of textbooks. Additionally, required health and safety are incorporated in the treatment program and will not have separate courses.

Issues: None

Recommendations: Full Five-Year Freeway Accreditation

Willowglen Academy-Indiana

Petition for Freeway School Status May 2013

1. Identify the school entity to be declared a Freeway School.

Willowglen Academy Learning Center is a private school in Gary, Indiana serving grades 6-12 and GED studies. The school is a service component part of Willowglen Academy Residential Program, a licensed childcare institution. The school is located in a Gary residential community area, creating a unique design through which specialty services are delivered. A well articulated mission, clear core values, goals and objectives undergird the philosophical direction of the program and underpins the practical application of methodologies and teaching strategies.

The mission of Willowglen Academy Learning Center is to provide quality education within a therapeutic atmosphere that stresses safety, human dignity, and unconditional positive regard for the right to fair, consistent services. The mission assures students the opportunity to live, grow, learn and participate in society to the fullest extent possible.

School History

Willowglen Academy - Indiana, Inc. was established May 17, 1992. Services were operationalized May 16, 1994 along with the education program. The initial focus of this comprehensive set of services was on the return of children and adolescents to their home community. In response, Willowglen developed a comprehensive integrated service delivery system that recognized and respected a holistic approach, which is essential to address the multiple complex needs of children.

The first week of May 1994, Willowglen Academy Learning Center hires a PhD. Ed Special Education Administrator to develop and oversee the education program and to work collaboratively with surrounding school districts. A teacher was also hired for the facility as the program accepted six (6) residents into our onsite residential program.

By June 16, 1994, Willowglen Academy Learning Center hired a second teacher as the program's residential census increased to fifteen (15). With the rapid admissions to the residential program a third teacher was hired in July along with a Special Education Consultant whose role was to administer the Woodcock Johnson Assessment tool and to perform classroom

observation, conduct behavioral assessments and make recommendations on teaching strategies for newly enrolled students.

By the end of December 1994 a certified physical education instructor was hired; by this time the capacity had increased to twenty-seven (27). Additionally, each classroom was assigned a teacher aide from the point of operationalizing the program to the maximizing census of twenty-seven (27) at the time.

In that same year 1994, construction of the new facilities began. These properties were completed August 1995 increasing the school capacity to forty (40). A fourth classroom teacher was hired to accommodate growth of Willowglen Residential Program. There were ten (10) students per classroom. Classroom assignments and needed support services were made in accordance of age appropriateness and an assessment of developmental skill level and cognitive abilities.

The school has been consistent in its efforts to be in compliance with procedural guides promulgated by state and federal laws. Doing so has enhanced and expanded collaborative relationships with numerous Indiana counties and neighboring states.

Over the years of operation, Willowglen Academy Learning Center has experienced leadership change. Nevertheless, the position of Education Coordinator has been filled by credentialed personnel, each holding a PhD. Ed. Or MA. education degree.

The first commitment of Willowglen Academy Residential Program and Learning Center is to address the individual needs and capabilities of each individual, in the least restrictive environment possible, utilizing the progressively structured program of assessment education, individual group treatment planning, and involvement in a normalizing and supportive community based setting. The school program takes a great deal of pride in the fact that there is an authentic nurturing interaction between staff and students which impacts upon the quality of life for both. Teachers spend time on the milieu before school to assist in the transition from the living space to the classroom and the same occurs after school. The level of involvement by teachers and aides ensures consistency, in supervision, service integration and it minimizes safety concerns.

The Joint Commission on Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations (JCAHO) accredits Willowglen Academy – Indiana, Inc. This accreditation requires a service philosophy and mission statement that embodies belief, values, instruction, best practice principles, and policies and procedures that govern program operation and service delivery. The national accrediting body standards are qualitative. The outcome is determined by the quality of

services provided which is measured through a tracer process. This process includes education and all other service elements noted in the individualized treatment plan.

The Department of Child Services also reviews our education program. As a component part of the residential program, the school has consistently complied with all the required health and safety codes put forth by Indiana Regulations for Child Caring Institutions, Indiana Department of Health and the applicable fire codes.

The second commitment is that of academic excellence. Willowglen Academy Learning Center employs individuals who have at a minimum a bachelor level degree. Each teacher holds a license in the state of Indiana and is qualified to teach assigned content area. With the school being highly structured and therapeutic in nature, social work staff, play a major role in creating and maintaining the holistic approach in the academic environment. The thrust has and continues to be educating the whole child, academically behaviorally and emotionally.

The Learning Center provides educational instruction 6.5 hours per day for 217 school days a year. High School credits are transferable to an individual's local high school upon discharge. Students may earn high school diplomas from their designated local school upon completion of specific educational requirements. Additionally, the school works collaboratively with Lake Ridge Adult Education Program and Work One to ensure older residents in the residential program earn a certificate of completion.

In keeping with the holistic approach, students benefit from extracurricular, social and recreational activities. Residential staff in collaboration with teaching staff, which supervises their involvement, plans many of these. On the other side, teachers plan educational trips to museums, and zoos etc. The planning process is continuous as evidenced by the organization's commitment to strategic planning and ongoing review of its service delivery system. Willowglen Academy Learning Center believes that Freeway Accreditation will enable the school to accomplish its mission, and to remain consistent with the Indiana Department of Education's methods of school improvement.

The Indiana Department of Education has different courses that are required for school to teach. Willowglen Academy, by its comprehensiveness and service design, teaching may occur across disciplines.

2. Provide the demographic data pertinent to this request.

Willowglen Academy is a multiracial, multi-cultural agency serving grades 6-12; however, we do take younger student on an emergency basis. Students

are residents of Willowglen Academy and as such, are wards of the state of Indiana. Most residents are African-American and come from Gary, Indiana and the surrounding areas.

Willowglen Academy differentiates instruction among similarly grouped students for each grade level from 6-12 and GED. Our capacity is 40 students with a maximum teacher to student ration of 10:1. Our program is based on the Indiana Department of Education's Standards as the baseline curriculum of Willowglen, with individualization and supplemental materials provided on a per need basis. At the present time we have 25 students attending our campus based facility and 3 in public school.

3. Identify the statutes and rules to be suspended as a result of this contract.

- A. Willowglen Academy provided a Health and Safety Program for students. The curriculum includes: Teen Health, Disease, Community and Environment, Health and Safety, Emergency Care, Alcohol and Drugs, Character Building. These topics will be covered through programs such as Community Service Programs, groups with Social Worker, Independent Living class, and Girl Talk. Therefore Willowglen Academy School request that **IC 20-30-5-8**, **IC 20-30-5-9** and **IC 20-30-5-11** be suspended.

- B. Willowglen Academy would like to suspend statues and rules concerning textbooks, **IC 20-20-5-2**, **IC 20-26-12-24**, and 511 **IAC6.1-5-5**, to enable Willowglen Academy Personnel to make decisions concerning textbooks appropriate for use within the facility. Since a goal of Willowglen Academy is to return students to public schools, some of the textbooks chosen will be from the selection adopted by the state of Indiana. When possible, we try to use the local school textbooks and supplementary materials. Our intent is to have our student ready to return to public school via using the same materials, this managing the difficulty in transitioning a student from one environment to another. Choices will be made from the state mandated list for Reading, Language Arts, and Mathematics. Supplementary materials will be used for Science and Social Studies since many of our students are functioning below grade level. Willowglen teachers develop their course content-based on the Indiana standards using various resources to supplement already existing information. Willowglen Academy recognizes the importance of textbook selection, but also recognizes the role of teachers in creatively supplementing existing information. When a change in the curriculum is needed, the Curriculum Committee will select a textbook that will prepare students for public school and will address the philosophy/mission of Willowglen Academy.

C. Willowglen Academy is requesting a waiver for Middle School and High School curriculums due to volatile temperament frequently accompany those students who are residents of Willowglen Academy and the fact that we seldom accept students lower than 6th grade. We would like to embrace the flexibility of the Freeway Schools Program in areas of general curriculum required so that the Willowglen Academy curriculum can be more individualized and still meet the instruction in reading, writing, mathematics and would meet many of the requirements of the General Curriculum Requirements related to Middle School, High School and GED. What is more, the unique connection with Willowglen Academy Residential Program, allows for access to subjects that are not taught in the school but are taught as part of the Residential Program. Some examples of these subject areas include:

Independent Living Program

- General work skills
 - Filling out applications
 - Interviewing
 - Interpersonal Relations
- Family and consumer science

The above items are all part of the total education that a student will receive at Willowglen Academy, but are not necessarily taught by Willowglen Academy School. Willowglen would like to suspend the following: 511 IAC 6.11-5-3.5 concerning Middle School, 511 IAC 6.11-5.4 concerning High School.

4. Set forth the minimum educational benefits expected to be attained as a result of this contract

Willowglen Academy is committed to providing a quality education to all residents enrolled in school with an eye toward returning each child to school as he/she demonstrated the necessary academic, social, emotional, and behavioral skills to function in a regular schools setting. One of the missions of Willowglen Academy is to provide students with the opportunity to live, grow, learn and participate in society to the fullest extent possible. In order for our residents to accomplish this, Willowglen will provide for the emotional and physical safety of the residents. This will help our students to develop the self-control, self-regulation, and self-help skills necessary to survive in the school and society. With a safe environment, appropriate curriculum in place and continued emphasis on the development and maintenance of social, emotional and behavioral control, students will be better able to transition into schools and continue to refine their skill levels.

The over-all goal for Willowglen is to prepare our students for an eventual return to the public school at or near their current grade level or a grade level equivalent as stated on their Individual Education Plan (IEP), if applicable. Willowglen Academy is committed to assessing each student's ability via standardized assessments such as the Woodcock Johnson III Behavioral Objective Sequence, SRA, and ISTEP to help pave the way for a return to public school. As such, we have included the provision of a quality education to those children who may have been previously enrolled in an academic honors program for those students is to select a curriculum appropriate school for those students to excel. The standardized assessments are given when students arrive at Willowglen Academy and at the beginning of each subsequent year of residence. This data is compiled and analyzed for program evaluation and improvement.

5. Describe what privileges are to be granted as a result of this contract

The privilege that is to be granted as a result of this contract is the freedom to be flexible in implementing a curriculum that will be beneficial to all students and supports the mission of Willowglen Academy. It will also allow Willowglen to develop an education and behavior plan so that students will be able to return to public school at the appropriate time.

6. Set forth the benchmarks by which the Freeway School will determine that the education benefits are being attained.

Willowglen Academy uses tests to determine the functioning level of students. Upon arrival, an initial educational assessment in Reading Comprehension and Math is administered to determine if a student will need assistance in completing assignments or extended time for completion.

- A. The benchmark that will determine that the educational benefits are being attained include the following:

Woodcock-Johnson Revised (WJ III) Test of Academic Skills, ISTEP, BOS and SRA. The WJ III battery of tests comprise a wider range, comprehensive system for measuring general intellectual ability, specific cognitive abilities, oral language, and academic achievement. The battery of tests has been designed to provide the most valid methods for determining patterns of strength and weaknesses based on actual discrepancy norms. Differentiation may be determined between:

- a) Intra-ability (intra-cognitive, intra-achievement, and intra individual)

- b) Ability-achievement (predicted- achievement, achievement, general intellectual ability/achievement, oral language ability/ achievement discrepancies.)

All student are administered the WJ III upon arrival and annually thereafter. A narrative report and accompanying color bar graph is provided to teachers including “teaching suggestions.” The purpose of the section on “teaching suggestions” is to assist teachers with generic suggestion for initiating the teaching process with new and/or existing students. In this section, suggestions are made relative to practicing or re-teaching certain concepts. Examples follow:

- T practice computing with fractions
- T practice reducing mixed fractions
- T long division with zero’s in the answer
- T practice writing complete sentences with subject verb agreement, correct tense, and correct use of prepositions
- T re-teach how to compute with decimals and/or percentages
- T re-teach how to solve for X or Y
- T re-teach use of daily measurements such as inches, feet, yards

In addition, a computer-generated report outlining the scores made and implications of those scores is provided. Our belief is that residents will improve their overall knowledge via the individualization of curricula based on data gathered from the WJ III. The data includes problems incurred during the testing process, identification of preferred learning style, sub-test scores, and mathematic average of the sub-test scores. Willowglen Academy will strive to raise student abilities by one grade level each school year.

The **ISTEP** is a three-day test based on Indiana’s academic standards of English Language Arts through grade 9. Math through grade 8 and Algebra.

1. It is imperative that students from Willowglen Academy are as “normalized” as possible upon release for residential placement. One way to assist in this process is by having those students who have the social and emotional, and behavioral skills necessary to sit for long periods of time, participate in the standardized testing process to partially determine growth in academic achievement.
- B. Since Willowglen Academy is a residential facility, attendance will be monitored daily and except for illness, court hearing or doctor appointments, students are not absent. Willowglen will maintain a 95% or better attendance rate.

- C. **IARCCA** (Association of Child Care Agencies) has an education outcome measure that looks at positive education outcomes at discharge. Willowglen Academy will work toward pursuing at least a 75% positive outcome on the **IARCCA** Education form.
- D. Willowglen students do not graduate from Willowglen. WGA students will have a GED or sufficient high school credits for graduation commensurate with the ability level of each resident and the home school requirements for each of our students.

7. Identify the strategies for the curriculum to address issues related to: character education, hygiene, alcohol and drugs, sexually transmitted diseases, honesty, respect, abstinence and restraint.

Willowglen Academy's Learning Center is closely connected to the Willowglen Academy Residential treatment program. Students are expected to maintain a high standard of conduct in the school and on the unit. The school offers a health curriculum that is the same as the local district for student in grade 6-12. Social Workers will provide group therapy two days a week to discuss the following topics: character, respect, and honesty. The health curriculum will address the following topics: health and safety, family health, hygiene, sexually transmitted diseases, chemical substance abuse, abstinence and restraint.

8. Give a plan by which students will be able to qualify and earn an academic honors diploma.

Students admitted to Willowglen Academy do not stay for an extended course of study. If a student is enrolled with honors level courses, Willowglen will return the student to the public school to continue the education process.

Willowglen has developed an outstanding relationship with the public school district and will work to make sure the student's needs are met.

9. Note the plan for securing and maintaining a safe and disciplined learning environment for students and teachers.

Willowglen Academy School is a service component part of Willowglen Academy residential program. The school works with Social Workers and Direct Care Counselors to maintain discipline & structure in the school. The WGA Behavior Management Program is based on behavior modification principles and consists of both immediate and delayed feedback. Students earn privileges for positive behavior and receive consequences for negative behavior. Each student signs a contract that they understand the school rules and will abide by them.

10. The contract must identify the quantitative measures that will be used to determine that the terms of the contract are being met.

Willowglen Academy will report attendance rates of student to the Indiana State Board of Education and test scores where applicable.