

**New Jersey Department of Education
Special Education Receiving School Monitoring**

Receiving School: NJ Regional Day School at Jersey City **County:** Hudson

Monitoring Dates: February 3-4, 2004

Monitoring Team: Jennifer DeSaye and Ann Marie Bruder

Background Information:

During the 2002– 2003 school year, the NJ Regional Day School at Jersey City conducted a self-assessment of policies, procedures, programs, services, and student outcomes. This self-assessment component of the monitoring process provided the NJ Regional Day School at Jersey City with an opportunity to evaluate its strengths and areas of need with regard to:

- The provision of a free, appropriate public education (FAPE) for students with disabilities in the least restrictive environment;
- The development and implementation of policies and procedures resulting in procedural compliance; and
- The organization and delivery of programs and services to meet the needs of the students with disabilities.

The self-assessment was designed to identify areas of strength, promising practices, areas that need improvement and areas that may be noncompliant with state and federal requirements. The NJ Regional Day School at Jersey City developed an improvement plan to address identified areas of need.

The New Jersey Department of Education (NJDOE) conducted an on-site monitoring to verify the self-assessment findings, to assess the appropriateness of the improvement plan, and to determine the progress in implementing the plan.

During the monitoring process, the monitoring team reviewed NJ Regional Day School at Jersey City documents such as policies and procedures, student records from sending districts, lesson plans, services as indicated in IEPs, staff evaluations, student count information, master student lists, class lists, schedules of students/ teachers/related service personnel, and other relevant information. Interviews were conducted with the NJ Regional Day School at Jersey City's special education administrators, building principals, special education teachers, related service personnel and parents.

School Strengths:

The NJ Regional Day School at Jersey City is commended for providing extensive opportunities for parental participation in school workshops and training sessions. The NJ Regional Day School offers parents: child care, transportation to and from the session, and interpreters to translate during the workshops. These workshops are based on parent input and parental needs. The Parent Training program includes three Saturday sessions in addition to other times during the school year. The school also has an active PTA. PTA meetings, which are held monthly, also include training information for parents. Child care and transportation are also provided to encourage parental participation at PTA meetings.

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The NJ Regional Day School at Jersey City is also commended for providing students with opportunities for inclusion within the Jersey City Public Schools. Twenty-four students participate and are placed in general education classes throughout the Jersey City School District in various subjects that include but are not limited to reading, math, library, music, art, gym, swimming and language arts and in various grade levels that range from kindergarten through high school. In addition, students from a Jersey City public middle school come to the Regional Day School and work with the students to help them generalize skills they have learned. The program has a positive long term effect on both groups of school students.

The NJ Regional Day School also implements transition programs for their students to prepare their students for adulthood. For some students, the focus is on employment and assisted living situations; while for others the emphasis is on interaction with the community and individual daily living skills.

Areas Demonstrating Compliance with All Standards:

General Provisions, FAPE, Facility Requirements, Discipline and Student Records were determined to be areas of compliance by the NJ Regional Day School at Jersey City during self-assessment and by the NJDOE during the on-site visit.

Section III: Staff Requirements

Summary of Findings:

During self-assessment, the NJ Regional Day School at Jersey City accurately identified themselves compliant in the areas regarding appropriate supervision of physical therapy assistants (PTA) and certified occupational therapy assistants (COTA), supervision of paraprofessionals, job descriptions of paraprofessionals maintained at county office, criminal history verification and having an approved professional development plan.

An area of need was identified during the on-site visit regarding certified/licensed staff.

Area of Need:

Certified/Licensed Staff – During the on-site visit through record reviews and interviews it was determined that the school has employed, since September 2003, a physical education teacher who currently holds only a substitute certificate. This staff member has applied for the PE Certificate of Eligibility through the alternate route program. The Human Resource Department of Jersey City requested an expedited review of the documentation for certification on 1/7/04 after reviewing the certification list for this monitoring. The staff member has not enrolled in the 200 hours of methodology courses required for the alternate route certification yet.

- **The school must revise their improvement plan to include procedures to ensure that all staff members have the proper certification to teach the courses or classes they are assigned. The plan must include in-service, and an administrative oversight component to ensure the consistent, compliant implementation of the procedures.**

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Section V: Individualized Education Plan/Annual Review

Summary of Findings:

During self-assessment, the NJ Regional Day School at Jersey City accurately identified themselves compliant in the areas regarding IEP meeting conducted at least annually, IEP conducted with required NJ Regional Day School at Jersey City participants, IEP conducted with students age 14 and older, as appropriate, signatures of participants present on IEPs, current IEP prior to service delivery, IEP accessibility to teachers and providers, informing teachers and providers of IEP responsibilities, timely implementation of IEPs, observation of proposed placement, statewide testing, and informing parents of progress toward goals and objectives.

During the self-assessment process, the NJ Regional Day School at Jersey City identified concerns in the areas regarding implementation of IEP components relating to the provision of speech as a related service. The receiving school's improvement plan is sufficient to address these areas of need.

An additional area of need was identified during the on-site visit regarding communication to sending district regarding missing IEP components.

Area of Need:

Communication to Sending District Regarding Missing IEP Components – During the on-site visit, through record reviews it was determined that the school does not review the IEPs to ensure that the IEP contains all the required components. In addition, the school does not communicate to sending districts when IEP components are missing. Areas consistently missing include documentation of extended school year consideration and description of extended school year programs, graduation requirements, transition planning and documentation of alternate proficiency assessment.

- **The school must revise their improvement plan to include procedures to ensure that the school reviews IEPs and communicates with sending district when IEP components such as documentation of extended school year consideration and description of extended school year programs, graduation requirements, transition planning and documentation of alternate proficiency assessment. The plan must include staff training and an administrative oversight component to ensure the consistent, compliant implementation of the procedures.**

Section VII: Programs and Services

Summary of Findings:

During self-assessment, the NJ Regional Day School at Jersey City accurately identified themselves compliant in the areas regarding special class program descriptions maintained at county office, certifications for specialized special classes serving students with similar educational needs, collaboration for home instruction, dispensing medication, nursing services, policies and procedures relating to school functions and services, and medical exams for sport teams.

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During the self-assessment process, the NJ Regional Day School at Jersey City identified concerns in the areas regarding class size and age range and teachers trained in CCCSs. The receiving school's improvement plan is sufficient to address these areas of need. During the on-site visit, a review of records and staff interviews indicated that the receiving school has appropriately implemented specific activities to bring about correction in these areas.

No additional areas of need were identified during the on-site visit.

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Summary

On-site special education monitoring was conducted in the NJ Regional Day School at Jersey City on February 3-4, 2004. The purpose of the monitoring visit was to verify the NJ Regional Day School at Jersey City's report of findings resulting from their self-assessment and to review the NJ Regional Day School at Jersey City's improvement plan.

The receiving school is commended for the exceptionally comprehensive review conducted during the self-assessment process. As a result of this review the receiving school was able to identify all but two areas of need and develop an improvement plan that will be sufficient to bring about systemic change. The receiving school is further commended for the prompt implementation of corrective action to address the areas of need identified during the self-assessment process. As a result, many of those identified areas were corrected prior to the on-site visit. Additionally, the receiving school is commended for the many areas that were determined by the receiving school and verified by the Department of Education as compliant with federal and state statutes and regulations.

General Provisions, FAPE, Facility Requirements, Discipline, and Student Records were determined to be areas demonstrating compliance with all standards by the NJ Regional Day School at Jersey City during self-assessment and by the NJDOE during the on-site visit.

Additional areas identified as consistently compliant by the NJ Regional Day School at Jersey City during self-assessment and verified during the on-site monitoring visit include appropriate supervision of physical therapy assistants (PTA) and certified occupational therapy assistants (COTA), supervision of paraprofessionals, job descriptions of paraprofessionals maintained at county office, criminal history verification, having an approved professional development plan, IEP meeting conducted at least annually, IEP conducted with required NJ Regional Day School at Jersey City participants, IEP conducted with students age 14 and older, as appropriate, signatures of participants present on IEPs, current IEP prior to service delivery, IEP accessibility to teachers and providers, informing teachers and providers of IEP responsibilities, timely implementation of IEPs, observation of proposed placement, statewide testing, informing parents of progress toward goals and objectives, special class program descriptions maintained at county office, certifications for specialized special classes serving students with similar educational needs, collaboration for home instruction, dispensing medication, nursing services, policies and procedures relating to school functions and services, and medical exams for sport teams.

During the self-assessment process, the NJ Regional Day School at Jersey City identified areas of need regarding implementation of IEP components relating to the provision of speech as a related service, class size and age range and teachers trained in CCCSs.

The on-site visit identified additional areas of need within the various standards regarding certified/licensed staff and communication to sending district regarding missing IEP components.

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Within forty-five days of receipt of the monitoring report, the NJ Regional Day School at Jersey City will revise and resubmit the improvement plan to the county office of education and to the Office of Special Education Programs to address those areas that require revisions.