

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

Receiving School: Morris County Educational Services Commission
(Morris County ESC)- Regional Day School at Morris and Park
Lake School

County: Morris

Monitoring Dates: April 11-13, 2005

Monitoring Team: Diane Mari, Gregory Margolis, Ann Marie Bruder

Background Information:

During the 2003– 2004 school year, Morris County ESC (Regional Day School at Morris and Park Lake School) conducted a self-assessment of policies, procedures, programs, services and student outcomes. This self-assessment component of the monitoring process provided the Morris County ESC 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 Morris County ESC 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 receiving school's 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 Morris County ESC's special education administrators, building principals, special education teachers, parents and related service personnel.

School Strengths:

The Morris County ESC staff members incorporate specialized techniques and equipment into the student's program to address their individual learning and therapeutic needs. The speech-language specialists use multi-sensory approaches and augmentative communication devices as an integral part of the program.

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The Morris County ESC regularly enlists the services of the New Jersey Commission for the Blind for annual vision screenings. The school has also developed a partnership with the New Jersey Foundation of Dentistry to provide students and their parents with access to a dental hygienist to discuss dental needs.

The Regional Day School at Morris provides the students with the opportunity to participate in community-based activities such as attending movies, shopping in the mall, lunch at a fast food restaurant, bowling and swimming at the local JCC Metro-West. The school provides ample activities to promote social interaction. Membership in scouting troops is available to all students through the school. A partnership program is in place with the Frelinghuysen Middle School in which seventh grade students volunteer their time in the classrooms at the Regional Day School. A similar program has been established with senior citizen organizations.

The Park Lake School also invites guest speakers from a variety of state and local agencies to provide the school community with access to information about meeting the present and future needs of students with disabilities. The Park Lake School is also commended for its community-based resources for the parents and students who attend the school.

Areas Demonstrating Compliance With All Standards:

General Provisions, Staff Requirements, Facility Requirements and Discipline were determined to be areas of compliance by the Morris County ESC during self-assessment and by the NJDOE during the on-site visit.

Section II: Free, Appropriate Public Education (FAPE)

Summary of Findings:

During self-assessment, the Regional Day School at Morris accurately identified themselves compliant in the areas regarding length of school day and year, provision of physical education, services at no cost to parents, extended school year programs and services provided in accordance with IEPs, provision of services as per IEP and provision of occupational therapy (OT), physical therapy (PT) speech-language and counseling services as per IEP.

During the self-assessment process, the Regional Day School at Morris identified concerns in the areas regarding maintenance of hearing aids and program open to observation by LEA and DOE. 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.

During the self-assessment process, the Park Lake School identified concerns in the areas regarding maintenance of hearing aids and program open to observation by LEA and DOE. The receiving school's improvement plan is sufficient to address the area of the observation of programs. 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 for that area. **The Park Lake School's improvement plan is insufficient to address the area of maintenance of hearing aids because it lacks an administrative oversight component to ensure that staff members will be**

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trained when students with hearing aids are enrolled in the program. The plan must be revised to include this component.

No additional areas of need were identified during the on-site visit at the Morris County ESC.

Section V: Individualized Education Plan/Annual Review

Summary of Findings:

During self-assessment, the Morris County ESC accurately identified themselves compliant in the areas regarding IEP conducted with required receiving school participants, IEP conducted with students age 14 and older, as appropriate, signatures of participants present on IEPs, IEP accessibility to teachers and providers, timely implementation of IEPs, observation of proposed placement, statewide testing, implementation of IEP components and informing parents of progress toward goals and objectives.

During the self-assessment process, the Morris County ESC identified concerns in the areas regarding IEP meeting conducted at least annually, current IEP prior to service delivery, communication to sending district regarding missing IEP components and informing teachers and providers of IEP responsibilities. The receiving school's improvement plan is sufficient to address the areas regarding IEP meeting conducted annually, current IEP and informing teachers/providers of IEP responsibilities. 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. **The Morris County ESC's improvement plan is insufficient to address the area of communication to sending districts regarding missing IEP components because it lacks procedures and an administrative oversight component to ensure that the school communicates with sending districts when IEP components such as frequency and duration for related services and short term objectives for identified goals are missing. The plan must be revised to include these components.**

No additional areas of need were identified during the on-site visit at Morris County ESC.

Section VII: Programs and Services

Summary of Findings:

During self-assessment, the Morris County ESC accurately identified themselves compliant in the areas regarding class size and age range, exceptions for class size and age range, special class program descriptions maintained at county office, certifications for specialized populations, special classes serving students with similar educational needs, teachers trained and instructing in core curriculum content standards (CCCSs) and dispensing medication.

During the self-assessment process, the Morris County ESC identified concerns in the areas regarding collaboration for home instruction. The receiving school's improvement plan is sufficient to address this area 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 this area.

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An additional area of need was identified during the on-site visit at the Morris County ESC regarding the need for a school wide curriculum.

Morris County ESC

Areas of Need:

School-Wide Curriculum- During the on-site visit a review of records and staff interviews indicated that the Morris County ESC at does not have a documented curriculum to use as a basis for student instruction.

- **The school must revise its improvement plan to ensure that an appropriate curriculum is developed for each subject and grade level which reflects the core curriculum content standards for students attending the program. The plan must include procedures, staff training and an administrative oversight component to ensure that teachers are instructing using an appropriate curriculum relating to the CCCS.**

Regional Day School at Morris

Areas of Need:

An additional area of need was identified during the on-site visit at the Regional Day School at Morris regarding the employment of a certified school nurse required to implement nursing services.

Nursing Services- During the on-site visit, through staff interviews it was determined that the three registered nurses employed by the Regional Day School at Morris do not hold New Jersey Department of Education school nurse's certification as required by N.J.A.C. 6A:16-2.1(e). While the Morris County ESC Park Lake School employs a certified school nurse, there is no approval of an equivalency waiver in place which permits Regional Day School at Morris to waive the full-time certified school nurse requirement and share the school nurse from the Park Lake School.

- **The school must revise its improvement plan to include procedures to ensure that the required full range of nursing services is provided by employing a full-time certified school nurse. The school may request a waiver of the full-time status through the Regulatory Equivalency and Waiver process in accordance with N.J.A.C. 6A:5-1.1**

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Section VIII: Student Records

Summary of Findings:

During self-assessment the Morris County ESC accurately identified themselves compliant in the areas regarding conformance to pupil record code, return of records upon termination, access to records is limited to authorized persons, access sheets, location of other records specified in central file, daily attendance available to LEAs, written notice of placement to county office and maintenance of student health records.

During the self-assessment process, Morris County ESC identified concerns in the areas regarding written communication to LEAs regarding five days of tardiness/absences. The receiving schools improvement plan is sufficient to address this area 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 this area.

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 Morris County Educational Services Commission (Morris County ESC) on April 11-13, 2005. The purpose of the monitoring visit was to verify the receiving school's report of findings resulting from their self-assessment and to review the receiving school's improvement plan. The Morris County ESC is commended for the comprehensive review conducted during the self-assessment process. As a result of that review the receiving school was able to identify all but two areas of need and develop an improvement plan that with some revision will bring about systemic change. The receiving school is further commended for the many areas determined by the receiving school and verified by the Department of Education as compliant with federal and state statutes and regulations.

General Provisions, Staff Requirements, Facility Requirements and Discipline were determined to be areas of compliance by the Regional Day School at Morris during self-assessment and by the NJDOE during the on-site visit.

During self-assessment the Morris County ESC accurately identified themselves compliant in the areas regarding length of school day and year, provision of physical education, services at no cost to parents, extended school year programs and services provided in accordance with IEPs, provision of services as per IEP, provision of occupational therapy (OT), physical therapy (PT), speech-language and counseling services as per IEP, IEP conducted with required receiving school participants, IEP conducted with students age 14 and older, as appropriate, signatures of participants present on IEPs, IEP accessibility to teachers and providers, timely implementation of IEPs, observation of proposed placement, statewide testing, implementation of IEP components, informing parents of progress toward goals and objectives, class size and age range, exceptions for class size and age range, special class program descriptions maintained at county office, certifications for specialized populations, special classes serving students with similar educational needs, teachers trained and instructing in CCCSs, dispensing medication, conformance to pupil record code, return of records upon termination, access to records is limited to authorized persons, access sheets, location of other records specified in central file, daily attendance available to LEAs, written notice of placement to county office and maintenance of student health records.

During the self-assessment process, the Morris County ESC identified areas of need regarding maintenance of hearing aids, observation of programs, IEP meetings held annually, current IEPs prior to service delivery, communication with sending district regarding missing IEP components, informing teachers/providers of IEP responsibilities, collaboration for home instruction and communication to sending districts regarding excessive tardiness and absences.

The on-site visit identified additional areas of need within the various standards regarding lack of a school wide curriculum and certified school nurse.

Within forty-five days of receipt of the monitoring report, the Morris County ESC 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.