

New Jersey Department of Education Special Education Receiving School Monitoring

Receiving School: Ocean County Vocational-Technical School
(Bricktown, Jackson, Lakehurst, Toms River and Waretown)

County: Ocean

Monitoring Dates: January 18, 19, 20, and February 9, 2006

Monitoring Team: Carmen Fanucci, Karen Frumen, Elaine Lerner, Deborah Magee, Heather Mills-Pevonis, and Dolores Walther

Background Information:

During the 2004–2005 school year, the Ocean County Vocational-Technical School (OCV-TS) conducted a self-assessment of policies, procedures, programs, services, and student outcomes. This self-assessment component of the monitoring process provided OCV-TS 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 OCV-TS 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 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 receiving school's special education administrators, building principals, special education teachers, parents and related service personnel.

School Strengths:

The OCV-TS is commended for building a sense of community commitment with their students by incorporating service learning projects across all vocational disciplines. These projects provide students the opportunity to apply pertinent trade skills in natural employment and community settings. One particular project promotes career education during the National Career and Technical Education Week celebration, where representatives visit public school districts throughout Ocean County.

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The OCV-TS participates in the annual Lacey Holiday Parade where students in various programs collaborated to develop floats with various themes. Building maintenance students not only contributed to the Holiday Parade, they also created wooden step stools for sale at the annual Car Show where proceeds supported student scholarships. These students are to be commended for their help to the community and for their time and energy in promoting vocational education in Southern Ocean County.

Areas Demonstrating Compliance With All Standards:

General Provisions, Free, Appropriate Public Education (FAPE), Staff Requirements, Facility Requirements and Programs and Services were determined to be areas of compliance by the OCV-TS during self-assessment and by the NJDOE during the on-site visit.

Section V: Individualized Education Program (IEP)/Annual Review

Summary of Findings:

During self-assessment, the OCV-TS accurately identified themselves compliant in the areas regarding IEP meeting conducted at least annually, IEP meeting conducted with age appropriate students, signatures of participants present on IEPs, IEP accessibility to teachers and providers, informing teachers and providers of IEP responsibilities, timely implementation of IEPs, observation of proposed placement, implementation of IEP components, and informing parents of progress toward goals and objectives.

During the self-assessment process, the OCV-TS identified concerns in the area regarding IEP meeting conducted with required receiving school participants and current IEP prior to service delivery. The receiving school's improvement plan is sufficient to address the area of current IEP prior to service delivery. 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. **The OCV-TS's improvement plan is insufficient to address the area regarding vocational school teachers attending IEP meetings because it lacks procedures to ensure arrangements are made with sending districts so that the student's vocational teachers attend IEP meetings. While the on-site review determined that teachers provide written documentation of progress towards goals and objectives and proposed vocational programs, participation is mandatory in accordance with N.J.A.C. 6A:14-4.7(e)1ii. Participation may be arranged with the sending districts through alternate methods, such as teleconferencing, to ensure attendance at IEP meetings. The plan must include an administrative oversight component to ensure consistent implementation of the procedures.**

An additional area of need was identified during the onsite visit regarding communication to sending districts concerning missing IEP components such as goals and objectives for special education vocational programs according to N.J.A.C. 6A:14-4.7 (d)1.

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Area of Need:

Communication to Sending Districts Regarding Missing Components- During the on-site visit, record review indicated that the receiving school does not communicate to sending districts concerning missing IEP components such as goals and objectives for special education vocational programs.

- **The school will revise its improvement plan to include procedures to ensure that the school communicates and collaborates with sending districts when IEP components such as goals and objectives for special education vocational programs are missing. The plan must include an administrative oversight component to ensure consistent implementation of the procedures.**

Section VI: Discipline

Summary of Finding:

During self-assessment the OCV-TS accurately identified themselves compliant in the areas regarding standard disciplinary procedures, removal of student pending mediation and due process, changes to program/placement pending mediation and due process, and procedures for termination of student placement.

During the self-assessment process, the OCV-TS identified concerns in the areas regarding notification to sending districts regarding suspensions. 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.

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

Section VIII: Student Records

Summary of Findings:

During self-assessment, the OCV-TS accurately identified themselves compliant in the areas regarding conformance to student records code, access to records limited to authorized persons, access sheets, location of other records specified in central file, daily attendance available to LEAs, written communication to LEAs regarding five days of tardiness/absences, written notice of placement to county office, and maintenance of student health records.

During the self-assessment process, the OCV-TS identified concerns in the areas regarding return of records upon termination of placement. 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.

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

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Summary

On-site special education monitoring was conducted of the OCV-TS on January 18-20 and February 9, 2006. The purpose of the monitoring visit was to verify the OCV-TS's report of findings resulting from their self-assessment and to review the receiving school's improvement plan.

The receiving school 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 one area 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, FAPE, Staff Requirements, Facility Requirements and Programs and Services were determined to be areas of compliance by the OCV-TS during self-assessment and by the NJDOE during the on-site visit.

Areas identified as consistently compliant by the OCV-TS during self-assessment and verified during the on-site monitoring visit included IEP meeting conducted at least annually, IEP meeting conducted with students as appropriate, signatures of participants present on IEPs, IEP accessibility to teachers and providers, informing teachers and providers of IEP responsibilities, timely implementation of IEPs, observation of proposed placement, implementation of IEP components, informing parents of progress toward goals and objectives, standard disciplinary procedures, removal of student pending mediation and due process, changes to program/placement pending mediation and due process, and procedures for termination of student placement, conformance to student records code, access to records limited to authorized persons, access sheets, location of other records specified in central file, daily attendance available to LEAs, written communication to LEAs regarding five days of tardiness/absences, written notice of placement to county office and maintenance of student health records.

During the self-assessment process, the OCV-TS identified areas of need regarding IEP conducted with appropriate participants, current IEPs prior to delivery of services, suspensions and return of records.

The on-site visit identified one additional area of need within the various standards regarding communication to sending district regarding IEP missing components.

Within forty-five days of receipt of the monitoring report, the OCV-TS will revise and resubmit the improvement plan to the Office of Special Education Programs and to the Ocean County Office of Education to address the one area that requires revision.