

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

District: Allamuchy School District

County: Warren

Monitoring Dates: April 4, 2005

Monitoring Team: Tracey Pettiford-Bugg and Jenifer Spear

Background Information:

During the 2003– 2004 school year, the **Allamuchy Township School District** conducted a self-assessment of policies, procedures, programs, services, and student outcomes. This self-assessment component of the monitoring process provided the **Allamuchy Township School District** with an opportunity to evaluate 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 protection of procedural safeguards for students and their families;
- The development and implementation of policies and procedures resulting in procedural compliance; and,
- The organization and delivery of programs and services resulting in positive student outcomes.

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 **Allamuchy Township School District** developed an improvement plan to address identified areas of need.

The Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) 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.

As the first step in the on-site monitoring process, the New Jersey Department of Education (NJDOE) held a focus group meeting for parents and community members, at the **Allamuchy Township School**, on April 4, 2004. Information obtained from that meeting was used to direct the focus of the monitoring visit.

During the on-site visit, the NJDOE team reviewed district documents, including district policies and procedures, student count information, master student lists, class lists, schedules of students, teachers, related service personnel, and other relevant information. A representative sample of student records was also reviewed. Interviews were conducted with the district's special education administrators, building principals, general education and special education teachers, speech therapists and child study team members.

District Strengths:

The district is commended for its commitment to educating students with disabilities in general education settings evidenced by the receipt and implementation of a grant entitled, 'Supporting Students With Disabilities in General Education' which provides such equipment as whiteboards, phonic ears, Kurzweil readers, software, Reading Pens,

New Jersey Department of Education Special Education Monitoring

books on tape, talking calculators and talking Franklin Dictionaries. Additionally the district is committed to hiring dual certified teaching staff. At least one instructional aide is also available for support, as needed, at each grade level.

The district is also commended for their middle school multiple disabilities program that instructs students in academic and functional skills and provides an opportunity for these students to be educated within the district. This program incorporates extensive community-based instruction. The classroom is arranged similar to a studio apartment to allow generalization of the skills learned.

Data Summary

The district is to be commended for their commitment to inclusive placement of students. In the age group from five to twenty-one, 62% of the students are in a general education setting for more than 80% of the day and an additional 23% are there for 40-80% of the day. The district total for these categories is 89.2% in contrast to the New Jersey average of 72%. Only 3.1% of the special education students are placed out of district which is well below the state average of 9.8%. Preschool disabled students are in a self-contained setting with only one student spending part of the day in a general education setting. The district has formulated plans to establish contact with private community preschools to establish an appropriate general education setting as the first option considered for these students.

Areas Demonstrating Compliance With All Standards:

Reevaluation, Eligibility, Discipline, Statewide Assessment, Graduation Requirements, Programs and Services and Student Records were determined to be areas of compliance by the district during self-assessment and by the Office of Special Education Programs during the on-site visit.

Section I: General Provisions

Summary of Findings:

During self-assessment, the district accurately identified compliance in the areas of policies and procedures, parent training and dissemination of IDEA information.

During the self-assessment process, the district identified concerns in the areas of professional development in Goal I, Part I. The district's improvement plan is sufficient to address this area.

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

Section II: Free, Appropriate Public Education (FAPE)

Summary of Findings:

During self-assessment, the district accurately identified compliance in the areas of extended school year, related services of physical and occupational therapy, length of day and year, facilities and certifications.

New Jersey Department of Education Special Education Monitoring

During the self-assessment process, the district identified concerns in the areas of goals and objectives for the related services of counseling. This is discussed in Section VIII, IEP. The district also identified concerns with transfer students and hearing aids. The district's improvement plan is sufficient to address these areas. During the on-site visit, it was determined that the district has successfully implemented activities to bring about correction in these areas.

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

Section III: Procedural Safeguards

Summary of Findings:

During self-assessment, the district accurately identified compliance in the areas of consent, content and provision of notices of meetings, content and provision of written notice, meetings, notices in native language, interpreters at meetings and independent evaluations.

During the self-assessment process, the district identified concerns in the areas of invitations to students to transition meetings. This is discussed in Section X, Transition. The district also identified a concern with surrogate parents. The district's improvement plan is sufficient to address this area. During the on-site visit, it was determined that the district has successfully implemented activities to bring about correction in these areas.

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

Section IV: Location, Referral and Identification

Summary of Findings:

During self-assessment, the district accurately identified compliance in the areas of Child Find, referral process and pre-referral interventions, direct referrals, summer referrals and identification meeting timelines and participants.

During the self-assessment process, the district identified concerns in the areas of health summary and vision and hearing screenings. The district's plan is sufficient to address this area. During the on-site visit, it was determined that the district has successfully implemented activities to bring about correction in these areas.

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

Section V: Protection in Evaluation and Evaluation Procedures

Summary of Findings:

During self-assessment, the district accurately identified compliance in the areas of multi-disciplinary, standardized assessments, functional assessments, written reports signed and dated, bilingual evaluations and independent evaluations.

During the self-assessment process, the district identified concern in the area of acceptance and rejections of reports. The district's plan is sufficient to address this

New Jersey Department of Education Special Education Monitoring

area. During the on-site visit, it was determined that the district has successfully implemented activities to bring about correction in these areas.

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

Section VIII: Individualized Education Program (IEP)

Summary of Findings:

During self-assessment the district accurately identified themselves compliant in the areas of meetings and participants, present level of educational performance, age of majority, implementation dates, annual review and 90-day timelines, provision of IEP to parents and teacher access to and knowledge of the IEP.

During the self-assessment process, the district identified concerns in the areas of considerations and required statements and alignment of goals and objectives with the Core Curriculum Content Standards. The district's improvement plan is sufficient to address these areas of concern. During the on-site visit, it was determined that the district has successfully implemented activities to bring about correction in these areas.

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

Section IX: Least Restrictive Environment (LRE)

Summary of Findings:

During self-assessment, the district accurately identified compliance in the areas of decision making process, least restrictive environment statements, considerations and documentation of supplementary aids and services, regular education access, nonacademic and extracurricular participation and continuum.

During the self-assessment process, the district identified concerns in the areas of general education access for preschool students who are disabled in Part I, Goal I. The district's improvement plan is sufficient to address this concern. The district also identified a concern with the continuum. They indicated a need to provide supplementary instruction to assist students in the general education classroom. The district's improvement plan is sufficient to address this concern.

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

Section X: Transition to Post-School

Summary of Findings:

During self-assessment, the district accurately identified compliance in the areas of agency involvement, agency invitation and age sixteen needed transition services.

During the self-assessment process, the district identified concerns in the areas of age 14 transition service needs, preferences and interests and student invitation. The district's improvement plan is sufficient to address these concerns. During the on-site visit, it was determined that the district has successfully implemented activities to bring about correction in these areas.

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

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

Section XIII: Graduation Not Applicable to This Pre-K to 8 District

Section XIV: Programs and Services

Summary of Findings:

During self-assessment, the district accurately identified compliance in the areas of class size waivers, age range waivers, group sizes for speech, home instruction and consultation time.

During the self-assessment process, the district identified concerns in the area of continuum. This is discussed under Section IX, Least Restrictive Environment.

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

New Jersey Department of Education Special Education Monitoring

Summary

On-site special education monitoring was conducted in the **Allamuchy Township School District** on April 4, 2005. The purpose of the monitoring visit was to verify the district's report of findings resulting from their self-assessment and to review the district's improvement plan. The Allamuchy Township School District is commended for the comprehensive review conducted during the self-assessment process. As a result of the review the school district was able to identify areas of need and develop an improvement plan that with some revision will bring about systemic change. The Allamuchy Township School District is further commended for the many areas determined by the school and verified by the Office of Special Education Programs as compliant with federal and state statutes and regulations.

The district is to be commended for their commitment to inclusive placement of students. In the age group from five to twenty-one, 62% of the students are in a general education setting for more than 80% of the day and an additional 23% are there for 40-80% of the day. The district total for these categories is 89.2% in contrast to the New Jersey average of 72%. Only 3.1% of the special education students are placed out of district which is well below the state average of 9.8%. Preschool disabled students are in a self-contained setting with only one student spending part of the day in a general education setting. The district has formulated plans to establish contact with private community preschools to establish an appropriate general education setting as the first option considered for these students.

At a focus group meeting held on March 7, 2005, parents expressed their satisfaction with many of the district's programs and services. A number of parents of students' ages 5 and older praised the district for their programs that support their children in general education classrooms. Parents expressed that the district offers programs designed to meet the needs of all children, including extra-curricular activities. Additionally, parents viewed the child study team and teachers as being very positive and accessible.

Areas identified as consistently compliant by the district during self-assessment and verified during the on-site monitoring visit included policies and procedures, parent training and dissemination of IDEA information, extended school year, physical and occupational therapy, speech therapy, length of day and year, facilities, certifications, consent, content and provision of notices of meetings, content and provision of written notice, meetings, notices in native language, interpreters at meetings, independent evaluations, Child Find, referral process, pre-referral interventions, direct referrals, summer referrals, identification meeting timelines and participants, multi-disciplinary evaluations, standardized assessments, functional assessments, written reports signed and dated, bilingual evaluations, reevaluation timelines, planning meetings and participants, reevaluations completed by June 30th, eligibility meeting and participants, criteria, statement of eligibility, signatures of agreement and disagreement, copy of evaluation reports to parents, IEP meeting and participants, present levels of education performance, age of majority, implementation dates, annual review timelines, IEPs to parents, 90-day timelines, teacher access to and responsibility for IEPs, decision-making process, least restrictive environment documentation, consideration of supplementary aids and services, general education in district, notification and participation of out-of-district students in extra-curricular activities, preschool transition planning conference, early intervention program to preschool disabled by age three, age sixteen transition services, documentation to case manager, suspension tracking, functional behavior

New Jersey Department of Education Special Education Monitoring

assessment, behavior intervention plan, manifestation determination, interim alternative education setting, statewide assessment participation, approved accommodations and modifications, IEP documentation, alternate assessments, class size waivers, age range waivers, group sizes, consultation time, access and requests, access sheets, maintenance and destruction and documentation of other locations.

During the self-assessment process, the district identified areas of need regarding staff training, counseling goals and objectives, transfer students, hearing aids, surrogate parents, student invitations to transition meetings, health summary, vision and hearing screenings, acceptance and rejection, IEP considerations and required statements, goals and objectives aligned to core curriculum content standards, continuum of programs, age fourteen transition service needs, preferences and interests, and supplementary instruction.

The on-site visit identified no additional areas of need within the various standards. As a result, the improvement plan submitted to the Office of Special Education Programs for approval will be reviewed for final approval. Verification of the implementation of the remaining activities in the improvement plan will be conducted by the County Office of Education.