

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

District: Bayonne **County:** Hudson

Monitoring Dates: January 29, 2001 - February 2, 2001

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Background Information:

During the 1999-2000 school year, the Bayonne School District conducted a self-assessment of policies, procedures, programs, services and student outcomes. The self-assessment included the collection of data and information from various sources within the district to determine if the district's practices regarding the provision of special education programs and services meet federal and state requirements. As the first step in the self-assessment process, the parents, staff and members of the community of the Bayonne School District were invited to attend a public focus group meeting.

A steering committee comprised of administrators, educators, related service providers, students, parents and community representatives was established to review information. Based on the information collected by the district, a report of findings was developed identifying areas of strength and areas that need improvement. The Bayonne School District developed an improvement plan to address the identified areas of need.

A second public focus group meeting was conducted in the district on January 18, 2001 prior to the monitoring visit. The New Jersey State Department of Education facilitated this focus group, which included parents and district representatives. At this meeting, some of the concerns identified by parents were availability of regular education placement with supports for students with disabilities and parental participation in the decision-making process. Parents expressed positive comments about the progress that the district has made in the continuing development of programs and supports for students with disabilities.

The Office of Special Education Programs conducted an on-site monitoring to verify the self-assessment results and to determine the appropriateness of the improvement plan. During the on-site monitoring visit, the NJDOE team reviewed district documentation including policies and procedures, student count information, master student lists, class lists, schedules of students, teachers, and related service providers and other relevant information, including a representative sample of student records. Interviews were conducted with the district's supervisor of special education, assistant supervisors of special education, building principals and vice principals, transition coordinator, guidance counselors, project support personnel, Child Study Team members, speech and language specialists, special education teachers and regular education teachers. Telephone interviews of parents of students with disabilities were also conducted. Additionally, all of the district's school buildings and a representative sample of special education classes and in-class support classes were visited. District compliance with

the requirements of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and the New Jersey Administrative Code for Special Education (N.J.A.C. 6A:14) was assessed.

District Strengths:

The district provides several unique programs that include students with disabilities. Project Independence, a program for high school students with mild and moderate cognitive impairments, assists in raising students' feelings of self-worth by providing them with the necessary skills to live independently.

The Bayonne Senior Teacher Program pairs Bayonne's senior citizens with elementary special education students to assist those students in making a smooth transition from special education classes to regular education classes.

The Student Self-Advocacy Team (SSAT) is a volunteer organization that creates a mentor environment for special education students in grades 7-12. This program assists students with disabilities in acquiring necessary skills to self-advocate, when they are preparing to transition from high school to post-secondary education, careers and independent living. Last year, Bayonne's SSAT was selected as one of the top student advocacy groups in the state of New Jersey.

Section I: General Provisions

Summary of Findings:

During the self-assessment process, the district identified the need to provide a continuum of placement options and training for paraprofessionals and for instructional staff and administrators regarding policies and procedures. The district has developed an improvement plan that is sufficient to address training needs.

Area(s) of Need:

Program Availability-The district identified the need to provide a continuum of placement options for students with disabilities that includes in-class support and an inclusion team-teaching model. The district's improvement plan does not sufficiently address this issue.

- **The district is directed to revise their improvement plan to include specific procedures regarding the development and implementation of these proposed programs.**

Section II: Free, Appropriate Public Education

Summary of Findings:

During the self-assessment process the district identified the need to indicate in IEPs, frequency, duration and location of related services, establish contacts with OT and PT agencies, provide technical assistance to child study teams and administrators, review OT and PT programs, establish OT and PT procedures and monitor transfer students. The improvement plan is insufficient to address these areas of need.

Additional areas of need were identified during the on-site monitoring visit regarding documentation of goals and objectives in IEPs, extended school year, and acceptance and/or rejection of evaluation reports.

Area(s) of Need:

Related Services-The district has identified the need for OTs and PTs to indicate the frequency, duration and location of related services and whether the services are to be provided to students individually or in a group.

- The district is directed to revise the improvement plan to ensure these components are included in IEPs. The improvement plan must also include an administrative oversight component to ensure that related services are consistently being provided by related service personnel and as required in students' IEPs.

Contracts with OT and PT Agencies-The district has identified the need to establish open-ended contracts with OT and PT agencies to provide these services.

- The district is directed to revise the improvement plan to include procedures to ensure that contracts with OT and PT agencies will be established.

Provision of Technical Assistance-The district has identified the need to provide Child Study Teams and administrators with technical assistance regarding FAPE and disciplinary procedures.

- The district is directed to revise the improvement plan to include procedures to determine the effectiveness of the technical assistance sessions.

Review OT and PT Programs-The district has identified the need to have the OT and PT programs reviewed by an outside state-approved to determine the efficiency of its current delivery system.

- The district is directed to revise the improvement plan to include procedures to ensure these improvements are identified and implemented in a timely manner.

Monitoring Transfer Students-The district has identified the need to monitor procedures regarding transfer students.

- The district must revise the improvement plan to specify how it will oversee the implementation of transfer procedures.

Counseling Goals and Objectives-During the on-site monitoring visit, it was determined that goals and objectives for related services are not included in IEPs. In addition, staff indicated that more time is spent performing "crisis" management instead of doing preventative counseling. Staff also indicated that high caseloads prohibit them from meeting with students on a more consistent basis. As a result, counseling services provided by the district are not recommended at IEP meetings.

- The district is directed to revise the improvement plan to include procedures to ensure that goals and objectives for all related services are individually determined and included in IEPs. The improvement plan must include a mechanism that will allow the district to determine the amount of services that need to be provided and how they will provide those services. The improvement plan must also include an administrative oversight component to ensure the consistent implementation of this procedure.

Extended school year- During the on-site monitoring visit, it was determined that the district does not consistently consider or discuss the need for an extended school year (ESY) program for all students with disabilities.

- The district is directed to revise the improvement plan to include procedures to ensure that ESY is considered and discussed for all students with disabilities and that the considerations are appropriately documented in each IEP.

Acceptance/Rejection of Outside Reports- During the on-site monitoring visit, it was determined that the district does not document acceptance or rejection of outside reports or assessments from specialists, other agencies, professionals or school districts, either in whole or in part.

- The district is directed to revise the improvement plan to include procedures to ensure the consistent documentation of the acceptance or rejection of outside reports or assessments.

Section III: Procedural Safeguards

Summary of Findings:

During the self-assessment process, the district identified the need to provide notification regarding transfer of rights, to provide notice of a meeting, for notice of meeting to contain all required components, to adhere to 15-day and 20-day timelines, to provide PRISE in native language and to inform parents that consent is voluntary. The district's improvement plan does not sufficiently address these areas of need.

Additional areas of need were identified during the on-site monitoring visit regarding written notice and Eligibility/IEP conference meetings.

Areas of Need:

Transfer of Rights-The district has identified the need to provide notification of transfer of rights at the age of majority. The district does not inform parents and students, at least three years before the student reaches the age of 18, that all rights will transfer to the student upon reaching the age of majority (unless parent has established guardianship).

- The district is directed to revise their improvement plan to ensure that at least three years before the student reaches the age of 18, parents and students are notified that all rights will transfer to the student on reaching the age of majority.

Notices of a Meeting/Written Notices - The district has identified the need to revise its notice of a meeting forms as well as its written notice forms for students determined eligible for special education and for students determined eligible for speech/language services.

- The district is directed to revise its improvement plan to ensure their notices of a meeting and written notices contain all required components. It is recommended that the district use the notice forms developed by the Office of Special Education Programs.

15/20-day Timelines-The district has identified the need to consistently provide written notice within 15 calendar days of a meeting and to provide written notice within 20-days of receipt of a written parental request.

- The district is directed to revise the improvement plan to include procedures to ensure that written notice is provided in accordance with established timelines.

Native Language - The district has identified the need to provide written notice and PRISE in languages other than English and Spanish. During on-site monitoring, it was noted that notice of meeting letters are not provided in languages other than English and Spanish, and N.J.A.C. 6A:14 is not provided in languages other than English. A review of notice of an identification meeting letters indicated that the district instructs the parents to bring their own interpreters to meetings.

- The district is directed to revise the improvement plan to include procedures to ensure that Notice of a Meeting, Written Notice, PRISE, N.J.A.C.6A:14, and N.J.A.C. 1:6 are provided in the native language of the parent whenever feasible. Additionally, the district must include procedures to ensure that interpreters and translators are provided by the district at no expense to the parents.

Consent-The district identified the need to inform parents that consent is voluntary and may be revoked at any time.

- The district is directed to revise the improvement plan to include procedures to ensure that parents and adult students are informed that consent is voluntary, may be revoked at any time and that revocation is not retroactive.

Section IV: Location, Referral & Identification

Summary of Findings:

During the self-assessment process the district identified the need to maintain written documentation of interventions developed by the PAC team, determine the cause of the district's overrepresentation of minority students, receive referrals from PAC that contain

a clear and consistent statement and to increase interventions prior to referral. The district has developed an improvement plan that is sufficient to address PAC referral statements. Notices have been addressed in Section III of this document.

Additional areas of need were identified during the on-site visit regarding Child Find activities and direct referrals by parents.

Area(s) of Need:

Pre-referral Interventions-The district has identified the need to maintain written documentation of interventions developed by the PAC team.

- The district is directed to revise the improvement plan to include procedures to ensure the documentation of interventions developed by the PAC team.

Overrepresentation of Minority Students-The district has identified the need to determine the cause of the overrepresentation of minority students being referred for special education and related services.

- To assist the district in its data review to determine the factors that may be contributing to the overrepresentation of minorities in special education, the district will participate in training sessions sponsored by the Office of Special Education Programs during the 2001-2002 school year.

Child Find Activities- During the on-site monitoring visit, it was determined through interviews and document review that the district does not conduct sufficient Child Find outreach activities for migrant or homeless students who are potentially disabled. In addition, it was determined that the district's Child Find outreach activities are not conducted throughout the year.

- The district is directed to revise the improvement plan to expand Child Find outreach activities to include migrant and homeless students who are potentially disabled. The district's Child Find outreach activities must be conducted throughout the year. The district must also ensure that outreach information is provided in languages other than English.

Direct Referrals by Parents- During the on-site monitoring, it was determined through interviews that written requests for referrals from parents are not consistently sent to the Child Study Team or the Supervisor of Special Education but are instead sent to the PAC.

- The district is directed to revise the improvement plan to include procedures to ensure that parents are aware they may refer their child to the Child Study Team or the Supervisor of Special Education to determine whether an evaluation is required or they may request interventions in the general education setting by referring their child to PAC. The improvement plan must include an administrative oversight component.

Increase Interventions Prior to Referral-The district has identified the need to increase interventions prior to referral to the Child Study Team.

- The district must revise the improvement plan to include procedures to ensure the implementation of a sufficient amount of interventions has been attempted prior to referral to the child study team.

Section V. Evaluation

Summary of Findings:

During the self-assessment process, the district identified the need to conduct non-discriminatory assessments and to document all components of a speech assessment.

An additional area of need was identified during the on-site visit regarding the functional assessment of students classified as eligible for special education and related services.

Area(s) of Need:

Non-discriminatory Assessments-The district has identified the need to in-service child study team members regarding cultural diversity and the use of non-discriminatory and culturally appropriate assessments.

- The district is directed to revise its improvement plan to include sensitivity training to child study team members and to ensure the use of non-discriminatory and culturally appropriate assessments.

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Speech/Language Reports- The district has identified the need for speech/language reports to include all required components.

- The district is directed to revise its improvement plan to include the required components of a speech/language evaluation.

Functional Assessments- During the on-site monitoring visit, it was determined through record review that functional assessments for students determined eligible for special education and related services did not include interventions documented by the classroom teacher.

- The district is directed to revise its improvement plan to ensure the inclusion of interventions documented by the classroom teacher in the functional assessment report.

Section VI. Reevaluation

Summary of Findings:

During the self-assessment process, the district identified the need to conduct reevaluations within 3 years of classification or sooner, if warranted. The district has developed an improvement plan that is sufficient to address this area of need.

Section VII. Eligibility

Summary of Findings:

During the self-assessment process, the district identified the need to clarify for parents the nature of the eligibility categories and provision of reports to parents. The district has developed an improvement plan that is sufficient to address these areas of need.

Section VIII. IEP

Summary of Findings:

During the self-assessment process, the district identified the need for IEPs to be disseminated to teachers, Behavior Intervention Plans to be included in IEPs, vocational personnel to participate in IEP meetings, regular education teachers participation at meetings, , in-service needs, IEP components, and integration of the Core Curriculum Content Standards into goals and objectives. The district has developed an improvement plan that is insufficient to address these areas of need.

Additional areas of need were identified during the on-site monitoring visit regarding program implementation dates on IEPs, and individualized goals and objectives.

Area(s) of Need:

Dissemination of IEPs to Teachers-The district identified the need for IEPs to be provided to both regular and special education teachers of students with disabilities.

- The district is directed to revise the improvement plan to include procedures to ensure teachers have access to IEPs.

Behavior Intervention Plans-The district has identified the need for Behavior Intervention Plans (BIPs) to be included in IEPs when intervention is required.

- The district is directed to revise the improvement plan to include procedures to ensure that BIPs are developed when behavioral interventions are required.

Participation at IEP Meetings-The district has identified the need for vocational school personnel to participate in IEP meetings when a student attends a shared-time county vocational school or an area vocational technical school. The district has also identified the need to ensure participation of regular education teachers at the middle and high schools.

- ◆ The district is directed to revise the improvement plan to include procedures to ensure that all required participants attend IEP meetings.

Required Components in IEPs-The district has identified the need to monitor all IEPs to ensure that all required components are included.

- The district is directed to revise the improvement plan to ensure that all required IEP components are included in the district's format. It is recommended that the district use the state developed IEP.

Integration of the Core Curriculum Content Standards into the IEP-The district has identified the need to closely monitor the integration of the Core Curriculum Content Standards into students' IEPs and the daily lesson plans of special education teachers to enhance the ability of all students to take and pass statewide assessments. During the on-site monitoring visit, it was determined that IEP goals and objectives were copied from the Core Curriculum Standards and were not individualized for each student, nor were there standards with which to evaluate a student's progress on the goals and objectives.

- The district is directed to revise the improvement plan to include procedures that will ensure that the Core Curriculum Content Standards are integrated into students' IEPs and reflected in daily lesson plans and to ensure goals and objectives are individualized to meet the needs of students.

Implementation Date- During the on-site monitoring visit, it was determined that students' IEPs did not consistently contain start and end dates for programs and services.

- The district is directed to revise the improvement plan to include procedures to ensure implementation dates are consistently indicated in IEPs.

Section IX. Least Restrictive Environment

Summary of Findings:

During the self-assessment process, the district identified the need to provide more opportunities for inclusion. The district has developed an improvement plan that sufficiently addresses this issue.

Section X. Transition to Preschool

Summary of Findings:

A. EIP to Preschool

During the self-assessment process, the district identified the need for pre-school Child Study Teams to participate in the transition planning conference, for the timely implementation of preschoolers' IEPs and for preschoolers to be evaluated during the summer months. The district has developed an improvement plan that does not sufficiently address these areas of need.

An additional area of need was identified during the on-site monitoring visit regarding inclusive preschool considerations for preschoolers.

Area(s) of Need:

Participation in the Transition Planning Conference-The district has identified the need for child study team members to be included transition planning conferences.

- The district is directed to revise the improvement plan to include procedures to ensure that members of the district's preschool child study team members participate at all EIP transition planning conferences.

Timely Implementation of IEPs and Placement-The district has identified the need to implement the initial IEP of preschoolers no later than age three.

- The district is directed to revise the improvement plan to include procedures to ensure that preschoolers with disabilities have their initial IEP developed and implemented by age three. The improvement plan must also include an administrative oversight component to ensure the consistent implementation of this procedure.

Evaluations during the Summer Months-The district has identified the need to have preschool students evaluated by Child Study Teams and speech-language therapists during the month of August.

- The district is directed to revise the improvement plan to ensure that when necessary, child study team members and speech-language therapists are available to evaluate preschoolers during the summer months.

Inclusive Preschool Consideration- During the on-site monitoring visit, it was determined that although there are a number of community-based preschools which could provide inclusive settings for district preschoolers with disabilities, such placements are not consistently considered or discussed at IEP meetings.

- The district is directed to revise the improvement plan to ensure that inclusive settings for preschoolers are considered and discussed for all preschoolers.

B. Transition from School to Post-school

During 1999-2000, NJDOE representatives provided assistance to the district in the area of post-secondary transition. Issues included documentation of student invitation to the IEP meeting, documentation of the process used to determine student interests and preferences; IEP documentation of: the statement of transition services needs, the statement of needed transition services, justification for not providing transition services, and alternate strategies for agency failure to provide transition services; agency invitation to meetings for in-district students; increased internal procedures to ensure the involvement and participation of identified agencies when they fail to send a representative to the meeting.

During the self-assessment process, the district identified the need to invite the student and agency to transition meetings, expand internships; establish a post-secondary tracking system, identify a liaison person for post secondary resources, discussion of transition at all meetings, placement of students in local businesses, survey graduates

and the need to arrange transition meetings at a convenient time. Although the district has begun to address transition concerns, systemic implementation of procedures has not yet occurred. The district has developed an improvement plan that is sufficient to address internship programs and tracking systems.

Additional areas of need were identified during the on-site monitoring visit regarding the need to consider students' interests and preferences, the notification of parents regarding meetings, a statement of transition services in IEPs, and procedures to follow when an agency fails to participate in meetings. Notices are address in Section III of this document.

Area(s) of Need:

Invitations to Agencies/Students-The district has identified the need to invite agencies responsible for providing and/or paying for transition services to IEP meetings and to invite students age 14 and above.

- The district is directed to revise the improvement plan to include procedures to ensure that agencies responsible for providing and/or paying for transition services and students are invited to IEP meetings and documentation of the letter of invitation is included in the student's record.

Consideration of Student's Interests and Preferences- During the on-site monitoring visit, it was determined that guidance counselors often assess students' interests and preferences, however this information is not consistently documented in students' IEPs. Furthermore, students' desired post-outcomes, along with their preferences and interests are not discussed at IEP meetings.

- The district is directed to revise the improvement plan to include procedures to ensure that students' desired post-outcomes, along with their preferences and interests are discussed at IEP meetings.

Statement of Transition Services Needs/ Statement of Needed Transition Services- During the on-site monitoring visit, it was determined that student interests, preferences and identified post-school outcomes are not consistently reflected in the student's course of study and specific courses of study are not listed as part of the student's Transition Services Needs. When there is a change to the student's course of study, the district does not consistently reconvene the IEP team to revise the IEP. Additionally,

- The district is directed to revise the improvement plan to include procedures to ensure that all transition components are included in the IEP and that the IEP team is reconvened when there are changes to a student's program.

Identification of Post Secondary Resource Liaison-The district has identified the need to document in students' IEPs, the person(s) responsible to serve as a liaison to post-secondary resources and for making referral to resources as appropriate.

- The district is directed to revise the improvement plan to include procedures to ensure the identification in IEPs of the person(s) responsible to serve as a

liaison to post-secondary resources and for making referrals to the appropriate resource.

Job Placements in Local Businesses-The district has identified the need to have students with disabilities placed at jobs within the local business community.

- The district is directed to revise the improvement plan to include procedures to ensure that students with disabilities have employment opportunities in the local business community.

Agency Failure to Provide Transition Services/ Attend IEP Meeting - During the on-site monitoring visit, it was determined that the district does not have a procedure to follow when an outside agency fails to provide transition services or fails to attend transition meetings.

- The district is directed to revise the improvement plan to include procedures to ensure the provision of services to students with disabilities when an outside agency fails to attend and/or provide transition services.

Section XI: Discipline

Summary of Findings:

The district identified in the self-assessment document the need to forward written notification of a student's removal to the case manager, the need for a tracking system; the need to conduct a manifestation determination, to develop a behavioral assessment instrument, and the need to hire a Behavior Specialist. The district's improvement plan does not sufficiently address these areas of need.

An additional area of need was identified during the on-site visit regarding the provision of procedural safeguards for students identified as potentially educationally disabled.

Areas of Need:

Notification of the Case Manager-The district has identified the need to notify the case manager when a classified student is going to be suspended.

- The district is directed to revise the plan to include procedures to ensure the notification of the case manager when a classified student is going to be suspended.

Tracking of Suspensions-The district has identified the need for case managers and/or vice principals to monitor or track the number of consecutive and/or cumulative days that a student with disabilities is suspended.

- The district is directed to revise the plan to include procedures to ensure that case managers and/or vice principals have a system in place to track the number of consecutive or cumulative days that a student with disabilities is suspended.

Manifestation Determinations-The district has identified the need for Child Study Teams to conduct manifestation determinations for students with disabilities suspended for ten or more days.

- The district is directed to revise the improvement plan to include procedures to ensure that all members of the IEP team convene a meeting to conduct manifestation determinations for students with disabilities suspended ten or more days, or when a series of short-term removals constitute a change of placement.

Functional Behavior Assessments and Behavior Intervention Plans-The district has identified the need to develop Functional Behavioral Assessment plans using comprehensive standardized Behavioral Assessments for students referred for behavioral issues and to include the Behavioral Assessment outcomes when developing and implementing appropriate Behavioral Intervention Plans (BIPs).

- The district is directed to revise the improvement plan to include procedures to ensure that all members of the IEP team convene to develop a Functional Assessment plan and to include the Behavioral Assessment outcomes when developing and implementing Behavioral Intervention Plans (BIP).

Provision of Procedural Safeguards- During the on-site monitoring, it was determined through interviews and record review that the district does not afford Procedural Safeguard rights to suspended students identified as potentially educationally disabled.

- The district is directed to revise its improvement plan to include procedures to ensure that students who are identified as potentially disabled are afforded their procedural safeguard rights.

Section XII: Statewide Assessment:

Summary of Findings:

According to information provided by the district for the 1998-1999 academic year, 98% of the students with disabilities took the statewide assessment. For the grade eight Proficiency Assessment, 98% of the students took the test with accommodations, while 2% took it without accommodations. In regard to the HSPT, 99% took the test with accommodations, while 1% took the test without accommodations. Further, 88% of students with disabilities took the grade-eight proficiency test and 66% of 11th grade students with disabilities took the HSPT.

An area of need was identified during the on-site monitoring visit regarding documentation of modifications and accommodations in students' IEPs.

Area(s) of Need:

Modifications and Accommodations- During the on-site monitoring visit, it was determined the district inconsistently documented the students' required modifications and/or accommodations for statewide assessments.

- The district is directed to revise the improvement plan to include procedures to ensure that required modifications and/or accommodations for Statewide Assessments are documented in students' IEPs.

Section XIII: Graduation

Summary of Findings:

Areas of need were identified during the on-site monitoring visit regarding documentation in IEPs of graduation requirements, participation in graduation exercises, the provision of notice for graduation and the participation of out-of-district students in district graduation exercises.

Areas of Need:

Graduation Requirements in IEPs- During the on-site monitoring visit, it was determined through record review that graduation requirements are not documented in students' IEPs.

- The district is directed to revise the improvement plan to include procedures to ensure the documentation of graduation requirements in students' IEPs.

Notice of Graduation- During the on-site monitoring visit, it was determined that the district does not provide Notice of Graduation to parents or adult students.

- The district is directed to revise the improvement plan to include procedures to ensure that parents and adult students are provided with notice prior to graduation.

Out-of-District Students' Participation in Graduation- During the on-site monitoring visit, a review of records indicated that the district does not document that students with disabilities in out-of-district placements are included in senior activities and graduation exercises.

- The district is directed to revise the improvement plan to include procedures to ensure that students with disabilities placed in out-of-district placements are provided the opportunity to participate in the district's graduation activities and ceremonies.

Section XIV: Programs and Services

Summary of Findings:

During the self-assessment process, the district identified the need to expand its resource program, to hire an additional Child Study Team and to hire additional aides to reduce class size.

Additional areas of need were identified during the on-site monitoring visit regarding the documentation of the prescribed amount of home instruction, IEP revisions for changes in placement and waiver requests.

Areas of Need:

Program Expansion-The district has identified the need to expand the district's resource program.

- The district is directed to revise its improvement plan to ensure the district follows appropriate procedures to expand its existing programs and to ensure it has sufficient staff to complement this expansion.

Child Study Team Services-The district has identified the need to hire an additional Child Study Team and additional aides. Additionally, during the on-site monitoring visit, it was determined that there is insufficient administrative oversight to ensure that student IEPs are being fully implemented.

- The district is directed to revise its improvement plan to include procedures to ensure the monitoring of district programs and caseloads to determine any future personnel needs. The improvement plan must also include an administrative oversight component to ensure the timely implementation of IEPs by district staff.

Waivers- During the on-site monitoring visit, it was determined that class size and age range waivers were not requested from the County Office of Education.

- The district is directed to revise its improvement plan to include procedures to ensure that waivers are requested.

Home instruction- During the on-site monitoring visit, it was determined that IEPs were not revised to reflect home instruction as the student's program and placement.

- The district is directed to revise the improvement plan to include procedures to ensure the IEP is appropriately revised to reflect home instruction as the student's placement.

Section XV: Student Records

Summary of Findings:

An area of need was identified during the on-site visit regarding the documentation in the central file of the location of other records.

Area of Need:

Documentation of Other Records-During the on-site monitoring visit, it was determined that the location of other files/records was not identified on students' central (cumulative) files.

- The district is directed to revise the improvement plan to ensure that all central (cumulative) files document the location of other records.

SUMMARY

An on-site special education monitoring was conducted in the Bayonne School District on January 29 through February 2, 2001. The purpose of the monitoring was to verify the district's report of findings resulting from self-assessment and to review the appropriateness of the district's improvement plan. As a result of the thorough and comprehensive review conducted by the district during the self-assessment process, the district was able to self-identify a number of areas that require improvement. Furthermore, the district was able to develop an improvement plan that with revisions will be sufficient to correct the areas of need identified during the self-assessment.

A focus group meeting was held in the district on January 18, 2001 prior to the monitoring visit. The New Jersey State Department of Education facilitated this focus group, which included parents and district representatives. At this meeting, parents expressed positive comments about the progress that the district has made in the development of programs and supports for students with disabilities. Some parents, however, identified concerns regarding regular education placement options for classified students and parental participation in the decision-making process.

The district provides several unique programs that include Project Independence, a program for high school students with mild and moderate cognitive impairments, the Bayonne Senior Teacher Program, and the Student Self-Advocacy Team (SSAT). Last year, Bayonne's SSAT was selected as one of the top student advocacy groups in the state of New Jersey.

The self-assessment document identified areas of need within the standards regarding staff development, program availability, related services, notices, timelines, overrepresentation of minority students in special education, transition and discipline.

In addition to the areas of need self-identified by the district, the on-site monitoring identified additional needs regarding notices, related services, Child Find outreach activities, program availability, documentation issues, extended school year, referrals, assessments, re-evaluations, participation at meetings, IEPs, transition, discipline, graduation, and student records.

Within forty-five (45) days of receipt of this monitoring report, the district will revise and resubmit its improvement plan to the Office of Special Education.