

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

**District:** Beverly City School District      **County:** Burlington

**Monitoring Dates:** October 21, 22, 23, 24, 2002

**Monitoring Team:** Arlene Popovici, Patricia Fair

***Background Information:***

During the 2001–2002 school year, the Beverly City School District conducted a self-assessment of policies, procedures, programs, services, and student outcomes. This self-assessment component of the monitoring process provided the Beverly City School District 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 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 Beverly City 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 St. Joseph's (annex) School on October 15, 2002. 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, including a representative sample of student records. 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 continued commitment to establishing and maintaining programs that address the individual needs of students and their families. This is apparent from the variety of programs that are offered during the school day and after hours. The district's child study team members are also commended for the level of documentation maintained in student files.

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The district provides an Alternative program (in St. Joseph's School Annex) for disaffected students who would otherwise attend the Beverly School. These students are referred by teachers and parents and can attend this alternative site for grades 2-3, 4-5, and 6. There are currently 4 classified students within the population of 23 regular education students. These students are integrated with other regular education students and remain in their home school district in a smaller environment with supports as needed.

Champs program is provided to students who are having difficulty with the transition from kindergarten to first grade. There are four to six students who work with a teacher in the morning on literacy and math and then return to their first grade class in the afternoon.

Pride Committee works with parents and other family members with a different activity every month. They have recently provided computer training for parents and grandparents.

Library Night provides an opportunity for the students to bring their parents to the school library to listen to an author give a presentation.

A Service Dog will be raised by the students for one year until it is ready to move on to the next level of intensive training with the Caring Canines Organization.

The Perkins Art Center of Moorestown provides artists and musicians who work with different grade levels of students on a rotating basis.

The PAPPY Program (Parents As Partners in Preparing Youngsters) provides exposure to a variety of activities that family and community members can participate in together; such as holiday trips to Longwood Gardens and Radio City Music Hall.

### ***Areas Demonstrating Compliance With All Standards:***

**Eligibility, Statewide Assessments, Graduation Requirements, 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 themselves compliant in the areas of policies and procedures and dissemination of IDEA information.

An area of need was identified during the on-site visit regarding effectiveness of staff development.

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### **Area(s) of Need:**

**Staff Development** – During the on-site visit, staff interviews indicated that the district does not have a mechanism in place to determine the effectiveness of the training it provides.

- **The district will revise its improvement plan to include procedures to ensure it develops and implements a system to determine the effectiveness of any staff development it provides.**

### ***Section II: Free, Appropriate Public Education (FAPE)***

#### **Summary of Findings:**

During self-assessment the district accurately identified themselves compliant in the areas of extended school year, provision of programs, length of school day and year, transfer students and certifications

Areas of need were identified during the on-site visit regarding the location of the provision of related services, and facilities. The county office has been notified of the facilities issues.

### **Area(s) of Need:**

**Related services** – During the on-site visit, a review of records and interviews with staff indicated that the location of the provision of related services is not included in the IEP.

- **The district will revise its IEP format to ensure it documents the location of related services within the IEP.**

### ***Section III: Procedural Safeguards***

#### **Summary of Findings:**

During self-assessment the district accurately identified themselves compliant in the areas of surrogate parent, having interpreters at meetings, and independent evaluations.

During the self-assessment process, the district identified concerns in the areas of consent (with regard to undo delay), notice of meetings, written notice, and notice in native language. The district's improvement plan is sufficient to address written notice. The district's improvement plan is insufficient to address consent, notice of a meeting and notice in native language because it lacks procedures and an administrative oversight component to bring about the required changes. The plan needs to be revised to include these elements.

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

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### **Section IV: Location, Referral and Identification**

#### **Summary of Findings:**

During self-assessment the district accurately identified themselves compliant in the areas of Child Find 3-21, referral process, direct referrals (parent and staff), and health summary.

During the self-assessment process, the district identified concerns in the areas of pre-referral interventions and Identification meeting timelines (20 days). The district's improvement plan is sufficient to address the area of pre-referral interventions. The district's improvement plan is insufficient to address the area of identification meeting timelines because it lacks procedures and an administrative oversight component to bring about the required changes. The plan needs to be revised to include this component.

An additional area of need was identified during the on-site visit regarding vision and hearing screenings.

#### **Area(s) of Need:**

**Vision and Hearing Screenings** – During the on-site visit, review of records and interviews with staff indicated that when referrals are received from parents, vision and hearing screenings are not consistently completed prior to identification meetings.

- **The district will revise its improvement plan to include procedures to ensure that when a direct referral is received from a parent, a vision and hearing screening is completed prior to the identification meeting. The plan must include an administrative oversight component to ensure the consistent, compliant implementation of the procedures.**

### **Section V: Protection in Evaluation and Evaluation Procedures**

#### **Summary of Findings:**

During self-assessment the district accurately identified themselves compliant in the areas of standardized assessments and bilingual evaluations.

During the self-assessment process, the district identified concerns in the areas of multi-disciplinary evaluations and acceptance and rejection of reports. The district's improvement plan is insufficient to address the area of multi-disciplinary evaluations because it lacks procedures, in-service, a mechanism to determine the effectiveness of the training and an administrative oversight component to bring about the required changes. The plan needs to be revised to include these elements. The district's improvement plan is sufficient to address the area of acceptance and rejection of reports.

Additional areas of need were identified during the on-site visit regarding written reports and functional assessments.

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### **Area(s) of Need:**

**Written Reports** – During the on-site visit, a review of records indicated that reports are not consistently dated. As a result, one cannot determine when the report was developed.

- **The district will revise its improvement plan to include procedures to ensure reports are dated by the evaluator. The plan must include an administrative oversight component to ensure the consistent, compliant implementation of the procedures.**

**Functional Assessments** – During the on-site visit, a review of records and interviews with staff indicated that teacher and parent interviews are not consistently completed as part of the functional assessment.

- **The district will revise its improvement plan to include procedures to ensure that all components of functional assessments are completed. The plan must include an administrative oversight component to ensure the consistent, compliant implementation of the procedures.**

### ***Section VI:   Reevaluation***

#### **Summary of Finding:**

During self-assessment the district accurately identified themselves compliant in the areas of planning meetings and completion of preschool reevaluations by June 30.

During the self-assessment process, the district identified concerns in the area of 3 year timelines. The district's improvement plan is sufficient to address this area.

An additional area of need was identified during the on-site visit regarding reevaluation planning meeting participants.

#### **Area(s) of Need:**

**Participants** – During the on-site visit record review and interviews with staff indicated that regular education teachers are not consistently in attendance at reevaluation planning meetings.

- **The district will revise its improvement plan to include procedures to ensure regular education teachers are consistently in attendance at reevaluation planning meetings. The plan must include an administrative oversight component to ensure the consistent, compliant implementation of the procedures.**

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### **Section VIII: Individualized Education Program (IEP)**

#### **Summary of Findings:**

During self-assessment the district accurately identified themselves compliant in the areas of meeting, participants, considerations and required statements, PLEP statements, goals and objective linked to the core curriculum standards, age of majority, implementation dates, annual review timelines, and IEPs to parents.

During the self-assessment process, the district identified concerns in the areas of 90 day timelines, program changes inconsistently documented and teacher responsibility. The district's improvement plan is sufficient to address the area of 90 day timelines. During the on-site visit, a review of records and staff interviews indicated that the district has implemented specific activities to bring about the correction in this area. The district's improvement plan is insufficient to address the areas of teacher responsibility and documentation of program changes because it lacks procedures, in-service, a mechanism to determine the effectiveness of the in-service and an administrative oversight component to bring about the required changes. The plan needs to be revised to include these elements.

An additional area of need was identified during the on-site visit regarding participants.

#### **Area(s) of Need:**

**Participants** – During the on-site visit a review of records indicted that regular education teachers do not consistently attend IEP meetings of students who are in self-contained programs.

- **The district will revise its improvement plan to include procedures to ensure that regular education teacher attend IEP meetings for students who are placed in self-contained programs in the event those students are or may be receiving some educational services in a regular education setting. The plan must include an administrative oversight component to ensure the consistent, compliant implementation of the procedures.**

### **Section IX: Least Restrictive Environment (LRE)**

#### **Summary of Findings:**

During self-assessment the district accurately identified themselves compliant in the areas of regular education access, participation in nonacademic and extracurricular activities, and continuum of programs.

During the self-assessment process, the district identified concerns in the areas of the decision-making process, LRE documentation, and consideration of supplemental aids and services. The district's improvement plan is insufficient to address these areas because it lacks procedures, in-service, a mechanism to determine the effectiveness of the training and an administrative oversight component to bring about the required changes. The plan needs to be revised to include these components.

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

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### **Section X: Transition to Post-School**

#### **Summary of Findings:**

During the self-assessment process, the district identified concerns in the areas of preferences and interests and the identification of a liaison. The district's improvement plan is insufficient to address these areas because it lacks procedures, in-service, a mechanism to determine the effectiveness of the training and an administrative oversight component to bring about the required changes. The plan needs to be revised to include these components.

Additional areas of need were identified during the on-site visit regarding age 14 transition service needs and student/agency invitations.

#### **Area(s) of Need:**

**Age 14 Transition Service Needs** – During the on-site visit, record review and interviews with staff indicated that transition service needs are not identified for students who are 13 and who will be turning 14 within the implementation dates of the current IEP.

- **The district will revise its improvement plan to include procedures to ensure that transition services needs are identified for those students who will be turning 14 within the implementation dates of the current IEP. The plan must include in-service, a mechanism to determine the effectiveness of training and an administrative oversight component to ensure the consistent, compliant implementation of the procedures.**

**Student/Agency Invitation** - During the on-site visit, record review and interviews with staff indicated that students and agencies who may provide transition services are not invited to IEP meetings where transition will be discussed.

- **The district will revise its improvement plan to include procedures to ensure that students and agency representatives are invited to attend transition meetings. The plan must include an administrative oversight component to ensure the consistent, compliant implementation of the procedures.**

### **Section X: Transition to Preschool**

#### **Summary of Findings:**

During self-assessment the district accurately identified themselves compliant in the area of preschool transition planning conference.

During the self-assessment process, the district identified concerns in the area of early intervention program to preschool by the age of 3. The district's improvement plan is insufficient to address this area because it lacks procedures, in-service, a mechanism to determine the effectiveness of the training and an administrative oversight component to bring about the required changes. The plan needs to be revised to include this component.

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

### ***Section XI: Discipline***

#### **Summary of Findings:**

During self-assessment the district accurately identified themselves compliant in the areas of suspension tracking, FBA, manifestation determination, interim alternative education settings, and procedural safeguards.

During the self-assessment process, the district identified concerns in the areas of documentation to case manager and behavior intervention plans. The district's improvement plan is insufficient to address these areas because it lacks procedures, in-service, a mechanism to determine the effectiveness of the training and an administrative oversight component to bring about the required changes. The plan needs to be revised to include these components.

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

### ***Section XIV: Programs and Services***

#### **Summary of Findings:**

During self-assessment the district accurately identified themselves compliant in the areas of class size waivers, age range waivers, home instruction and consultation time.

During the self-assessment process, the district identified concerns in the areas of descriptions of special education classes and employing sufficient staff. The district's improvement plan is sufficient to address 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 Beverly City School District on October 21, 2002. 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 district is commended for the exceptionally comprehensive review conducted during the self-assessment process. As a result of that review the district was able to identify nearly all areas of need and develop an improvement plan that with some revision will bring about systemic change. The district is further commended for the many areas determined by the district and verified by the Office of Special Education Programs as compliant with federal and state statutes and regulations.

At a focus group meeting held prior to the monitoring visit, parents overwhelmingly expressed their satisfaction with the district's many individualized programs and services. The district's staff is considered to be very supportive and informative. The parents feel that the district's staff goes above and beyond what is required to provide appropriate programs for the students.

Areas identified as consistently compliant by the district during self-assessment and verified during the on-site monitoring visit included policies and procedures, dissemination of IDEA information, extended school year, provision of programs, length of day and year, transfer students, certifications, surrogate parents, having interpreters at meetings, independent evaluations, Child-Find 3-21, referral process, direct referrals from parents and staff, health summaries, standardized assessments, bilingual evaluations, planning meetings, completion of preschool evaluations by June 30<sup>th</sup>, IEP meetings, participants, considerations and required statements, PLEP statements, goals and objectives linked to the core curriculum standards, age of majority, implementation dates, annual review timelines, IEPs given to parents, regular education access, out of district nonacademic and extracurricular activities, continuum of programs, preschool transition planning conference, suspension tracking, functional behavior assessments, manifestation determination meetings, interim alternative education settings, procedural safeguards, class size/waivers, age range/waivers, home instruction, and consultation time.

During the self-assessment process, the district identified areas of need regarding consent (with regard to undo delay), written notice, notice in native language, pre-referral interventions, identification meeting timelines (20 days), multi-disciplinary evaluations, acceptance/rejection of reports, 3 year timelines, 90 day timelines, teacher responsibility, program changes, decision making process, LRE documentation, consideration of supplementary aids and services, Early Intervention Program to Preschool Disabled by age 3, transition preferences and interests, identification of transition liaison, documentation of discipline to case manager, behavioral intervention plans, description of special classes, and hiring a district LDT-C.

The on-site visit identified additional areas of need within the various standards regarding staff development, related services, provision of speech and language services, vision and hearing screenings, written reports, functional assessments, participants at IEP meetings, age 14 transition service needs, and student/agency invitation to transition meetings.

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Within forty-five days of receipt of the monitoring report, the Beverly City School District will revise and resubmit the improvement plan to the Office of Special Education Programs to address those areas that require revisions.