

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

**District:** Bradley Beach

**County:** Monmouth

**Monitoring Dates:** February 18, 2004

**Monitoring Team:** Barbara J. Tucker, Vanessa L. Leonard

***Background Information:***

During the 2002–2003 school year, the **Bradley Beach School District** conducted a self-assessment of policies, procedures, programs, services, and student outcomes. This self-assessment component of the monitoring process provided the Bradley Beach 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 Bradley Beach School District developed an improvement plan to address identified areas of need.

The Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) conducted a comprehensive desk audit, held a public focus group meeting for parents and community members at the Bradley Beach Elementary School on February 10, 2004 and conducted parent interviews to verify the self-assessment findings, to assess the appropriateness of the improvement plan, and to determine the progress in implementing the plan. Based on these activities, a determination was made by staff from the Office of Special Education Programs that the district had conducted a thorough and accurate review during the self-assessment process and had developed a plan that will appropriately address all areas of identified need.

**District Strengths:**

The district is commended for its **After School Homework Program** which oversees the completion of homework assignments and provides instructional assistance to students in both regular and special education. The program is open to students in grades 5 through 8 and meets three days a week.

The district is also commended for its **Library Program** which is provided to all students in the district as a once a week special. The program is serviced by a certified Learning Disabilities Teacher/Consultant (LDT/C) and Reading Specialist who provides reading assistance to any child who is experiencing difficulty in the area of reading.

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**B.E.A.C.H.** (Become an Educated Advocate for your Child's Happiness) is a parent support group for parents of children with special needs. The group's goal is to help parents understand and become educated partners in their child's special education needs and is open to all parents within the district.

### **Part One Data Summary:**

Bradley Beach is a district which has struggled to reduce its classification rate, which is 28.6%. Staff indicated that a major contributor to this high classification rate is the number of classified students who transfer into the district from surrounding districts. In addition, information submitted by the district indicated that this issue is also compounded by the fact that the district's I&RS committee does not operate effectively. The district has developed a plan to address the I&RS process. Data regarding the district's preschool students indicated that when compared to the state average of 23.2%, less than 23% of the district's preschool students are educated for at least 80% of the school day with their non-disabled peers. The district has identified training for regular education teachers, the referral process and regular education access for preschool disabled students as areas of concern and has addressed these concerns through their improvement plan. However, despite these district-identified concerns, the district is to be commended for its efforts in eliminating the need for preschool out-of-district placements by offering more inclusive placements within the district.

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

**Eligibility** and **Transition to Preschool** were determined to be areas of compliance by the district during self-assessment and by the Office of Special Education Programs.

### **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.

During the self-assessment process, the district identified concerns in the area of in-service training for paraprofessionals who provide special education, general education or related services. Although the district initially identified this as an area of need, the district was able to demonstrate that it has already begun to appropriately implement specific activities to bring about correction in this area.

No additional areas of need were identified during the desk audit, focus group and/or parent interviews.

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

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

During self-assessment the district accurately identified themselves compliant in the areas of goals and objective for related services, length of school day/year, transfer students and certification.

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During the self-assessment process, the district identified concerns in the areas of an accessible facility, extended school year and provision of programs and services due to insufficient staff. Although these areas were initially identified by the district as areas of need, the district was able to demonstrate that it has already begun to appropriately implement specific activities to bring about correction in these areas.

During the self-assessment process, the district also identified a concern in the area of monitoring IEPs. The district's improvement plan is sufficient to address this area of need.

No additional areas of need were identified during the desk audit, focus group and/or parent interviews.

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

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

During self-assessment the district accurately identified themselves compliant in the areas of independent evaluations.

During the self-assessment process, the district identified concerns in the areas of surrogate parents, consent for individual assessments to determine student preferences notices of meeting, written notices, notices of meetings in native language, interpreters at meetings, 20-day calendar response to written parental request, provision of procedural safeguards, meetings held at a mutually convenient time, implementation of programs without undue delay, and documentation of attempts to secure parental participation. Although these areas were initially identified by the district as areas of need, the district was able to demonstrate that it has already begun to appropriately implement specific activities to bring about correction in these areas.

During the self-assessment process, the district also identified concerns in the areas of implementation of programs without undue delay and availability of translation resources. The district's improvement plan is sufficient to address this area of need.

No additional areas of need were identified during the desk audit, focus group and/or parent interviews.

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

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

During self-assessment the district accurately identified themselves compliant in the areas of Child Find, health summary, vision/hearing screenings and identification meeting timelines and participants.

During the self-assessment process, the district identified concerns in the areas of the referral process including pre-referral interventions and documentation of interventions and their effectiveness. The district's improvement plan is sufficient to address this area of need.

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No additional areas of need were identified during the desk audit, focus group and/or parent interviews.

### **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, written reports, bilingual evaluations and nature and scope.

During the self-assessment process, the district identified concerns in the areas of multi-disciplinary evaluations, functional assessments and acceptance/rejection of reports. Although these areas were initially identified by the district as areas of need, the district was able to demonstrate that it has already begun to appropriately implement specific activities to bring about correction in these areas.

No additional areas of need were identified during the desk audit, focus group and/or parent interviews.

### **Section VI: Reevaluation**

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

During self-assessment the district accurately identified themselves compliant in the areas of planning meeting participants.

During the self-assessment process, the district identified concerns in the areas of three year timelines and reevaluations completed by June 30<sup>th</sup> of students' last year in preschool. Although these areas were initially identified by the district as areas of need, the district was able to demonstrate that it has already begun to appropriately implement specific activities to bring about correction in these areas.

No additional areas of need were identified during the desk audit, focus group and/or parent interviews.

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

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

During self-assessment the district accurately identified themselves compliant in the areas of present levels of educational performance statements, 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 signatures of meeting participants, IEP considerations and required statements, goals and objectives aligned with the core curriculum content standards, teacher access and responsibility and vocational education participation. Although these areas were initially

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identified by the district as areas of need, the district was able to demonstrate that it has already begun to appropriately implement specific activities to bring about correction in these areas.

During the self-assessment process, the district identified a concern in the area of 90-day timelines. The district's improvement plan is sufficient to address this area of need.

No additional areas of need were identified during the desk audit, focus group and/or parent interviews.

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

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

During self-assessment the district accurately identified themselves compliant in the areas of decision-making process, LRE documentation, consideration of supplementary aids and services, notification and participation of out-of-district students in nonacademic and extracurricular activities.

During the self-assessment process, the district identified concerns in the areas of regular education access and continuum of programs. Although these areas were initially identified by the district as areas of need, the district was able to demonstrate that it has already begun to appropriately implement specific activities to bring about correction in these areas.

No additional areas of need were identified during the desk audit, focus group and/or parent interviews.

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

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

During self-assessment the district accurately identified themselves compliant in the areas of Statements of Transition Service Needs and Needed Transition Services and preferences and interests surveys and assessments.

During the self-assessment process, the district identified concerns in the areas of student and agency invitation, relationships with community resources and monitoring of transition services by outside agencies. Although these areas were initially identified by the district as areas of need, the district was able to demonstrate that it has already begun to appropriately implement specific activities to bring about correction in these areas.

No additional areas of need were identified during the desk audit, focus group and/or parent interviews.

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

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

During self-assessment the district accurately identified themselves compliant in the areas of the preschool transition planning conference and EIP to preschool by age 3.

No additional areas of need were identified during the desk audit, focus group and/or parent interviews.

### **Section XI: Discipline**

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

During self-assessment the district accurately identified themselves compliant in the areas of suspension tracking, functional behavioral assessments, behavioral intervention plans, manifestation determination meetings, interim alternative educational settings, 45-day return and procedural safeguards.

During the self-assessment process, the district identified a concern in the area of notification to the case manager. Although the district initially identified this as an area of need, the district was able to demonstrate that it has already begun to appropriately implement specific activities to bring about correction in this area

No additional areas of need were identified during the desk audit, focus group and/or parent interviews.

### **Section XII: Statewide Assessment**

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

During self-assessment the district accurately identified themselves compliant in the areas of student participation in statewide assessments, approved accommodations and modifications, IEP documentation and alternate assessments.

During the self-assessment process, the district identified a concern in the area of knowledge of CST members regarding statewide assessments. Although the district initially identified this as an area of need, the district was able to demonstrate that it has already begun to appropriately implement specific activities to bring about correction in this area

No additional areas of need were identified during the desk audit, focus group and/or parent interviews.

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**Section XIII:** This is a Preschool to 8<sup>th</sup> grade district.

### **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, group sizes for speech and home instruction.

During the self-assessment process, the district identified concerns in the areas of consultation time and insufficient staff. Although these areas were initially identified by the district as areas of need, the district was able to demonstrate that it has already begun to appropriately implement specific activities to bring about correction in these areas.

No additional areas of need were identified during the desk audit, focus group and/or parent interviews.

### **Section XV: Student Records**

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

During self-assessment the district accurately identified themselves compliant in the areas of documentation of other locations.

During the self-assessment process, the district identified concerns in the areas of access sheets, access resulting from a request and maintenance and destruction of records. Although these areas were initially identified by the district as areas of need, the district was able to demonstrate that it has already begun to appropriately implement specific activities to bring about correction in these areas.

No additional areas of need were identified during the desk audit, focus group and/or parent interviews.

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## **Summary**

The Bradley Beach School District is to be commended for the exceptionally comprehensive review conducted during the self-assessment process. As a result of their review, the district was able to identify all areas of need and develop an improvement plan that has already resulted in systemic changes in most areas. The district is further commended for the many areas determined by the district as compliant with federal and state statutes and regulations and verified by the Office of Special Education Programs through a desk audit, a focus group meeting and parent interviews.

Bradley Beach is a district which has struggled with its classification rate over the last three years. However, despite these concerns the district was able to reduce to zero, during 2001-2002, the number of students ages 3-5 who were in out-of-district settings. While the district's classification and placement rates continue to be of concern, the district has addressed these concerns through their improvement plan. The district is to be commended for the measures they have already taken, and those they propose to take, regarding increasing the number of students who can, and will be educated in general education with supplementary aids and services by providing training for teachers in the areas of instructional strategies, adaptations, effective inclusive practices and positive behavioral supports and interventions.

Eligibility and Transition to Preschool 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.

At a focus group meeting attended by the superintendent, principal, four staff members and 3 parents, parents expressed their satisfaction with many of the district's programs and services and praised district staff for their genuine concern and ability to be open to new ideas. Parents also praised the district for always including them in the decision-making process and considering their child's individual needs. Similar comments were also made during the parent interview process.

Areas identified as consistently compliant by the district during self-assessment and verified through desk audits, the parent focus group meeting and parent interviews included, policies/procedures, dissemination of IDEA information, goals/objective for related services, length of school day/year, transfer students, certification, independent evaluations, Child Find, health summary, vision/hearing screenings, identification meetings/timelines/participants, standardized assessments, written reports signed/dated, bilingual evaluations, nature/scope, planning meetings/participants, PLEPs, age of majority, implementation dates, annual review timelines, IEPs to parents, decision-making-process, LRE documentation/consideration of supplementary aids/services, notification/participation of out-of-district students in nonacademic and extracurricular activities, Statements of Transition Service Needs and Needed Transition Services, preferences/interests, survey/assessments, preschool transition planning conference, EIP to preschool by age 3, suspension tracking, functional behavioral assessments, behavioral improvement plans, manifestation determination meetings, IAES, 45-day return, procedural safeguards, student participation in statewide assessments, approved accommodations and modifications, IEP documentation, alternate assessments, class size waivers, age range waivers, group sizes for speech, home instruction and documentation of other locations.



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During the self-assessment process, the district identified areas of need regarding in-service training for paraprofessionals who provide special education, general education or related services, an accessible facility, extended school year, monitoring IEPs, provision of programs/services due to insufficient staff, surrogate parents, consent for individual assessments to determine student preferences, notices of meeting/content/provision, written notices/ content/provision, notices/meetings in native language, interpreters at meetings, 20-calendar response to written parental request, provision of procedural safeguards/code, implementation of IEPs without undue delay, meetings held at a mutually convenient time, documentation of attempts to secure parental participation, availability of translation resources, referral process including pre-referral interventions, documentation of interventions and their effectiveness, multi-disciplinary evaluations, functional assessments, acceptance/rejection of reports, three year timelines, reevaluations completed by June 30<sup>th</sup> of students' last year in preschool, signatures of meeting participants, IEP considerations/required statements, annual goals/objectives aligned with the core curriculum content standards, 90-day timelines, teacher access/responsibility, vocational education participation, regular education access, continuum of programs, student/agency invitation, establishing relationships with community resources, monitoring of transition services by an outside agency, notification to the case manager knowledge of CST members regarding statewide assessments, consultation time, sufficient staff, access sheets, access/request and maintenance/destruction of records.

No additional areas of need were identified during the desk audit, focus group and/or parent interviews.

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