

New Jersey Department of Education Special Education Monitoring

District: Burlington County Institute of Technology **County:** Burlington

Monitoring Dates: December 2, 3, 4, 2002

Monitoring Team: Julia Harmelin, Arlene Popovici and Kenneth Richards

Background Information:

During the 2001–2002 school year, the Burlington County Institute of Technology conducted a self-assessment of policies, procedures, programs, services, and student outcomes. This self-assessment component of the monitoring process provided the Burlington County Institute of Technology 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 Burlington County Institute of Technology 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 Burlington County Institute of Technology Westampton Campus on November 17, 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 and child study team members.

District Strengths:

The district provides a wide variety of career major shops for all students. Students benefit from instruction while learning skills that are transferable to real life work experiences. Students with disabilities have competed and been national medal winners in the Vocational – Industrial Club of America competition. Students with disabilities have

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also been the recipients of a scholarship honoring the Burlington County Young Woman of the Year recognition for their scholastic ability and service to the community.

The district also provides unique opportunities for students. Students enrolled in the veterinary assistant program provide companionship and support while visiting community based senior citizen programs with select dogs.

Students with disabilities also participate in Future Business Leaders of America, Future Farmers of America and Inter-Act, a community service organization assisting in Toys for Tots drives and animal welfare programs.

Areas Demonstrating Compliance With All Standards:

General Provisions, Eligibility, and Statewide Assessment 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 II: Free, Appropriate Public Education (FAPE)

Summary of Findings:

During self-assessment the district accurately identified themselves compliant in the areas of length of school day/year, transfer students, facilities and certifications.

During the self-assessment process, the district identified concerns in the areas goals and objectives for related services and supplemental instruction. **The district's improvement plan is insufficient to address these areas because it lacks an administrative oversight component to ensure the consistent implementation of the procedures.** The plan needs to be revised to include this component

Additional areas of need were identified during the on-site visit regarding extended school year and related services.

Areas of Need:

Extended School Year – During the on-site monitoring visit, it was determined through record review that IEPs do not include an implementation date or duration for the extended school year program.

- **The district will revise its improvement plan to include procedures to ensure IEPs document the projected implementation date and duration of extended school year programs. The plan must include an administrative oversight component to ensure the consistent, compliant implementation of the procedure.**

Related Services – During the on-site monitoring visit, it was determined through record review and staff interviews that speech therapy has not been consistently provided due to the lack of a speech therapist at the Medford campus. As a result, speech therapy has not been provided during the current school year. At the Westampton campus, some students have not been scheduled for speech therapy in accordance with the services required by their IEPs.

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- **The district will revise its improvement plan to include procedures to ensure related services are provided in accordance with the frequency and duration identified in IEPs. The plan must include activities to determine the amount of compensatory services for those students who have not received services they were entitled to receive. The plan must include an administrative oversight component to ensure the consistent, compliant implementation of the procedures.**

Section III: Procedural Safeguards

Summary of Findings:

During self-assessment the district accurately identified themselves compliant in the areas of surrogate parents, consent, meetings, written notice, native language and independent evaluations.

An area of need was identified during the on-site visit regarding notice of meeting.

Area of Need:

Notice of Meeting - During the on-site monitoring visit, it was determined through record review that notice of a meeting does not inform the parent or adult student that at the discretion of the parent, adult student or school district, other individuals having knowledge or special expertise may be invited to meetings. Additionally, though guidance counselors are identified in the notice of meeting as a participant, they are not consistently in attendance at these meetings.

- **The district will revise its notices of meetings to include all required components. The district must also revise the improvement plan to include procedures to ensure only those individuals who will be attending the meeting are identified in the notice of the meeting. It is recommended that the district adopt the notice forms developed by the Office of Special Education Programs. The plan must include an administrative oversight component to ensure implementation of the procedures.**

Section IV: Location, Referral and Identification

Summary of Findings:

During self-assessment the district accurately identified themselves compliant in the areas of child find activities, summer referrals, vision and hearing screenings, health summary and ID meeting meetings and participants.

During the self-assessment process, the district identified concerns in the areas of referral process including pre-referral interventions, and direct referral. **The district's improvement plan is insufficient to address these areas because it lacks in-service training, a mechanism to determine the effectiveness of the training and an administrative oversight component to ensure the consistent, compliant**

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implementation of the procedures. The plan needs to be revised to include these components.

An area of need was identified during the on-site visit regarding identification meeting timelines.

Area of Need:

Identification Meeting Timelines – During the on-site monitoring visit, it was determined through staff interviews that timelines are not consistently met due to high case management caseloads, case managers providing counseling/crisis intervention to regular education students, the need to provide assistance to support freshman students with disabilities and the increasing number of classified students.

- **The district will revise its improvement plan to include procedures to ensure identification meetings are conducted within 20 days of a referral to the child study team. The plan must include a mechanism to determine whether the district has sufficient staff, whether staff are being utilized in an appropriate manner, and an administrative oversight component to ensure the consistent 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, bi-lingual evaluations and independent evaluations and multidisciplinary assessments.

During the self-assessment process, the district identified concerns in the areas of acceptance and rejection of reports, functional assessments, written reports and assessment in all areas of suspected disability. **The district's improvement plan is insufficient to address the area of acceptance and rejection of reports because it lacks appropriate 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. **The district's improvement plan is insufficient to address the areas of written reports, assessment in all areas of suspected disabilities and functional assessment because it lacks an administrative oversight component to ensure the consistent implementation of the procedures.** The plan needs to be revised to include this component.

An additional area of need was identified during the on-site visit regarding written reports for students determined eligible for speech and language services

Area of Need:

Written Reports for Eligible for Speech and Language Services – During the on-site visit, it was determined through record review that written reports do not consistently

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include interviews with teachers and parents and an observation in other than a testing situation.

- **The district will revise its improvement plan to include procedures to ensure written reports include all required components. The plan must include in-service and 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 participants.

During the self-assessment process, the district identified concerns in the areas of three year timelines. **The district's improvement plan is insufficient to address this area because it lacks an administrative oversight component to ensure the consistent implementation of the procedures.** The plan needs to be revised to include this component.

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, IEP to parent and student, annual review timelines and age of majority.

During the self-assessment process, the district identified concerns in the areas of participants, 90 day timelines, implementation, required components for speech IEP, goals and objectives aligned to the core curriculum content standards (CCCS) and implementation dates. **The district's improvement plan is insufficient to address the areas of goals and objectives/CCCS and 90 day timelines because it lacks in-service training, a mechanism to determine the effectiveness of the training and an administrative oversight component to ensure the consistent, compliant implementation of the procedures.** The plan needs to be revised to include these components. **The district's improvement plan is insufficient to address the areas of implementation, components for speech IEPs and participants because it lacks an administrative oversight component to ensure the consistent implementation of the procedures.** The plan needs to be revised to include this component.

Additional areas of need were identified during the on-site visit regarding implementation and staff knowledge of responsibilities.

Areas of Need:

Implementation – During the on-site monitoring visit, it was determined through record review and staff interviews that instruction in in-class support programs is not

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consistently provided because of insufficient special education staff members. Additionally, because supplemental instruction is scheduled at the same time students are to receive special education instruction in accordance with their IEPs, IEPs are not being fully implemented.

- **The district will revise its improvement plan to include procedures to ensure in-class support is provided for each student who requires that program. The plan must include a mechanism to determine the need for additional staff. The plan must also include procedures to ensure scheduling of supplemental instruction does not result in the district's failure to provide other special education programs identified in the IEPs. The plan must include an administrative oversight component to ensure the consistent implementation of the procedure.**

Staff Knowledge of Responsibilities – During the on-site monitoring visit it was determined through staff interviews that not all regular education staff members are knowledgeable about their responsibility in implementing the IEP. As a result students are not receiving the modifications and adaptations required by the IEP.

- **The district will revise its improvement plan to include procedures to ensure regular education staff are knowledgeable about their responsibility in implementing IEPs. The plan must include an administrative oversight component to ensure implementation of these procedures.**

Section IX: Least Restrictive Environment (LRE)

Summary of Findings:

During self-assessment the district accurately identified themselves compliant in the areas of consideration of supplemental aides and services, regular education access and participation in non-academic and extra curricular activities.

Areas of need were identified during the on-site visit regarding continuum of services, individual decision-making and documentation of Oberti considerations.

Areas of Need:

Oberti Documentation - During the on-site monitoring visit, it was determined through record review and staff interviews that Oberti considerations were not consistently included in IEPs for students enrolled in in-class support programs.

- **The district will revise its improvement plan to include procedures to ensure Oberti considerations are documented in all IEPs. The plan must include in-service and an administrative oversight component to ensure the consistent, compliant implementation of the procedure.**

Continuum/Individual Decision Making – During the on-site monitoring visit, it was determined through staff and parent interviews that there is a need for multiple disabilities classes and behavioral disabilities classes. It was reported that there has been a significant increase in the number of classified students who attend the school. It

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was further reported that these students enter the programs and their ability levels are quite varied. As such, these students have created the need for a more expansive range of programs than currently exists in the district.

- **The district will revise its improvement plan to include procedures to ensure that the district offers and provides a full continuum of programs and services for students with disabilities. The plan must include a needs assessment to determine the types of options that are needed and procedures to ensure those options are implemented.**

Section X: Transition to Post-School

Summary of Findings:

During self-assessment the district accurately identified themselves compliant in the areas of preferences and interests, student agency invitation and needed transition services.

An area of need was identified during the on-site visit regarding transition service needs

Area of Need:

Transition Service Needs – During the on-site monitoring visit, it was determined through record review that specific shop classes are not identified in the IEP. Instead, the IEP identifies these courses as “career major courses.”

- **The district will revise its improvement plan to include procedures to ensure specific courses are identified in the transition service needs statement. The plan must include in-service and an administrative oversight component to ensure the consistent, compliant implementation of the procedure.**

Section XI: Discipline

Summary of Findings:

During self-assessment the district accurately identified themselves compliant in the area of functional behavior assessments.

Areas of need were identified during the on-site visit regarding procedural safeguards, documentation to case management, suspension tracking, manifestation determination meetings and interim alternative educational setting.

Areas of Need:

Procedural Safeguards – During the on-site monitoring visit, it was determined through staff interviews that for students with a suspected disability who are being suspended, the district does not consistently provide educational services.

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- **The district will revise its improvement plan to include procedures to ensure identified students are afforded the same procedural safeguards as students with disabilities when they are suspended. The plan must include in-service, a mechanism to determine the effectiveness of the training and an administrative oversight component to ensure the consistent, compliant implementation of the procedure.**

Suspension Tracking and Notification to Case Managers - During the on-site monitoring visit it was determined through record review and staff interviews that case managers do not consistently receive written notification of suspensions in a timely manner. Barriers include the lack of a district wide discipline procedure, suspension tracking system and the number of staff responsible for discipline that effects the coordination of information.

Manifestation Determination Meetings – During the on-site monitoring visit, staff interviews and record review indicated that although manifestation determination meetings are conducted, it is rarely within the required timeline because case managers are not notified prior to the removal of a student with disabilities.

- **The district will revise its improvement plan to include procedures to ensure case managers are notified prior to suspending a classified student. The plan must include in-service, a mechanism to determine the effectiveness of the training and an administrative oversight component to ensure the consistent, compliant implementation of the procedure.**

Interim Alternative Educational Setting – During the on-site monitoring visit, staff interviews indicated that the district utilizes homebound instruction as the sole interim alternative educational setting. When a 45-day removal occurs, shops are not provided and as a result, the district does not provide services necessary to enable the student to progress and advance appropriately toward achieving the goals and objectives set out in the student's IEP.

- **The district will revise its improvement plan to include procedures to ensure that when an interim alternative education setting is required, the district provides the services necessary to ensure the student progress in the general education curriculum and in the goals and objectives in the IEP. The plan must include in-service and an administrative oversight component to ensure the consistent, compliant implementation of the procedure.**

Section XIII: Graduation

Summary of Findings:

During self-assessment the district accurately identified themselves compliant in the areas of documentation of graduation requirements and participation.

An area of need was identified during the on-site visit regarding written notice of graduation.

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Area of Need:

Written Notice of Graduation – During the on-site monitoring visit it was determined through staff interviews and record review the district does not provide written notice that graduation is a change of placement.

- **The district will revise its improvement plan to include procedures to ensure parents and adult students are provided with written notice that graduation is a change of placement. The plan must include an administrative oversight component to ensure the consistent, compliant implementation of the procedure.**

Section XIV: Programs and Services

Summary of Findings:

During self-assessment the district accurately identified themselves compliant in the areas of age range, consultation time and group size for speech therapy.

Areas of need were identified during the on-site visit regarding class size, home instruction and speech therapy class size.

Areas of Need:

Class Size - During the on-site monitoring visit, it was determined through record review and class room visits that class sizes exceed the limits identified in N.J.A.C. 6A:14.

- **The district will take immediate action to bring class sizes into compliance. The district will also revise its improvement plan to include procedures to ensure class sizes do not exceed the limits identified in N.J.A.C. 6A:14 in the future. The plan must include an administrative oversight component to ensure the consistent implementation of the procedure.**

Home Instruction – During the on-site visit, it was determined through staff interviews and record review that the district does not obtain approval from the county office prior to placing a student on home instruction.

- **The district will revise its improvement plan to include procedures to ensure approvals are obtained from the county office prior to placing the student on home instruction. The plan must include an administrative oversight component to ensure the consistent implementation of the procedure.**

Section XV: Student Records

Summary of Findings:

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During self-assessment the district accurately identified themselves compliant in the areas of access sheets and access upon request

Areas of need were identified during the on-site visit regarding maintenance/destruction and documentation of location other records.

Areas of Need:

Maintenance and destruction – During the on-site monitoring visit, record review indicated the district informs parents that student records are retained for one year prior to destruction. However, to remain eligible to receive federal grant monies, the pupil records code requires the district to maintain specific special education records for a period of five years after a student graduates or permanently leaves the district.

- **The district will revise its improvement plan to include procedures to ensure records are maintained for five years after a student graduates or permanently leaves the district. The plan must include an administrative oversight component to ensure the consistent implementation of the procedure.**

Documentation of Location of Other Records – During the on-site monitoring visit, record review indicated the district does not identify in the central files the location of other records maintained by the district.

- **The district will revise its improvement plan to include procedures to ensure that the location of other student records maintained by the district is identified in the central file. The plan must include an administrative oversight component to ensure the consistent implementation of the procedure.**

Summary

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On-site special education monitoring was conducted in the Burlington County Institute of Technology on December 2, 3, 4, 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 comprehensive review conducted during the self-assessment process. As a result of that review the district was able to identify 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 expressed their satisfaction with many of the district's programs and services. Parents indicated that special education staff and child study team members have a high level of commitment and work hard to implement programs that result in positive outcomes for students with disabilities. Parents indicated there was need for increased supplemental instruction and that high case management caseloads do not allow case managers to effectively oversee IEPs and that these high caseloads impact timely communication between the school and home.

Areas identified as consistently compliant with all standards by the district during self-assessment and verified during the on-site monitoring visit included General Provisions, Eligibility and State Wide Assessment.

The areas identified as consistently compliant by the district during self assessment and verified during the on-site monitoring visit included length of school day/year, transfer students, facilities, certifications, surrogate parents, consent, meetings, written notice, native language, independent evaluations, child find activities, summer referrals, vision and hearing screenings, health summary, identification meetings and participants, standardized assessments, multi-disciplinary assessments, bi-lingual evaluations, reevaluation planning meetings and participants, IEP to parents, annual review timelines, age of majority, consideration of supplemental aides and services, regular education access, participation in non academic and extracurricular activities, considerations and documentation, documenting preferences and interests, student and agency invitation, needed transition services, functional behavior assessment, documentation of graduation requirements, graduation participation, age range, consultation time, speech group size, access sheets and access upon request.

During the self-assessment process, the district identified areas of need regarding related services, supplemental instruction, referral and direct referral process including pre referral interventions, acceptance and rejection of reports, functional assessments, written reports, assessment in all areas of suspected disability, reevaluation timelines, IEP meeting participants, implementation, 90 day timelines, goals and objectives, required statements,

The on-site visit identified additional areas of need within the various standards regarding extended school year, related services, notice of meeting, identification meeting timelines, written speech reports, IEP implementation, staff knowledge and responsibility, required statements, continuum, individual decision making, Oberti considerations, transition service needs, procedural safeguards, documentation to case manager, suspension tracking, manifestation determination meetings, interim alternative education setting, written notice of graduation, class size, case management, home

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instruction, maintenance and destruction of records and documentation of location of other records.

Within forty-five days of receipt of the monitoring report, the Burlington County Institute of Technology will revise and resubmit the improvement plan to the Office of Special Education Programs to address those areas that require revisions.