

**THE NEW JERSEY DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION  
SPECIAL EDUCATION MONITORING**

**District:** Cape May County Technical School District      **County:** Cape May

**Monitoring Dates:** January 19 and 24, 2005

**Monitoring Team:** Patricia Fair, Caryl Carthew and Julia Harmelin

***Background Information:***

During the 2003-2004 school years, the Cape May County Technical School District conducted a self-assessment of policies, procedures, programs, services and student outcomes. This self-assessment component of the monitoring process provided the Cape May County Technical School District with an opportunity to evaluate its strengths and areas of need with regard to:

- The provision of a free and 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 Cape May County Technical School District developed an improvement plan to address the 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 Cape May County Technical School on January 19, 2005. Information obtained from the meeting was used to direct the focus of the monitoring visit.

During the on-site visit, the NJDOE team reviewed district documentation, 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 administrator, building principals, general education and special education teachers, and child study team members.

**District Strengths:**

The Cape May County Technical School District is commended for providing a wide variety of programs for students such as; Tutoring Program which is intended to identify and address student achievement deficiencies as soon as possible, provide extra help

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and support for students to improve problems areas, ensure that all students do their best, prepare students for competitive, “real world” situations and increase student success.

The district is a member of High Schools That Work, an educational initiative that focuses on raising the achievement of career-bound students by integrating academic and career education. As part of student success they have instituted a mandatory summer bridging program for students who have low grade point averages. These students receive support in math and literacy.

The Cape May County Technical High School is accredited by the Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools, a non-profit association serving elementary, secondary and higher education institutions through programs of self-study, evaluation and accreditation.

**Part One Data Summary:**

The district indicates that it provides special education and related services to twenty-four students eligible for special education and related services. Over a three year period the district classification rate has been significantly below the state average. The most recent data reflects district classification rate of 6.4% as compared to the state average of 14.1%.

***Areas Demonstrating Compliance with all Standards:***

**Evaluation, Least Restrictive Environment, Transition, Graduation Requirements, Programs and Services** and **Student Records** were determined to be areas of compliance by the district during self-assessment and by the Office of Special Education Programs during the on-site visit.

***Section I. General Provisions***

**Summary of Findings:**

During the self-assessment, the district indicated compliance in the areas of policies and procedures and dissemination of IDEA information.

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

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

***Section II. Free, Appropriate Public Education (FAPE)***

**Summary of Findings:**

During the self-assessment, the district indicated compliance in the areas of extended school year, provision of programs, length of school day and year, transfer students and certifications.

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During the self-assessment process, the district identified concerns in the area of holding IEP meeting prior to making changes. On-site monitoring activities determined that the district has implemented activities to bring about correction in this area.

An additional area of need was identified during the on-site visit regarding goals and objectives for related services.

**Areas of Need:**

**Goals and Objectives** – During the on-site visit it was determined through record review and staff interview that IEPs do not contain goals and objectives for related services.

- **The district will revise its improvement plan to include activities to ensure that IEPs contain goals and objective for related services. This will ensure services providers are aware of specific student needs and are able to determine progress in meeting goals and objectives. The plan must include and an administrative oversight component to ensure the consistent implementation or the procedures.**

***Section III. Procedural Safeguards***

**Summary of Findings:**

During self-assessment, the district indicated compliance in the areas of consent, notice of meetings, written notice, notice in native language and interpreters at meetings and independent evaluations.

During the self-assessment process, the district identified concerns in the area of surrogate parents. **The district failed to submit an improvement plan to address this area of need. The district will develop activities to ensure that there is a procedure for surrogate parents.**

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

***Section IV. Location, Referral and Identification***

**Summary of Findings:**

During self-assessment, the district indicated compliance in the areas of referral process, direct referrals, health summary, vision and hearing screenings and identification meeting participants.

During the self-assessment process, the district identified concerns in the area of pre-referral interventions, child find and date of receipt of child study team referral. The district's improvement plan is sufficient to address pre-referral intervention and date of receipt of child study team referral. **The district failed to submit an improvement plan to address child find. The district will develop activities to ensure that there is a procedure for child find.**

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

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**Section VI.   Reevaluation**

**Summary of Findings:**

During the self-assessment, the district indicated compliance in the areas of planning meetings and participants.

During the self-assessment process the district identified concerns in the area of three year timelines. **The district failed to submit an improvement plan to address this area of need. The district will develop activities to ensure that reevaluations are consistently conducted within the three year timeline.**

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

**Section VII.   Eligibility**

**Summary of Findings:**

During self-assessment the district indicated compliance in the areas of meetings, participants, criteria, statement of eligibility for students eligible for special education and related services and signature of agreement/disagreement rationale.

During the self-assessment process the district identified concerns in the area of copy of evaluation reports to parents/adult students 10 days prior to meeting. **The district failed to submit an improvement plan to address this area of need. The district will develop activities to ensure that parents/adult students receive copy of evaluation reports ten day prior to meeting**

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

**Section VIII.   Individual Education Program (IEP)**

**Summary of Findings:**

During self-assessment, the district indicated compliance in the areas of meetings, participants, consideration and required statements, present levels of educational performance, goals and objectives aligned with Core Curricular Content Standards, age of majority, implementation dates, annual review timelines, IEPs to parents and 90 day timelines.

During the self-assessment process the district identified concern in the area of teacher responsibility/access and vocational personnel participating in the IEP of shared time students. The district's improvement plan is sufficient to address this area.

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

**Section XI.   Discipline**

**Summary of Findings:**

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During the self-assessment, the district indicated compliance in the areas of functional behavioral assessments, manifestation determination meetings and procedural safeguards.

During the self-assessment process, the district identified areas of need regarding documentation to case managers and suspension tracking. **The district failed to submit an improvement plan to address this area of need. The district will develop activities to ensure that case managers are receiving notification of students suspensions and that students suspensions are consistently tracked.**

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 Cape May County Technical School District on January 19 and 24, 2005. The purpose of the monitoring was to verify the district's report of findings resulting from 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.

A review of district data indicated that the district is significantly lower than the state average for classification.

A focus group meeting was held prior to the monitoring visit. Parents expressed their satisfaction with many of the district's programs and services. They are pleased with the accessibility of the child study team and students' access to general education programs. They felt teachers were well prepared and were effective in teaching their subject area.

Standards identified as consistently compliant by the district during self-assessment and verified during the on-site monitoring visit included, Least Restrictive Environment, Transition, Graduation Requirements, Programs and Services and Student Records.

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 school day and year, transfer students, certifications, consent, notice of meetings, written notice, notice in native language, interpreters at meetings, direct referrals, health summary, vision and hearing screenings, multi-disciplinary evaluation, standardized assessments, functional assessments, written reports, acceptance and rejection of reports, planning meetings, participants, criteria, statement of eligibility, signature of agreement/disagreement rationale, consideration and required statements, present levels of educational performance, goals and objectives aligned with Core Curricular Content Standards, age of majority, implementation dates, annual review timelines, IEPs to parents, 90-day timelines, functional behavioral assessments, manifestation determination meeting and procedural safeguards.

During the self-assessment process, the district identified areas of need regarding professional development, surrogate parents, pre-referral interventions, child find, holding IEP meetings prior to making changes, three year timelines, copy of evaluations reports to parents/adult students 10 days prior to meeting, teacher responsibility/access, documentation to case managers and suspension tracking.

The on-site visit identified additional areas of need within the various standards regarding goals and objectives.

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Within forty-five days (45) days of receipt of the monitoring report, the Cape May County Technical School District will revise and resubmit the improvement plan to the Office of Special Education Programs to address those areas that require revisions.