



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

educate parents regarding federal and state regulations, their role on the IEP team, interventions available within the school buildings and other issues related to special education. In addition, child study team members attend the meetings to discuss their roles with regard to parents and students with disabilities.

### ***Section I: General Provisions***

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

During self-assessment the district accurately identified themselves compliant in the areas of Policy and Procedures, parent training and dissemination of public information. The required Statement of Assurances and procedures have been submitted to the county office.

During the self-assessment process, the district identified concerns regarding staff development. The district has developed an improvement plan that is sufficient to address this area of need.

No additional area of need was identified 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 extended school year, frequency, duration and location of related services, length of school day, facilities, and certification.

During the self-assessment process, the district identified concerns regarding the implementation of programs and related services, goals and objectives for related services, and transfer students. The district has developed an improvement plan that is sufficient to address these areas of need.

No additional area of need was identified during the on-site visit.

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

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

During self-assessment the district accurately identified themselves compliant in the areas of provision of notices, independent evaluations, and all areas of consent.

During the self-assessment process, the district identified concerns regarding surrogate parents, written notice in native language, and 15 and 20-day timelines. The district has developed an improvement plan that is sufficient to address these areas of need.

An additional area of need was identified during the on-site visit regarding provision of notices in the native language of non-English speaking parents.

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### Areas of Need:

**Notices in Native Languages** – During the on-site monitoring visit, it was determined through record review that the district does not provide notices in the native language of non-English speaking parents, when feasible.

- **The district will revise the improvement plan to include procedures to ensure that notices are translated and provided in the native language of the parent, when feasible. The plan must include an administrative oversight component to ensure the 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 parent referrals and identification meeting participants.

During the self-assessment process, the district identified concerns regarding documentation of pre-referral interventions, referral date, 20-day timeline, health summary, and vision and hearing screenings. The district has developed an improvement plan that is sufficient to address these areas of need.

Additional areas of need were identified during the on-site monitoring visit regarding child find activities and staff referrals.

#### Areas of Need:

**Child Find Activities** – During the on-site monitoring visit, it was determined through record review that although the district conducts child find activities, the activities do not continue throughout the year including summer months and do not reach migrant and homeless students.

- **The district will revise the improvement plan to include procedures to ensure that child find activities continue throughout the year including summer months and include migrant and homeless students.**

**Staff Referrals** – During the on-site monitoring visit, it was determined through interviews with building administrators and teachers that all staff referrals must first go to the Pupil Assistance Committee (PAC).

- **The district will revise the improvement plan to include procedures to ensure that staff has the ability to directly refer a student to the child study team and to participate in meetings when they believe the nature of the student's problem is such that an evaluation is warranted without delay. At that meeting, a decision may be made that an evaluation is not warranted and that the student needs to be referred to PAC. The improvement plan must include a mechanism to establish criteria that identifies the type of documentation that would support a staff request for a direct referral. The plan must further include in-service and an**

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**administrative oversight component to ensure consistent, compliant implementation of these activities.**

**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 for students eligible for special education and related services, multi-disciplinary reports for students eligible for special education and related services and written reports for students eligible for special education and related services.

During the self-assessment process, the district identified concerns regarding functional assessments, bilingual evaluations, acceptance/rejection of reports, nature and scope of an evaluation and standardized tests for students eligible for speech/language services. The district has developed an improvement plan that is sufficient to address these areas of need.

An additional area of need was identified during the on-site monitoring visit regarding multi-disciplinary evaluations for students eligible for speech/language services.

**Areas of Need:**

**Multidisciplinary Evaluations** – During the on-site monitoring visit, it was determined through staff interviews and record review that the written educational impact statement from the student’s teacher is not included in speech/language evaluations.

- **The district will revise the improvement plan to include procedures to ensure speech/language evaluations include a written educational impact statement from the student’s teacher. The plan must include an administrative oversight component to ensure the implementation of the procedures.**

**Section VI: Reevaluation**

**Summary of Findings:**

During self-assessment the district accurately identified themselves compliant in the areas of conducting reevaluation planning meetings and participants at reevaluation planning meetings.

During the self-assessment process, the district identified concerns regarding conducting reevaluations to determine eligibility and reevaluations by June 30<sup>th</sup>. The district has developed an improvement plan that is sufficient to address these areas of need.

No additional area of need was identified during the on-site monitoring visit.

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**Section VII: Eligibility**

**Summary of Findings:**

During self-assessment the district accurately identified themselves compliant in the area of eligibility meeting participants.

During the self-assessment process, the district identified concerns regarding copies of evaluation reports to parents, statement of eligibility, severe discrepancy formula and eligibility criteria. The district has developed an improvement plan that is sufficient to address these areas of need.

No additional area of need was identified during the on-site monitoring visit.

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

**Summary of Findings:**

During self-assessment the district accurately identified themselves compliant in the areas of required statements in the IEP document and Age of Majority.

During the self-assessment process, the district identified concerns regarding goals and objectives aligned with the Core Curriculum Content Standards (CCCS), 90-day timeline, IEP participants, copies of IEPs to parents, teacher access/responsibility, parent observation of the proposed program, Present Levels of Educations Performance (PLEP), IEP considerations, annual review timelines and documentation of progress in the IEP. The district has developed an improvement plan that does not sufficiently address these areas of need because it lacks an administrative oversight component to ensure implementation of the procedures. The improvement plan needs to be revised to include this element.

No additional area of need was identified during the on-site monitoring visit.

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

**Summary of Findings:**

During the self-assessment process, the district identified concerns regarding the individualized decision-making process, continuum of program options, general education access, non-academic and extracurricular participation, placement in the least restrictive environment, considerations/required statements and supplemental aids and services. The district has developed an improvement plan that does not sufficiently address these areas of need because it lacks an administrative oversight component to ensure implementation of the procedures. The improvement plan needs to be revised to include this element.

No additional area of need was identified during the on-site monitoring visit.

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**Section X: Transition – Transition from School to Post-School**

**Summary of Findings:**

During the self-assessment process, the district identified concerns regarding Statement of Transition Service Needs, Statement of Needed Transition Services, transition goals and objectives, agency linkages/participation, student/agency invitation, linkages with community resources, and student preferences/interests. The district has developed an improvement plan that is sufficient to address these areas of need.

No additional area of need was identified during the on-site monitoring visit.

**Section X: Transition – Transition to Preschool**

**Summary of Findings:**

During the self-assessment process, the district identified concerns regarding preschool transition planning conferences and implementation of IEPs for preschoolers by age three. The district has developed an improvement plan that is sufficient to address these areas of need.

No additional area of need was identified during the on-site monitoring visit.

**Section XI: Discipline**

**Summary of Findings:**

During the self-assessment process, the district identified concerns regarding discipline procedures, documentation to case managers, functional behavioral assessments, behavioral intervention plans, manifestation determinations, interim educational settings, potentially disabled. The district has developed an improvement plan that is sufficient to address these areas of need.

An additional area of need was identified during the on-site monitoring visit regarding suspension tracking.

**Areas of Need:**

**Suspension Tracking** – During the on-site monitoring, it was determined through interviews with child study team members and vice-principals that case managers do not track suspensions because they are not provided with written notification at the time of suspension. As a result, the IEP team does not meet to conduct manifestation determination meetings, conduct functional behavioral assessments and/or develop/review behavioral intervention plans, when needed.

- **The district must revise the improvement plan to include procedures to ensure that written notifications of suspensions are provided to case managers at the time a removal from program is being considered. Furthermore, it is recommended the district develop procedures to ensure that child study team members have access to the suspension database to**

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**assist them in accurately tracking the number of days that a student is removed from program. The improvement plan must include staff training and an administrative oversight component to ensure the consistent, compliant implementation of the procedures.**

**Section XII: Statewide Assessment**

**Summary of Findings:**

During self-assessment the district accurately identified themselves compliant in the area IEP documentation.

During the self-assessment process, the district identified concerns regarding participation in statewide assessment, accommodations and modifications, alternate assessments and the SRA process. The district has developed an improvement plan that is sufficient to address these areas of need.

No additional area of need was identified during the on-site monitoring visit.

**Section XIII: Graduation**

**Summary of Findings:**

During self-assessment the district accurately identified themselves compliant in the areas of out-of-district participation and choice of diploma.

During the self-assessment process, the district identified concerns regarding IEP requirements for graduation. The district has developed an improvement plan that is sufficient to address this area of need.

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

**Areas of Need:**

**Written Notice of Graduation** – During the on-site monitoring visit, it was determined through interviews with child study teams and record review that the district does not provide notice of graduation to parents or adult students.

- **The district will revise the improvement plan to include procedures to ensure that parents/adult students are provided with written notice of graduation and that this provision is documented in the student’s file. The plan must include an administrative oversight component to ensure the implementation of the procedures. It is recommended that the district adopt the Written Notice of Graduation developed by the New Jersey Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs.**

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**Section XIV: Programs and Services**

**Summary of Findings:**

During self-assessment the district accurately identified themselves compliant in the area of age ranges.

During the self-assessment process, the district identified concerns regarding insufficient staffing, apportioned time for case management, teacher collaboration, group sizes, team teaching, supplemental instruction, description of special education programs, and home instruction. The district has developed an improvement plan that is sufficient to address these areas of need.

An additional area of need was identified during the on-site monitoring visit regarding class size.

**Areas of Need:**

**Class Sizes** – During the on-site monitoring, it was determined through review of class lists and interviews with staff that class sizes for in-class support (ICS) programs at the middle school exceed code limits due to insufficient staffing.

- **The district will revise the improvement plan to include procedures to ensure that class sizes for in-class support programs comply with code requirements. The improvement plan must include an administrative oversight component to ensure the implementation of the procedures.**

**Section XV: Student Records**

**Summary of Findings:**

During self-assessment the district accurately identified themselves compliant in the area of access/requests of records.

During the self-assessment process, the district identified concerns regarding the location of other records and maintenance and destruction of records. The district has developed an improvement plan that is sufficient to address these areas of need.

No additional area of need was identified during the on-site monitoring visit.

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## **Summary**

On-site special education monitoring was conducted in the Carteret Borough School District on May 14, 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 this review the district was able to identify nearly all areas of need and develop an improvement plan that with minor revisions, will be sufficient to bring about systemic change. The district is further commended for the many areas that were determined by the district and verified by the Office of Special Education Programs as compliant with federal and state statutes and regulations.

Thirteen parents attended an evening focus group meeting held on April 18, 2002. In general, each parent was satisfied with their child's current program and felt that their child had access to the general education curriculum. Additionally, parents stated that they were pleased with the efforts of the Director of Special Services and the district's child study teams. However, concerns were raised regarding sufficient staff to implement programs/services, lack of participation with non-disabled peers, scheduling of special education students and lack of books/worksheets for use at school/home.

Areas identified as consistently compliant by the district during self-assessment and verified during the on-site monitoring visit included the Policy and Procedures, parent training, dissemination of public information, extended school year, frequency, duration and location of related services, length of school day, facilities, certification, provision of notices, meetings, independent evaluations, all areas of consent, parent referrals identification meeting participants, standardized assessments for students eligible for special education and related services, multi-disciplinary reports for students eligible for special education and related services, written reports, conducting reevaluation planning meetings, reevaluation participants at planning meetings, eligibility meetings participants, required statements in the IEP, Age of Majority, documentation of statewide assessment in the IEP, out-of-district participation, choice of diploma, age ranges and access/requests of records.

During the self-assessment process, the district identified areas of need regarding staff development, provision of related services, goals and objectives for related services, transfer students, surrogate parents, written notice in native language, 15-day timeline, documentation of pre-referral interventions, referral date, 20-day timeline, health summary, vision/hearing screening, functional assessments, bilingual evaluations, accept/rejection of reports, nature and scope of an evaluation, standardized assessments for students eligible for speech/language services, reevaluation timelines, reevaluation completed by June 30<sup>th</sup>, evaluation reports to parents, statement of eligibility, severe discrepancy formula, eligibility criteria, alignment of goals and objectives in the IEP to the core content curriculum standards, 90-day timeline, IEP participants, copy of the IEP to parents, teacher access/ responsibility, parent observation of the proposed program, present levels of educational performance, IEP considerations, annual review timelines, documentation of progress in the IEP, individualized decision making process, continuum of program options, general education access, nonacademic and extracurricular participation, placement in the least restrictive environment, considerations and required statements, supplemental aids and services, statement of transition service needs, statement of needed transition services, agency participation, student/agency invitation, preschool transition planning conference,

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implementation of IEPs for preschoolers no later than age three, discipline procedures, documentation to case manager, functional behavior assessment, behavioral intervention plan, manifestation determination, interim educational setting, potentially disabled, participation in statewide assessments, accommodations and modifications, alternate assessment, SRA, IEP requirements for graduation, insufficient staff, apportioned time for case management, teacher collaboration, group size, team teaching, supplemental instruction, description of special education programs, home instruction, maintenance and destruction of records.

The on-site visit identified additional areas of need within the various standards regarding notices in native languages, child find activities, staff referrals, multi-disciplinary reports, suspension tracking, written notice of graduation and class sizes.

Within forty-five days of receipt of the monitoring report, the Carteret Borough School District will revise and resubmit the improvement plan to the Office of Special Education Programs to address the areas of need identified during the on-site visit and those areas that require revisions to the improvement plan.