

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

**District:** Clearview Regional School District

**County:** Gloucester

**Monitoring Dates:** April 4, 2005

**Monitoring Team:** Patricia Fair and Julia Harmelin

***Background Information:***

During the 2003-2004 school years, the Clearview Regional School District conducted a self-assessment of policies, procedures, programs, services and student outcomes. This self-assessment component of the monitoring process provided the Clearview Regional School District with an opportunity to evaluate 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 Clearview Regional 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 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 Clearview Regional School on April 6, 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. A representative sample of student records was also reviewed. Interviews were conducted with the district's special education administrator, building, general education and special education teachers, and child study team members.

**District Strengths:**

The Clearview Regional School District is commended for providing a wide variety of innovative programs for all students. The district provides several different transition programs. The COIN Program, which is an on-line computer program, assesses each

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student's career interests and develops a plan for transition to post-school activities. The Career Scope Program is a program geared towards transition; it provides an interest inventory and aptitude test then compares the two to come up with an attainable idea for career planning. The district also has an Individual Career Portfolio which students begin using in middle school and continue to use through high school. Each year students review interest, preferences and career goals. This yearly review assists with matching educational plans as they change and assist students in successfully meeting their goals.

Clearview Regional School District operates an evening program for students who are struggling in school with behavioral issues and also for those students who are not finding success in a regular school day program. Students attend Clearview Regional School from 3:10PM until 8:00PM. Students who would generally be placed in out-of-district programs can be maintained in district and work towards returning to the day programs. This program is open to all students who attend Clearview Regional School District.

The district also provides the Renaissance program which empowers students, staff, parents and the community to pursue excellence in education. The goal is to increase grade point averages and standardized test scores, decrease the number of absences, provide a positive and safe school environment and encourage involvement in extracurricular and community based organization. The program also recognizes staff dedication and hard work.

**Part One Data Summary:**

The data submitted by the Clearview Regional School District as a result of the self-assessment process indicates 37.5% of students are placed in general education more than 80% of the day which is slightly lower than the state average of 41.6%. A three year trend of the district reflects an increase of 8.7% of students included in the general education setting. The district's classification rate is 13.9% which is slightly lower than the state average of 14.35%

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

**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 area 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.

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

**Summary of Findings:**

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

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

**Section III. Procedural Safeguards**

**Summary of Findings:**

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

During the self-assessment process, the district identified concerns in the areas of surrogate parents and parent refusal to give consent for initial evaluation. The district's improvement plan is sufficient to address these areas of need.

Additional areas of need were identified during the on-site visit regarding notice of a meeting, meetings, and written notice for students eligible for speech and language services.

**Areas of Need:**

**Notice of a Meeting** - During the on-site visit it was determined through record review and staff interview that notice of a meeting does not include the purpose of the meeting. In addition, notice of a meeting identifies district participants by name. Although this is not noncompliant, the named staff members do not consistently attend the meetings. Notice of meeting for students eligible for speech and language services is not consistently provided. Instead, parents are notified by phone and a meeting will be held at parent request.

- **The district will revise its improvement plan to include activities to ensure that notice of a meeting is consistently provided and indicates the purpose, time, location and participants. The district may indicate the position of the staff member, as required, to ensure that the appropriate members of the team will be represented. Implementation of these activities will ensure that parents are receiving proper notification of a meeting. It is recommended the district adopt the notice forms developed by the Office of Special Education Programs.**

**Written Notice for Students Eligible for Speech and Services** – During the on-site visit it was determined through record review and staff interview that written notice is inconsistently provided and when provided it does not document a description of factors used in making the decision, options considered and rejected and why rejected and description of other relevant factors.

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- **The district will revise its improvement plan to include activities to ensure that written notice is consistently provided and includes all the required components. Implementation of these activities will ensure that parents are fully informed of the decisions made at the meetings and the factors considered in making the decision. The improvement plan must include an administrative oversight component to ensure the consistent implementation of these activities.**

**Short Procedural Safeguards Statement for Students Eligible for Speech and Language Services** – During the on-site visit it was determined through record review and staff interview that short procedural safeguards statement is inconsistently provided and when provided it does not consistently document School District Office or Personnel, School District Representative and County Supervisor of Child Study and list phone numbers for each.

- **The district will revise its improvement plan to include activities to ensure that Short Procedural Safeguards Statement is consistently provided and documents all the correct information. Implementation of these activities will ensure that parents are informed and the means by which a copy of a description of the procedural safeguards can be obtained and sources for parents to contact to obtain assistance in understanding their rights. The improvement plan must include an administrative oversight component to ensure the consistent implementation of these activities.**

**Meetings for Students Eligible for Speech and Language Services** – During the on-site visit it was determined through record review and staff interview that meetings are not consistently held for identification meetings, eligibility meetings, IEP meetings, reevaluation planning meetings, revision to IEP meetings and annual review meetings. Parents are notified by phone and a meeting will be held at parent request.

- **The district will revise its improvement plan to include activities to ensure that meetings are held required participants are in attendance and written notice is provided. Implementation of these activities will ensure that collaborative decisions are made regarding provision of programs and services. The improvement plan must include an administrative oversight component to ensure the consistent implementation of these activities.**

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

**Summary of Findings:**

During self-assessment, the district indicated compliance in the areas of child find, direct referrals, health summary and identification meeting timelines.

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

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

**Areas of Need:**

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**Identification Meeting Participants** – During the on-site visit it was determined through record review and staff interview that general education teachers do not consistently attend identification meetings.

- **The district will revise its improvement plan to include activities to ensure that the correct participants are at meetings. Implementation of these activities will ensure that collaborative decisions are made regarding programs and services. The improvement plan must include an administrative oversight component to ensure the consistent implementation of these activities.**

**Vision and Hearing Screening** – During the on-site visit it was determined through record review and staff interview that vision and hearing screenings are not consistently completed prior to the identification meeting for students referred for special education and related services.

- **The district will revise its improvement plan to include activities to ensure that vision and hearing screening for students referred for special education and related services are conducted prior to the identification meeting. The implementation of these activities will ensure that information is available to determine the need for an evaluation and if needed the assessment that will be conducted. The improvement plan must include an administrative oversight component to ensure the consistent implementation of these activities.**

**Section V. Protection in Evaluation and Evaluation Procedures**

During self-assessment, the district indicated compliance in the areas of multi-disciplinary evaluations, standardized assessments, written reports and bilingual evaluations.

During the self-assessment process, the district identified concerns in the areas of, functional assessments and acceptance and rejection of reports. The districts improvement plan is sufficient to address these areas of need.

An additional area of need was identified during the on-site regarding functional assessments for student's eligible speech and language services.

**Area of Need:**

**Functional Assessments** – During the on-site visit it was determined through record review and staff interview that speech evaluations do not include documentation of educational impact, structured observation, teacher interview, review of educational history and review of interventions.

- **The district will revise its improvement plan it include activities to ensure that functional assessments for students eligible speech and language services contain all the required components. The implementation of these activities will ensure that reports contain sufficient information upon which eligibility determination can be made. The plan must include an**

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

**Section VI.   Reevaluation**

**Summary of Findings:**

During the self-assessment, the district indicated compliance in the areas of three-year timelines and reevaluation planning meetings.

Additional areas of need were identified during the on-site visit regarding participants at planning meetings, undue delay and dismissals for speech.

**Areas of Need:**

**Participants at Planning Meetings** – During the on-site visit it was determined through record review and staff interview that general education and special education teachers are not consistently at planning meetings.

- **The district will revise its improvement plan to include activities to ensure that general education and special education teachers are in attendance at planning meetings. The implementation of these activities will ensure that collaborative decisions are made regarding reevaluation and programs and services. The improvement plan must include an administrative oversight component to ensure the consistent implementation of these activities.**

**Undue Delay** – During the on-site monitoring it was determined that the district is not implementing reevaluation plans in a timely manner once parental consent has been obtained. Although reevaluations are completed by the three-year due date, evaluation planning meetings may be conducted as early as six to seven months prior to the due date. As a result the assessments are conducted well after parental consent is obtained and the evaluation plans have not considered any interim change in the student’s level of functioning.

- **The district will revise its improvement plan to include activities to ensure that reevaluation plans are implemented without undue delay once parental consent has been obtained. Implementation of these activities will ensure that the assessments conducted are relevant to the student’s current educational program and level of functioning. The improvement plan must include an administrative oversight component to ensure consistent implementation of the plan.**

**Speech Dismissals** – During the on-site monitoring it was determined that a reevaluation is not conducted when considering dismissal for students eligible for speech-language services.

- **The district will develop an improvement plan to include activities to ensure that a reevaluation is conducted prior to dismissing students eligible for speech and language services. The implementation of these activities will ensure that appropriate evaluations are conducted to determine the eligibility status of speech students. The improvement plan**

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**must include an administrative oversight component to ensure consistent implementation of the activities.**

***Section VII. Eligibility***

**Summary of Findings:**

During self-assessment, the district indicated compliance in the areas of criteria and statement of eligibility.

During the self-assessment process the district identified concerns in the areas of participants, signature of agreement/disagreement rationale and copy of evaluation reports to parents/adult students 10 days prior to a meeting. The district's improvement plan is sufficient to address these areas of need.

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, goals and objectives aligned with Core Curricular Content Standards, age of majority, implementation dates, and annual review timelines, IEPs to parents, 90-day timelines and teacher access/responsibility.

During the self-assessment process the district identified concerns in the areas of consideration and required statements and present levels of educational performance. The district's improvement plan is sufficient to address these areas of need.

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

**Area of Need:**

**Individual Education Plans** – During the on-site monitoring it was determined through record review and staff interview that although IEPs for students eligible for speech and language services have all the proper components, present levels of performance, modifications and supplementary aids and services in the general education classroom, participation in district and state assessment program, extended school year, statement of speech language services, transfer of rights at age of majority, notice requirements for the IEP and placement and procedural safeguards statement are not consistently completed.

- **The district will develop an improvement plan to include activities to ensure that all sections of IEPs for students eligible for speech and language services are completed. The implementation of these activities will ensure documentation of all consideration reviewed by the IEP and programs developed by the IEP team. The plan must include in-service and administrative oversight component to ensure consistent implementation of the activities.**

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**Section IX. Least Restrictive Environment**

**Summary of Findings:**

During self-assessment, the district indicated compliance in the areas of decision making process, consideration of supplemental aides and services, general education access and continuum of programs.

During the self-assessment process the district identified concerns in the areas of out-of-district participation in nonacademic and extracurricular activities. 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 XI. Discipline**

**Summary of Findings:**

During the self-assessment, the district indicated compliance in the areas of suspension tracking, functional behavioral assessments, behavioral intervention plans and procedural safeguards.

During the self-assessment process, the district identified areas of need regarding documentation to case managers, manifestation determination meetings and interim alternative educational settings. The district's improvement plan is sufficient to address these areas of need.

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

**Section XII. Statewide Assessments**

**Summary of Findings:**

During self-assessment, the district identified themselves compliant in the areas of participation, approved accommodation and modifications, IEP documentation and alternative proficiency assessments.

During the self-assessment process, the district identified concerns in the area of special review assessment. 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.



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**SUMMARY**

On-site special education monitoring was conducted in the Clearview Regional School District on April 4 and 5, 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 has increased the percentage of students in the general education settings by increasing the number of students in in-class support classrooms and providing additional supplemental supports. In addition the district has utilized instructional aides and one-on one aides for students. A three year trend of the districts classification rate has remained relatively consistent with the state average.

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 expressed concerns at times with child study team accessibility and teachers knowledge of students IEPs.

Standards identified as consistently compliant by the district during self-assessment and verified during the on-site monitoring visit included transition 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 in native language, interpreters at meetings, direct referrals, health summary, multi-disciplinary evaluation, standardized assessments, written reports, criteria, statement of eligibility, 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 and procedural safeguards.

During the self-assessment process, the district identified areas of need regarding professional development, surrogate parents, referral process, functional assessments, acceptance and rejection of reports, meeting participants at eligibility meetings, signature of agreement disagreement rational, copy of evaluation report to parents/ adult students 10 days prior to a meeting, consideration and required statements, present level of educational performance, out-of-district notification of nonacademic and extracurricular activities, documentation to case managers, manifestation and determination meetings and interim alternative educational settings.

The on-site visit identified additional areas of need within the various standards regarding vision and hearing screenings, participants, functional assessments, undue delay, procedures for speech dismissals, notice of a meeting and written notice for

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students eligible for speech and language services, short procedural safeguards statement and meetings for students eligible for speech and language services and IEPs for students eligible for speech and language services.

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