District: Fair Haven **County**: Monmouth

Monitoring Dates: November 1 and 2, 2005

Monitoring Team: Jane Marano and Kenneth Richards

Background Information:

During the 2004-2005 school year, the Fair Haven School District conducted a self-assessment of policies, procedures, programs, services and student outcomes. This self-assessment component of the monitoring process provided the Fair Haven School District with an opportunity to evaluate 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 Fair Haven School District 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.

During the on-site visit, the New Jersey State Department of Education (NJDOE) monitoring 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. A representative sample of student records was also reviewed. Interviews were conducted with the district's special education administrators, building principals, general education and special education teachers, speech-language specialists and child study team members. Parents of students with disabilities were interviewed by phone.

Data Summary:

A review of the district's data for students with disabilities indicates that during the 2004-2005 school year, the district educated 48.4% of students with disabilities (62 students) in the general education setting for more than 80% of the school day. This rate is higher than the state average of 41.9% for that year. All preschool students, ages three to five, attend the integrated preschool program within the district. Only six of the 139 students with disabilities were in general education classes less than 40% of the school day and two students were placed in approved private schools for students with disabilities. The district's classification rate of 11.79% was lower than the state's average of 14.61%.

Fair Haven Monmouth

Sections Demonstrating Compliance with All Standards

The self-assessment process required the district to review implementation of federal and state regulations categorized into 15 sections. Within each section, a number of areas were reviewed. The on-site monitoring visit involved verification that the sections and areas identified as compliant by the district in their self-assessment were compliant with regulations. These sections were identified by the district during self-assessment and the monitors during the monitoring process as compliant:

- General Provisions
- Transition to Preschool
- Statewide Assessments

Sections Not Reviewed

These areas were not reviewed by the New Jersey Department of Education because the district does not serve a population of students who would require these services:

- Transition to adult life beginning at Age 16
- Activities, annual goals and benchmarks relative to student's desired outcomes
- Out-of district student participation in high school graduation
- Written Notice of high school graduation

Areas Demonstrating Compliance

The following areas were identified by the district's self-assessment committee and by the Department of Education as compliant. These areas were reviewed for students eligible for special education and related services (ESERS) and students eligible for speech and language services (ESLS). Areas compliant for only one group of students are noted.

Section	Areas Demonstrating Compliance
Free, Appropriate Public Education (FAPE)	 Oversight of individualized education program (IEP) implementation Provision of programs
Procedural Safeguards	 Consent Implementation without undue delay Provision of notice of a meeting Content of notice of a meeting Meetings Content of written notice (ESERS)
Location, Referral and Identification (LRI)	 Referral process Pre-referral interventions Direct Referrals Identification meeting timelines Identification meeting participants

Section	Areas Demonstrating Compliance
Evaluation	Multi-disciplinary evaluations
	 Educational impact statement
	 Standardized assessments
	Bilingual evaluations
Reevaluation	Reevaluation when change of eligibility is considered
	(ESERS)
	■ Timelines
	Planning meeting participants
	 Reevaluations prior to age 5
	Procedures when parental consent cannot be obtained
E1: 11:12	Documentation of efforts to obtain parental consent
Eligibility	Meeting participants Single line Original O
	Eligibility Criteria
	Copy of evaluation reports to parents
Individualized Education	 Meeting participants
Program (IEP)	Implementation dates
	 IEP provided to parent prior to implementation
	 Annual reviews completed by June 30
	 Teachers informed of their responsibilities (knowledge of
	and/or access to IEPS)
	90 day timelines
Least Restrictive Environment (LRE)	 Documentation of LRE decisions
Discipline	 Suspension tracking system
	 Discipline procedures employed equitably for all students
	 IEP team meeting for first removal beyond 10 days
	 Procedures for determination of change in placement
	 Procedures for development of behavior intervention plan
	 Short-term removals resulting in a change of placement
	■ Short-term removals that are not a change in placement—
	school personnel determining the extent of services to be provided
	 Interim Alternative Educational Settings
Programs & Services	Class size
	Age range
	Group size

Areas of Noncompliance – Improvement Plan Review

The following areas were identified by the district's self-assessment committee as noncompliant. The district must revise the improvement plan for any area where there is an 'X' in the 'Needs Revision' column:

Section	Area	Plan Is Sufficient	Plan Needs Revision	Implemented and the district has demonstrated compliance
Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE)	 Extended school year (ESY) determination – ESY is not considered and documented for all students with disabilities. Provision of related services – related service providers (speechlanguage specialists, occupational therapists, physical therapists and counselors) do not document levels of services by maintaining student contact logs. Transfer procedures – the child study team does not document the immediate review of the student file. Transfer procedures – the IEP team does not develop an interim 	X		x x
	IEP for a transfer student when there is a disagreement.			
Procedural Safeguards	 Content of written notice (ESLS) - written notices do not contain all required components (a description of other options considered and/or rejected and why they were rejected is missing). Provision of written notice – the district does not provide written notice at least 15 days prior to the implementation of the IEP. Notices in native language – notices of meeting and written notices are not provided in the 	X		X X
	 native language of the parents. Interpreters at meeting – the district does not consistently provide interpreters at meetings 			X
	because there is a lack of individuals available to translate. Independent evaluations – the district does not maintain a list of			X

Section	Area	Plan Is Sufficient	Plan Needs Revision	Implemented and the district has demonstrated compliance
	evaluators.			
	 Child Find ages 3-21 – Child Find activities do not include outreach in the summer months. 			X
LRI	 Direct referrals – teachers cannot refer to the child study team without going through the Intervention and Referral Services (I&RS) committee. 			X
	 Health summary, vision and hearing screenings – the school nurse does not provide the health summary and vision and hearing screening results to the CST prior to identification meetings. 			X
	Functional assessments			X
Evaluation	components – classroom observation and parent and teacher interviews are not documented in evaluation reports.			
	 Acceptance and/or rejection of written reports – CST members do not document their review of reports prepared by outside evaluators. 	Х		
Reevaluation	 Reevaluation - when a change in eligibility is considered, the speech-language specialists do not conduct reevaluation planning meetings prior to determining that ESLS students no longer need services. 			X
Eligibility	 Statement of eligibility - the district does not consistently use a severe discrepancy formula to determine eligibility for specific learning disability. Signature of agreement and/or disagreement with eligibility 			X X
	determination and rationale – CST team evaluators do not certify in writing whether the report reflects their conclusions.			

Section	Area	Plan Is Sufficient	Plan Needs Revision	Implemented and the district has demonstrated compliance
IEP	 IEP considerations and components – IEPs do not consistently include parental concerns as part of the Present Levels of Academic Achievement and Functional Performance, consideration for need of assistive technology devices and services, and progress reporting. Meetings held annually or more often if necessary, to review and/or revise the IEP – the case manager does not conduct an IEP meeting prior to revising the IEP. 	X		X
LRE	 Notification of and participation in non-academic and extracurricular activities for students in out- of-district placements - parents of students in out of district placements are not notified on a regular basis of in-district activities. Continuum of programs – because of a lack of in-class support programs in certain school buildings and the lack of an integrated preschool program, individual placement decisions are not occurring. Placement decisions based on 	X		X
	students' individual needs – because of a lack of in-class support programs in certain school buildings and the lack of an integrated preschool program, individual placement decisions are not occurring.			X
	 Opportunity for all students with disabilities to access all general education programs - students in special education classes are not consistently included in extracurricular activities. 			X
Discipline	 Notification of removal forwarded to case manager – the case manager is verbally informed of the removal rather than in writing. 			Х

Section	Area	Plan Is Sufficient	Plan Needs Revision	Implemented and the district has demonstrated compliance
	 Manifestation determinations – when a series of short term removals is a change in placement, the IEP team does not conduct a manifestation determination meeting. Procedures for conducting functional behavioral assessment – the district does not obtain parental consent for a functional behavioral assessment. 			x x
Programs & Services	 Common planning time – special education teachers do not have sufficient time to consult with the general education staff. 			Х

Additional Areas of Need

The following areas were originally identified by the district's self-assessment committee as compliant but were found to be noncompliant by the NJDOE during the on-site monitoring:

Section	Area	Activity
Transition to Adult Life	Beginning at age 14 or younger, if appropriate, IEP must contain a statement of "transition service needs" - IEP does not include student's strengths, interests and preferences, postsecondary goals outcomes and courses of study.	The district is directed to revise the improvement plan to include activities to ensure that IEPs for students beginning at age 14 or younger, if appropriate, contain a statement of transition service needs including student's strengths, interests and preferences, post secondary goals outcomes, courses of study aligned to the student's interests, preferences and desired postsecondary goals and statement of technical consultation, when appropriate.
	Student and agency invitation to IEP meetings - the district does not invite the student with disabilities and a representative of any agency that is likely to be responsible for providing or paying for transition services to the IEP meeting where transition services will be discussed.	In addition, the district is directed to revise the improvement plan to include activities to ensure that when a purpose of an IEP meeting for a student with disabilities beginning at age 14, or younger, if appropriate, is a discussion of transition services needs, the notice of the IEP meeting indicates that the purpose is to

Section	Area	Activity
		develop a statement of the transition services needs and that the student with disabilities and a representative of any agency that is likely to be responsible for providing or paying for transition services are invited to attend the meeting.
		Implementation of these activities will ensure the student is afforded the opportunity to participate in decisions regarding postsecondary outcomes. The activities must include procedures, inservice training and oversight to ensure that the IEPs and notice of a transition meeting include all required transition components.
Graduation	IEP requirements - the district does not address graduation requirements during IEP meetings for students who are age 14 or who will become 14 during the timeframe of the IEP. Graduation is not addressed until the student transitions to high school.	The district is directed to revise the improvement plan to include activities to ensure that graduation requirements are addressed for students age 14 and documented in the IEP. As a result of these activities parents and students will have the opportunity to participate in decisions regarding requirements the student must fulfill to receive a high school diploma. These activities must include procedures, in-service training and oversight to ensure that the IEPs include all required graduation components.

Summary

On-site special education monitoring was conducted in the Fair Haven School District on November 1 and 2, 2005. 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 acknowledged for the 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 will bring about systemic change. The district is further acknowledged for the many areas determined by the district and verified by the OSEP as compliant with federal and state statutes and regulations.

A review of the district's data indicates that 139 students with disabilities were enrolled in the Fair Haven School district during the 2004 school year. The district educated 48.4% of students with disabilities (62 students) in the general education setting for more than 80% of the school day. This rate is higher than the state average of 41.9% for that year. All preschool students, ages three to five, attend the integrated preschool program within the district. Only six of the 139 students with disabilities were in general education classes less than 40% of the school day and two students attend private day schools. The district's classification rate for the 2004 school year was 11.79% compared to the state classification average of 14.61%.

During interviews conducted with parents by telephone, many parents expressed their satisfaction with the district's programs and services and staff. The majority of the parents interviewed felt that they were part of the IEP team and that their opinions were valued when planning for their child's education.

Standards identified as consistently compliant by the district during self-assessment and verified during the on-site monitoring visit included:

- General Provisions
- Transition to Preschool
- Statewide Assessments (SWA)

Areas identified as consistently compliant by the district during the self-assessment and verified during the on-site monitoring visit include:

- Oversight of individualized education program (IEP) implementation
- Provision of programs
- Consent
- Implementation without undue delay
- Provision of notice of a meeting
- Content of notice of a meeting
- Meetings
- Content of written notice (ESERS)
- Referral process
- Pre-referral interventions
- Identification meeting timelines

- Identification meetings participants
- Multi-disciplinary evaluations
- Educational impact statement
- Standardized assessments
- Bilingual evaluations
- Reevaluation when change of eligibility is considered (ESERS)
- Reevaluation timelines
- Planning meeting participants
- Reevaluations prior to age 5
- Procedures when parental consent cannot be obtained
- Documentation of efforts to obtain parental consent

- Eligibility meeting participants
- Eligibility criteria
- Copy of evaluation reports to parents
- IEP meeting participants
- Implementation dates of IEP
- IEP provided to parent prior to implementation
- Annual reviews completed by June 30
- Teachers informed of their responsibilities (knowledge of and/or access to IEPs)
- 90-day timelines
- Documentation of LRE decisions
- Suspension tracking system
- Discipline procedures employed equitably for all students

- IEP team meeting for first removal beyond 10 days
- Procedures for determination of change in placement
- Procedures for development of behavior intervention plan
- Short-term removals resulting in a change of placement
- Short-term removals that are not a change in placement—school personnel determining the extent of services to be provided
- Interim Alternative Educational Settings
- Class size
- Age range
- Group size

Areas of need originally identified by the district but determined to have been corrected prior to the on-site monitoring visit by the NJDOE include:

- Extended school year
- Transfer procedures
- Content of written notice (ESLS)
- Provision of written notice
- Interpreters at meetings
- Independent evaluations
- Child Find
- Direct referrals
- Health summary
- Vision and hearing screenings
- Functional assessments
- Reevaluation when change of eligibility is considered (ESLS)
- Statement of eligibility
- Signature of agreement and/or disagreement and rationale
- IEP considerations and components
- Opportunity for all students with disabilities to access all general education programs
- Continuum of programs
- Placement decisions based on students' individual needs
- Notification of removal forwarded to case manager
- Manifestation determinations
- Procedures for conducting functional behavioral assessment
- Common planning time

During the self-assessment process, the district identified areas of need regarding:

- Provision of related services
- Notices in native languages
- · Meetings held annually or more often if necessary, to review and/or revise the IEP

 Notification of and participation in non-academic and extracurricular activities for students in out of district placements

The on-site visit identified additional areas of need within the various standards, regarding:

- Beginning at age 14, IEP statement of "transition service needs"
- Student and agency invitation to IEP meetings
- IEP requirements for graduation beginning at age 14, the IEP identifies graduation requirements

Within 45 days of receipt of the monitoring report, the Fair Haven School District will revise and resubmit the improvement plan to the OSEP to address those areas that require revisions.