

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

**District:** Glen Ridge Public School District

**County:** Essex

**Monitoring Dates:** January 27 and 28, 2003

**Monitoring Team:** Janet Wright, Tracey Pettiford-Bugg and Zola Mills

***Background Information:***

During the 2001–2002 school year, the Glen Ridge Public School District conducted a self-assessment of policies, procedures, programs, services, and student outcomes. This self-assessment component of the monitoring process provided the Glen Ridge Public School District 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 Glen Ridge Public 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.

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 Glen Ridge Public School on January 21, 2003. 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, speech therapists and child study team members.

**District Strengths:**

The district is commended for the preschool disabilities program which utilizes the infusion model of providing related services within the classroom.

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

The district is commended for its active special education parent group called GRASE. The group works cooperatively with the department of student services. GRASE assists in providing parent and staff workshops and training. The group also provides mini-grant opportunities for teachers and offers a scholarship for a deserving special needs student graduating from Glen Ridge High School.

The district is also commended for the Glen Ridge Educational Foundation which provides mini-grants for teachers to plan and implement special programs to stimulate growth and enrich the curriculum.

The district provides a program called Lunch Bunch. In this program, the school psychologist and speech and language specialist work on improving social decision making skills.

The district also provides a ninth period at the middle and high school levels to allow all students, including students with disabilities, the opportunity to seek additional academic help when needed.

### ***Areas Demonstrating Compliance With All Standards:***

**Eligibility** was determined to be an area 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 self-assessment the district accurately identified themselves compliant in the areas of policies and procedures and dissemination of IDEA.

During the self-assessment process, the district identified concerns in the area of professional and parent development. The district's improvement plan is sufficient to address this area. During the on-site visit, a review of records and staff interviews indicated that the district has implemented specific activities to bring about correction in the area of professional and parent development.

No additional areas of need were 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 and certifications.

During the self-assessment process, the district identified concerns in the areas of transfer students, facilities and hearing aids. The district's improvement plan is sufficient to address these areas. During the on-site visit, a review of records and staff interviews indicated that the district has begun implementation of specific activities to bring about correction in these areas. The district further identified concerns in the area of related services of speech, counseling and transportation. **The district's improvement plan is insufficient to address these areas because it lacks an administrative oversight**

## New Jersey Department of Education Special Education Monitoring

**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 III: Procedural Safeguards**

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

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

During the self-assessment process, the district identified concerns in the areas of surrogate parents, notices of meetings and written reports. The district's improvement plan is sufficient to address these areas. During the on-site visit, a review of records and staff interviews indicated that the district has implemented specific activities to bring about correction in the areas.

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 accurately identified themselves compliant in the areas of referral process, direct and summer referrals and identification meeting participants and timelines.

During the self-assessment process, the district identified concerns in the areas of Child Find, pre-referral interventions, health summary and vision and hearing screenings. The district's improvement plan is sufficient to address these areas. During the on-site visit, a review of records and staff interviews indicated that the district has begun implementation of specific activities to bring about correction in these areas.

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

### **Section V: Protection in Evaluation and Evaluation Procedures**

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

During self-assessment the district accurately identified themselves compliant in the areas of multidisciplinary evaluations, standardized and functional assessments, written reports and bilingual evaluations.

During the self-assessment process, the district identified concerns in the area of acceptance and rejection of reports. **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.

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

## New Jersey Department of Education Special Education Monitoring

### **Area(s) of Need:**

**Written Reports** – During the on-site monitoring, staff interviews and record review indicated that speech and language therapists are documenting eligibility in their evaluation reports.

- **The district will revise the improvement plan to include procedures to ensure individual assessment reports do not include determinations that may only be made by an appropriately configured IEP team. The plan must include 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 reevaluation planning meeting, participants and turning age five.

During the self-assessment process, the district identified concerns in the areas of reevaluation timelines. The district's improvement plan is sufficient to address this area. During the on-site visit, a review of records and staff interviews indicated that the district has implemented specific activities to bring about correction in this area.

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 alignment of goals and objectives to the core curriculum standards, age of majority and annual review timelines.

During the self-assessment process, the district identified concerns in the areas of IEP participants, considerations and required statements, implementation dates, ninety-day timelines, teacher knowledge and access of the IEP and the provision of copies of IEPs to parents. The district's improvement plan is sufficient to address these areas. During the on-site visit, a review of records and staff interviews indicated that the district has begun implementation of specific activities to bring about correction in these areas.

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

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

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

During the self-assessment process, the district identified concerns in the areas of individualized decision-making, Oberti factors, consideration and required statements, regular education access and continuum. The district indicated it wanted to expand its current program options. **The district's improvement plan is insufficient to address**

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

**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. The district further identified concerns in the areas of nonacademic and extracurricular participation and in the documentation of the supplemental aids and services in provides in general education settings. The district's improvement plan is sufficient to address these areas.

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

### **Section X: Transition to Preschool**

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

During self-assessment the district accurately identified themselves compliant in the areas of preschool transition planning conference and early intervention program to preschool disabled by age three.

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

### **Section X: Transition to Post-School**

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

During self-assessment the district accurately identified themselves compliant in the areas of student and agency invitation, agency involvement and courses of study.

During the self-assessment process, the district identified concerns in the areas of age fourteen transition service needs, preferences and interests and age sixteen needed transition services. The district's improvement plan is sufficient to address these areas. During the on-site visit, a review of records and staff interviews indicated that the district has begun implementation of specific activities to bring about correction in these areas.

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

### **Section XI: Discipline**

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

During self-assessment the district accurately identified themselves compliant in the areas of procedures, suspension tracking, behavioral intervention plan, functional behavioral assessment, manifestation determination and interim alternative educational setting.

During the self-assessment process, the district identified concerns in the areas of documentation to the case manager. The district's improvement plan is sufficient to address this area. During the on-site visit, a review of records and staff interviews indicated that the district has implemented specific activities to bring about correction in this area.

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

## New Jersey Department of Education Special Education Monitoring

### **Section XII: Statewide Assessment**

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

During self-assessment the district accurately identified themselves compliant in the areas of participation, approved accommodations and modifications, IEP documentation and alternate assessment.

During the self-assessment process, the district identified concerns in the area of child study team knowledge of assessment content. The district's improvement plan is sufficient to address this area. During the on-site visit, a review of records and staff interviews indicated that the district has implemented specific activities to bring about correction in this area.

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

### **Section XIII: Graduation**

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

During self-assessment the district accurately identified themselves compliant in the areas of IEP requirements, diploma and participation.

During the self-assessment process, the district identified concerns in the area of written notice of graduation. The district's improvement plan is sufficient to address this area. During the on-site visit, a review of records and staff interviews indicated that the district has begun implementation of specific activities to bring about correction in this area.

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

### **Section XIV: Programs and Services**

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

During self-assessment the district accurately identified themselves compliant in the areas of class sizes waivers, age range waivers, group sizes and home instruction approvals.

During the self-assessment process, the district identified concerns in the areas of staffing, class descriptions, team teaching and supplemental instruction. The district's improvement plan is sufficient to address these areas. The district further identified concerns in the area of collaborative planning time. **The district's improvement plan is insufficient to address the area of collaboration time 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.

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

**Section XV: Student Records**

**Summary of Findings:**

During self-assessment the district accurately identified themselves compliant in the areas of parent and adult student access and requests for records, access sheets, maintenance and documentation of locations.

During the self-assessment process, the district identified concerns in the area of destruction of records. The district's improvement plan is sufficient to address this area. During the on-site visit, a review of records and staff interviews indicated that the district has implemented specific activities to bring about correction in this area.

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

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

### **Summary**

On-site special education monitoring was conducted in the Glen Ridge Public School District on January 27 and 28, 2003. 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 all but one minor area of need and develop an improvement plan that with some revision, will be sufficient to bring about systemic change. The district is further commended for the prompt implementation of corrective action to address the areas of need identified during the self-assessment process. As a result, many of those identified areas were corrected prior to the on-site visit. Additionally, the district is 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.

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 were especially pleased with the assistance and cooperation received from staff at the elementary level. Some parents expressed concern with the need for additional staff to provide more in-class-support sections at all levels and for staff to provide additional transition services for age fourteen and above.

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, length of day and year, certifications, consent, meetings, native language, independent evaluations, referral process, direct and summer referrals, identification meeting timelines and participants, multidisciplinary evaluations, standardized and functional assessments, bilingual evaluations, reevaluation planning meeting and participants, turning age five, eligibility, alignment of goals and objectives to the core curriculum standards, age of majority, annual review timelines, transition to preschool, early intervention to preschool disabled by age three, courses, agency involvement, student and agency invite, discipline procedures, suspension tracking, functional behavioral assessments, behavioral intervention plans, manifestation determination, interim alternative educational setting, procedural safeguards, statewide assessment participation, approved accommodations and modifications, alternate assessment, IEP requirements, choice of diploma, participation, class sizes, age ranges, group sizes, home instruction approvals, access sheets, parent and adult student access and requests, maintenance and documentation of locations.

During the self-assessment process, the district identified areas of need regarding professional and parent development, related services, transfer students, facilities, hearing aids, surrogate parents, notices of meetings, written notice, Child Find, pre-referral interventions, health summary, vision and hearing screenings, acceptance and rejection of records, reevaluation timelines, IEP participants, considerations and required statements, implementation dates, ninety-day timelines, teacher access and responsibility, copies of IEPs to parents, least restrictive environment, age fourteen transition service needs, preferences and interests, age sixteen needed transition



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

services, documentation to the case manager for discipline, child study team knowledge of content of statewide assessment, written notice of graduation, staffing, collaboration time, class descriptions, team teaching, supplemental instruction and destruction of records.

The on-site visit identified one minor area of need regarding written reports.

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