

## New Jersey Department of Education Special Education Monitoring

**District:** Gloucester County Vocational School

**County:** Gloucester

**Monitoring Dates:** January 10 and 11, 2006

**Monitoring Team:** J. Harmelin and C. Carthew

### ***Background Information:***

During the 2004-2005 school year, the Gloucester County Vocational School District conducted a self-assessment of policies, procedures, programs, services and student outcomes. This self-assessment component of the monitoring process provided the Gloucester County Vocational 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 Gloucester County Vocational 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 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 and 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, general education and special education teachers, the transition coordinator 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 2005-2006 school year, the district reported a classification rate of 11.77% (78 of 662 students). The district initiated a full-time program during the 2005-2006 school year, educating 78 full-time students with disabilities in vocational programs. The district projects that they will accept an additional 70 full-time students with disabilities for the 2006-2007 school year, phasing out the shared-time program and operating only a full-time program for all students, including those with disabilities. The district educated 38.5% of their students with disabilities in general education programs for more than 80% of the school day during the 2005-2006 school year. An additional 57.7% were

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

educated in general education programs between 40 and 80% of the day. The district continues to operate self-contained shop area courses, but there is a plan to start general education shop courses with supports during the 2006-2007 school year.

**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 NJDOE during the monitoring process as compliant: General Provisions, Free and Appropriate Public Education (FAPE), Reevaluation, Eligibility, Individualized Education Program (IEP), Transition to Adult Life, Statewide Assessment, Graduation Requirements, and Programs and Services.

**Area Not Applicable:**

Transition to Preschool was not reviewed because the district does not serve a population of students for whom these requirements apply.

**Areas Demonstrating Compliance**

The following areas, within the remaining sections reviewed, were identified by the district's self-assessment committee and by the NJDOE 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.

<b>Section</b>	<b>Areas Demonstrating Compliance</b>
Procedural Safeguards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Consent</li> <li>▪ Implementation without undue delay</li> <li>▪ Provision of notice of a meeting</li> <li>▪ Provision of written notice</li> <li>▪ Content of written notice</li> <li>▪ Meetings</li> <li>▪ Native language</li> <li>▪ Interpreters at meetings</li> <li>▪ Independent evaluations</li> </ul>
Location, Referral, and Identification (LRI)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Child Find Ages 3-21</li> <li>▪ Direct referrals (parents/staff)</li> <li>▪ Identification meeting participants</li> </ul>
Evaluation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Multi-disciplinary evaluations</li> <li>▪ Educational impact statement (ESLS)</li> <li>▪ Standardized assessments</li> <li>▪ Bilingual evaluations</li> <li>▪ Written reports prepared by evaluators</li> </ul>
Least Restrictive Environment (LRE)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Documentation of LRE decisions</li> <li>▪ Notification of and participation in non-academic and extracurricular activities for students educated outside of the</li> </ul>

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

Section	Areas Demonstrating Compliance
	district <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Opportunity for all students with disabilities to access all general education programs</li> <li>▪ Placement decisions based on students' individual needs</li> </ul>
Discipline	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Suspension tracking system</li> <li>▪ Discipline procedures employed equitably for all students</li> <li>▪ IEP team meeting for first removal beyond 10 days</li> <li>▪ Procedures for conducting functional behavioral assessment and development of behavior intervention plan</li> <li>▪ Interim Alternative Educational Settings</li> </ul>

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

**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
Procedural Safeguards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Content of notice of a meeting - The district notice of a meeting form does not include purpose, time, location and participants.</li> </ul>			X
LRI	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Referral process and pre-referral Interventions - The district does not maintain the required documentation regarding the implementation and effectiveness of the interventions and must establish a formal intervention and referral services (IR&amp;S) committee.</li> <li>▪ Health Summary/Vision and Hearing Screenings - The district does not consistently complete a health summary and vision and hearing screening for each student referred to the child study team.</li> <li>▪ Identification Meeting Timelines - The district does not consistently hold identification meetings within twenty days of receipt of the referral.</li> </ul>	X		X  X
Evaluation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Functional assessments - Evaluations did not contain all required components.</li> </ul>			X
Least Restrictive Environment (LRE)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Continuum of programs - The district identified a need for more supports in general education to accommodate students with disabilities.</li> </ul>			X
Discipline	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Notification of removal forwarded to case manager - The district did not always forward written notification of suspensions to case manager.</li> <li>▪ Short-term removals that are not a change in placement - The district did not always consult with the special education teacher and case manager to determine extent of services necessary.</li> <li>▪ Short-term removals resulting in a</li> </ul>			X  X  X

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

<b>Section</b>	<b>Area</b>	<b>Plan Is Sufficient</b>	<b>Plan Needs Revision</b>	<b>Implemented and the district has demonstrated compliance</b>
Discipline (continued)	change in placement - The IEP team did not always meet to determine if the misconduct was a manifestation of the student's disability <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Manifestation determinations - The IEP team did not consistently conduct manifestation determinations when required.</li> </ul>			X

**No additional areas of need were identified during the on-site monitoring visit, interviews or record review.**

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

### ***Summary***

On-site special education monitoring was conducted in the Gloucester County Vocational School District on January 10 and 11, 2006. 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 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 Office of Special Education Programs as compliant with federal and state statutes and regulations.

A review of the district's data for students with disabilities indicates that during the 2005-2006 school year, the district reported a classification rate of 11.77% (78 of 662 students). The district initiated a full-time program during the 2005-2006 school year, educating 78 full-time students with disabilities in vocational programs. The district projects that they will accept an additional 70 full-time students with disabilities for the 2006-2007 school year, phasing out the shared-time program and operating only a full-time program for all students, including those with disabilities. The district educated 38.5% of their students with disabilities in general education programs for more than 80% of the school day during the 2005-2006 school year. An additional 57.7% were educated in general education programs between 40 and 80% of the day. The district continues to operate self-contained shop area courses, but there is a plan to start general education shop courses with supports during the 2006-2007 school year.

During interviews conducted with parents by phone, many parents expressed their satisfaction with the district's programs, services and staff. Parents stated that the district has made every effort to collaborate with them in making the transition from shared-time to full-time very smooth for their children.

Sections identified as consistently compliant by the district during self-assessment and verified during the on-site monitoring visit included General Provisions, Free, Appropriate Public Education (FAPE), Reevaluation, Eligibility, IEP, Transition, Statewide Assessment, Graduation Requirements, and Programs and Services.

Areas identified as consistently compliant by the district during self-assessment and verified during the on-site monitoring visit included consent, implementation without undue delay, provision of written notice, content of written notice, meetings, native language, interpreters at meetings, independent evaluations, child find ages 3-21, summer referrals, direct referrals, identification meeting participants, multi-disciplinary evaluations, educational impact statement (ESLS), standardized assessments, written reports prepared by evaluators, bilingual evaluations, documentation of LRE decisions, notification of and participation in non-academic and extracurricular activities for students educated outside the district, opportunity for all students with disabilities to access all general education programs, placement decisions based on students' individual needs, suspension tracking system, discipline procedures employed equitably for all students, IEP team meeting for first removal beyond 10 days, procedures for conducting functional behavioral assessment and development of behavior intervention plan and interim alternative educational settings.

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

Areas of need originally identified by the district as non-compliant, but determined to have been corrected prior to the on-site monitoring visit by the NJDOE, are content of notice of a meeting, health summary, vision and hearing screenings, functional assessments, identification meeting timelines, continuum of programs, notification of removal forwarded to case manager, short-term removals resulting in a change in placement, short-term removals that are not a change in placement (school personnel determining the extent of services to be provided) and manifestation determinations.

During the self-assessment process, the district identified areas of need regarding referral process and pre-referral interventions.

During the on-site visit, no additional areas of need were identified. The improvement plan submitted to the Office of Special Education Programs will be forwarded to the County Office of Education for final approval. Verification of implementation of the plan will be conducted by the County Supervisor of Child Study.