

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

**District:** Haddon Township School District

**County:** Camden

**Monitoring Dates:** January 21, 22, 23, February 11, 2004

**Monitoring Team:** Julia Harmelin, Michael Lee, Patricia Fair

***Background Information:***

During the 2002-2003 school year, the Haddon Township School District conducted a self-assessment of policies, procedures, programs, services, and student outcomes. This self-assessment component of the monitoring process provided the Haddon Township 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 Haddon Township 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 Haddon Township High School on February 11, 2004. Information obtained from that meeting was used to assist in 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 initiated an inclusive preschool program this year, as well as in-class support program at the middle school level. As a result, every school now has an in-class support program.

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

The district sponsors Career Day, in which a representative from the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation comes once a year and speaks to students and parents in a group and on an individual basis regarding higher education, vocational skills and training, and securing jobs in the workplace.

The district also sponsors a Career Fair in the spring for middle and high school students, in which technical schools, cosmetology schools, community colleges, and different community businesses participate.

The district has a parent support group, the Haddon Township Committee on Disabilities (HTCOD), which provides summer recreational activities for students and citizens with disabilities who reside in the community.

The district was awarded a grant through the Vocational School with the Plumbers Association, in which two students with disabilities are prepared to take entrance exams to gain admittance to a five-year apprenticeship in the Plumbers Association.

### **Part One Data Summary:**

The data submitted by the district indicated that placement of preschool disabled students in general education settings is below the state average. 89.6% of these students are placed in settings that do not offer access to general education. For students ages 6-21, the need to increase access to general education is also an area of concern that has been addressed through the district's improvement plan.

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

**Statewide Assessment and Graduation** 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 self-assessment the district accurately identified themselves compliant 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 and parent development. The district's improvement plan is sufficient to address these issues.

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

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

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

**Summary of Findings:**

During self-assessment the district accurately identified themselves compliant in the areas of length of school day and year, provision of related services, facilities, oversight of IEP implementation, and certifications.

During the self-assessment process, the district identified concerns in the areas of extended school year, goals and objectives for counseling, transfer students, and provision of an inclusive preschool program. The district's improvement plan is sufficient to address these areas. It should be noted that the district has implemented an inclusive preschool program this year, as well as corrected the area of goals and objectives for counseling prior to the on-site monitoring visit.

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, notices of meetings, written notice, meetings, native language, and independent evaluations.

During the self-assessment process, the district identified concerns in the area of surrogate parents. The district's improvement plan is sufficient to address this area. It should be noted that the district corrected this area prior to the on-site monitoring visit.

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, summer referrals, and identification meeting participants and timelines.

During the self-assessment process, the district identified concerns in the areas of child find ages 3-21, direct referrals for parents and staff, health summary, and pre-referral interventions. The district's improvement plan is sufficient to address these areas. It should be noted that the district corrected the areas of child find ages 3-21 and pre-referral interventions prior to the on-site monitoring visit.

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

## New Jersey Department of Education Special Education Monitoring

### **Area of Need:**

**Vision and Hearing Screenings** - During the on-site monitoring visit, it was determined through staff interviews and record review that vision and hearing screenings are not consistently conducted on all potentially disabled students by the time the identification meeting is conducted.

- **The district will revise its improvement plan to include activities that ensure that vision and hearing screenings are conducted on all students referred to the child study team for evaluation by the time of the identification meeting. Implementation of these activities will ensure the members of the identification team have the information necessary to make appropriate decisions regarding whether an evaluation is warranted and if warranted what the nature and scope of that evaluation will be. The improvement plan must include an administrative oversight component to ensure the consistent implementation of the 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, written reports, and bilingual evaluations.

During the self-assessment process, the district identified concerns in the areas of multi-disciplinary assessments for students referred for speech and language services and acceptance and rejection of reports. The district's improvement plan is sufficient to address these areas. It should be noted that the district corrected these areas prior to the on-site monitoring visit.

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

### ***Section V: Reevaluation***

#### **Summary of Finding:**

During self-assessment the district accurately identified themselves compliant in the areas of planning meetings, notices, participants at the planning meetings, parental consent, and meetings for students turning age five.

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

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

## New Jersey Department of Education Special Education Monitoring

### **Section VII: Eligibility**

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

During self-assessment the district accurately identified themselves compliant in the areas of meetings, participants, criteria, and documentation of eligibility.

During the self-assessment process, the district identified concerns in the area of provision of copies of evaluation reports to parents ten days prior to the meeting. The district's improvement plan is sufficient to address 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 considerations and required statements, goals and objectives related to the Core Curriculum Content Standards, age of majority, implementation dates, annual review timelines, and 90-day timelines.

During the self-assessment process, the district identified concerns in the areas of goals and objectives for science and social studies, teacher responsibility and IEP revision meetings. The district's improvement plan is sufficient to address these areas. It should be noted that the district corrected teacher responsibility and IEP meetings prior to the on-site monitoring visit.

An additional area of need was identified during the on-site visit regarding IEP meeting participants.

#### **Area of Need:**

**IEP Meeting Participants** - During the on-site monitoring visit, it was determined through staff interviews and record review that general education teachers are not consistently attending IEP meetings for students placed in preschool disabled programs.

- **The district will revise its improvement plan to include activities to ensure that general education teachers consistently attend IEP meetings for students in the preschool disabled program. Implementation of these activities will ensure each IEP team member is provided with the information necessary to determine how the student might benefit from receiving educational services within the general education setting. The improvement plan must include an administrative oversight component to ensure the compliant implementation of the activities.**

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

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

**Summary of Findings:**

During self-assessment the district accurately identified themselves compliant in the areas of individualized decision-making, considerations and documentation, and regular education access.

During the self-assessment process, the district identified concerns in the areas of Oberti, supplemental aids and services, nonacademic and extracurricular participation and continuum of programs. The district identified insufficient coordination to ensure the exchange of information among district personnel regarding available programs and services as a barrier to compliance. The district's improvement plan is sufficient to address these areas. It should be noted that the district corrected the areas of supplemental aids and services and nonacademic and extracurricular participation prior to the on-site monitoring visit.

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 invitation, courses of study, preferences and interests, and age 16 needed transition services.

During the self-assessment process, the district identified concerns in the areas of agency invitation, agency involvement, and age 14 transition service needs. The district's improvement plan is sufficient to address these areas. It should be noted that the district corrected agency invitation and age 14 transition service needs prior to the on-site monitoring visit.

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 area of preschool transition planning conference.

During the self-assessment process, the district identified concerns in the area of early intervention programs to preschool disabled by age three because Early intervention programs are not consistently notifying the district of students who are nearing age three. The district's improvement plan is sufficient to address this area.

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

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

**Section X: Discipline**

**Summary of Findings:**

During self-assessment the district accurately identified themselves compliant in the areas of procedures, suspension tracking, manifestation determinations, and interim alternative educational settings.

During the self-assessment process, the district identified concerns in the areas of documentation to case manager, behavior intervention plans/functional behavioral assessments, and notification of authorities. The district's improvement plan is sufficient to address these areas. It should be noted that the district corrected behavior intervention plans/functional behavioral assessments and notification of authorities prior to the on-site monitoring visit.

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 group sizes for speech therapy and home instruction.

During the self-assessment process, the district identified concerns in the areas of class size, age range, common planning time, child study team personnel, and time of instructional day, noting that a few of the pull-out resource programs are provided for more than one-half of the instructional day. The district's improvement plan is sufficient to address these areas. It should be noted that the district corrected the areas of class size, age range, common planning time, and time of instructional day prior to the on-site monitoring visit.

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

**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 to records, access sheets, maintenance, and destruction.

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

An additional area of need was identified during the on-site visit regarding documentation of locations of other records.

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

**Area of Need:**

**Documentation of Locations of Other Records** - During the on-site monitoring visit, it was determined through staff interviews and record review that central records do not document the locations of where other records may be found.

- **The district will revise its improvement plan to include activities to ensure that central records document where other records may be found. Implementation of this activity will ensure parents and adult students are aware of the location of all records.**



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

## **Summary**

On-site special education monitoring was conducted in the Haddon Township School District on January 21, 22, 23, and February 11, 2004. 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 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 monitoring 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.

A review of data indicated the district has increased the number of students in an inclusive preschool setting by initiating an inclusive program this year.

At a focus group meeting, parents expressed their satisfaction with many of the district's programs and services. Concerns were raised regarding least restrictive environment, teacher responsibility of IEPs and inconsistency of case managers.

Standards identified as consistently compliant by the district during self-assessment and verified during the on-site monitoring visit included Statewide Assessment and Graduation.

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, length of day and year, facilities, oversight of IEP implementation, certifications, consent, notices of meetings, written notice, meetings, native language, independent evaluations, referral process, summer referrals, identification meeting participants and timelines, standardized assessments, written reports, bilingual evaluations, reevaluation planning meetings, notices, participants at reevaluation planning meetings, parental consent, meetings for students turning age five, eligibility meetings, participants, criteria, documentation of eligibility, IEP considerations and required statements, goals and objectives related to the Core Curriculum Content Standards, age of majority, implementation dates, annual review timelines, 90-day timelines, individualized decision-making, considerations and documentation, regular education access, preschool transition planning conference, student invitation, courses of study, preferences and interests, age 16 needed transition services, discipline procedures, suspension tracking, manifestation determinations, interim alternative educational settings, group sizes for speech therapy, home instruction, parent and adult student access to records, access sheets, maintenance, and destruction of records.

During the self-assessment process, the district identified areas of need regarding professional and parent development, extended school year, goals and objectives for counseling as a related service, transfer students, provision of inclusive preschool programs, surrogate parents, child find ages 3-21, direct referrals for parents and staff, health summary, pre-referral interventions, multi-disciplinary assessments for students referred for speech and language services, acceptance and rejection of reports,

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

reevaluation timelines, provision of copies of evaluation reports to parents, goals and objectives for science and social studies, teacher responsibility, IEP meetings, Oberti, supplemental aids and services, nonacademic and extracurricular participation, continuum of programs, early intervention programs to preschool disabled students by age three, agency invitation, agency involvement, age 14 transition service needs, documentation of suspensions to case manager, behavior intervention plans/functional behavioral assessments, notification of authorities, class size, age range, common planning time, child study team personnel, time of instructional day, and knowledge of student records policies and procedures.

The on-site visit identified additional areas of need within the various standards regarding vision and hearing screenings, functional assessments, IEP meeting participants and documentation of locations of other records.

The district corrected many areas of need prior to the on-site monitoring visit, including goals and objectives for counseling, provision of an inclusive preschool program, surrogate parents policy, child find ages 3-21, pre-referral interventions, multi-disciplinary evaluations for students referred for speech and language services, acceptance and rejection of reports, teacher responsibility, IEP revision meetings, supplemental aids and services, nonacademic and extracurricular participation, agency invitation, age 14 transition service needs, behavior intervention plans/functional behavioral assessments, notification of authorities, class size, age range, common planning time, and time of instructional day.

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