

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

**District:** Haddonfield School District

**County:** Camden

**Monitoring Dates:** March 4, 5, 6, 7, 2002

**Monitoring Team:** Patricia Fair, Jane Marano, Arlene Popovici, Kenneth Richards

**Background Information:**

During the 2000 – 2001 school year, the Haddonfield School District conducted a self-assessment of policies, procedures, programs, services, and student outcomes. This self-assessment component of the monitoring process provided the Haddonfield 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 Haddonfield School District developed an improvement plan to address identified areas of need.

The Office of Special Education Programs conducted an on-site monitoring to verify the self-assessment findings, determine the appropriateness of the improvement plan, and determine the progress in implementing the plan.

As the first step in the on-site monitoring process, the NJDOE held a focus group meeting for parents and community members at the Haddonfield High School on February 26, 2002. Information obtained from that meeting was used to direct the focus of the monitoring visit.

During the on-site, 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, and child study team members.

**I. General Provisions**

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 development. The improvement plan is not sufficient to address this area of

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need because it lacks a mechanism to determine the effectiveness of each training area. The plan needs to be revised to include this component.

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

### II. F.A.P.E.

#### Summary of Findings:

During self-assessment the district accurately identified themselves compliant in the areas of length of school day/year, transfer students and certifications.

During the self-assessment process, the district identified concerns in the areas of documenting the provision of related services and facilities. The improvement plan is sufficient to address these areas of concern.

Additional areas of need were identified during the on-site visit regarding the identification of the anticipated frequency/duration of related services and extended school year.

#### Areas of Need:

**Frequency and Duration of Related Services** – During the on-site monitoring visit, it was determined through record review and staff interviews that because of scheduling issues, therapists do not specify a specific frequency and duration for related services. Instead, a range for these services is identified in the IEP. A review of IEPs indicated speech therapy would be provided two to three times per cycle for a twenty to thirty minute period of time. Occupational therapy would be provided three to four times a month for thirty minutes per session. None of the IEPs identify a criteria that would determine whether the student would receive the fewer sessions or the greater number of sessions.

- **The district will revise its improvement plan to include procedures to ensure the frequency and duration of related services is specified in the IEP. The plan must include in-service, a mechanism to determine the effectiveness of training and an administrative oversight component to ensure the implementation of the procedures.**

**Extended School Year** - During the on-site visit, a review of records indicated that while extended school year is identified in the IEP, a program description describing the extended school year program is not consistently documented.

- **The district will revise its improvement plan to include procedures to ensure a description of the extended school year program is documented in the IEP for each student receiving ESY services. The plan must include an administrative oversight component to ensure implementation of the procedure.**

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### **III. Procedural Safeguards**

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

During self-assessment the district accurately identified themselves compliant in the areas of consent, written notice (except following an IEP meeting), independent evaluations and native language.

During the self-assessment process, the district identified concerns in the areas of surrogate parents, notice of meetings, written notice (following an IEP meeting) and meetings. The improvement plan submitted in the area of meetings is sufficient to address that area. The improvement plan submitted in the area of notice of meetings is not sufficient because it lacks in-service for each specific area identified, a mechanism to determine the effectiveness of training and an administrative oversight component to ensure consistent, compliant implementation of the procedures. The improvement plan submitted in the area of surrogate parents is not sufficient because it lacks in-service and a mechanism to determine the effectiveness of the training. The improvement plan submitted in the area of written notice is not sufficient because it contains an inappropriate procedure. The plans need to be revised to address all missing or inappropriate components.

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

### **IV. Location, Referral, Identification**

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

During self-assessment the district accurately identified themselves compliant in the areas of direct referrals, summer referrals and identification meeting timelines.

During the self-assessment process, the district identified concerns in the areas of the referral process, child find activities, health summary, and vision and hearing screenings. The improvement plan submitted in the area of child find activities is sufficient to address this area of concern. The improvement plan submitted in the area of the referral process is not sufficient because it lacks an administrative oversight component to ensure implementation of the procedures. The improvement plan submitted in the areas of health summary and vision and hearing screenings are not sufficient because they lack procedures and an administrative oversight component to bring about the required changes. The plans need to be revised to include these elements.

An additional area of need was identified during the on-site visit regarding participants at preschool identification meetings

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

**Identification Meeting Participants** - During the on-site monitoring visit, record review and staff interviews indicated that regular education teachers do not participate in identification meetings for preschool students.

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- **The district will revise its improvement plan to include procedures to ensure regular education teachers participate in preschool identification meetings. The plan must include an administrative oversight component to ensure implementation of the procedures.**

### **V. Evaluation**

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

During self-assessment the district accurately identified themselves compliant in the areas of standardized assessments, multi-disciplinary evaluations and bi-lingual evaluations.

During the self-assessment process, the district identified concerns in the areas of functional assessments, written reports and acceptance and rejection of reports. The improvement plan is insufficient to address the area of functional assessments because it lacks an administrative oversight component to ensure implementation of the procedures. The improvement plan is insufficient to address the areas of written reports and acceptance and rejection of reports because they lack in-service training, a mechanism to determine the effectiveness of the training and an administrative oversight component to ensure the consistent, compliant implementation of the procedures. The plans need to be revised to include these elements.

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

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

**Written Reports** – During the on-site visit, it was determined through record review that assessment reports are not consistently dated.

- **The district will revise its improvement plan to include procedures to ensure assessment reports are dated. The plan must include an administrative oversight component to ensure the implementation of the procedure.**

### **VI. Reevaluation**

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

During self-assessment the district accurately identified themselves compliant in the areas of timelines, participants and turning age five.

During the self-assessment process, the district identified concerns in the areas of planning meetings. The improvement plan is not sufficient to address this area because it lacks procedures, in-service, a mechanism to determine the effectiveness of training and an administrative oversight component to ensure the consistent, compliant

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implementation of the procedures. The plan needs to be revised to include these elements.

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

### VII. Eligibility

#### Summary of Findings:

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

During the self-assessment process, the district identified concerns in the areas of participants, criteria and copy of evaluation reports to parents. The improvement plans are insufficient to address these areas of need because they lack appropriate procedures to address all identified barriers, in-service training, a mechanism to determine the effectiveness of the training and an administrative oversight component to bring about the required changes. The plan needs to be revised to include these elements. The improvement plan to address the area of eligibility criteria for speech and language services identifies an unreasonable timeline. The timeline needs to be revised to ensure completion of the activity prior to December 2002.

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

#### Area of Need:

**Participation** – During the on-site it was determined through record review and interviews with staff that regular education teachers do not consistently attend meetings for preschool aged students. Additionally, staff identified in the notices of meetings as participants in scheduled meetings do not consistently attend the meetings.

- **The district will revise its improvement plan to include procedures to ensure regular education teachers participate in preschool eligibility meetings. The plan must also ensure staff identified as participants in the notice of the meeting are in attendance at the meeting. The plan must include an administrative oversight component to ensure implementation of the procedures.**

### VIII. IEP

#### Summary of Findings:

During self-assessment the district accurately identified themselves compliant in the areas of 90-day and annual review timelines.

During the self-assessment process, the district identified concerns in the areas of age of majority, participants, implementation dates, teacher knowledge/access,

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considerations/required statements, opportunity to observe programs, goals and objectives aligned to the CCCS, transition from elementary to secondary school and the provision of the IEP to parents. All of these improvement plans are insufficient because they lack specific timelines or identify unreasonable timelines for completion of identified activities. Additionally, the improvement plan submitted in the area of age of majority, teacher knowledge/access and transition from elementary to secondary school are not sufficient because they lack an administrative oversight component to ensure implementation of the procedures. The improvement plan submitted in the area of participants is not sufficient because it includes an inappropriate procedure and lacks an administrative oversight component to ensure consistent, compliant implementation of an appropriate procedure. The improvement plans submitted in the areas of opportunity to observe programs, goals and objectives/CCCS, considerations and required statements and copy of IEP to parents are not sufficient because they lack procedures, in-service, a mechanism to determine the effectiveness of training and an administrative oversight component to bring about the required changes. The improvement plan submitted in the area of implementation dates is not sufficient because it lacks procedures and an administrative oversight component to bring about the required changes. The plan needs to be revised to include these elements and reasonable timelines.

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

### **IX. Least Restrictive Environment**

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

During the self-assessment process, the district identified concerns in the areas of individualized decision-making, regular education access/participation in nonacademic/extracurricular activities, preschool programs and continuum. The improvement plan submitted in the area of nonacademic and extracurricular activities is not sufficient because it lacks procedures and an administrative oversight component to bring about the required changes. The improvement plan submitted in the area of individualized decision-making is not sufficient because it lacks in-service, a mechanism to determine the effectiveness of training and an administrative oversight component to ensure the consistent, compliant implementation of the procedures. The improvement plan submitted in the area of continuum and regular education access is insufficient because it lacks procedures, in-service, a mechanism to determine the effectiveness of training and an administrative oversight component to bring about the required changes. The improvement plan submitted in the area of inclusive preschool programs is not sufficient because it lacks an administrative oversight component to ensure implementation of the procedures. The plans need to be revised to include these elements.

An additional area of need was identified during the on-site visit regarding student programs.

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

**Student Programs** - During the on-site visit, interviews and record review indicated the district makes payments directly to parents who have enrolled their children in sectarian

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nonpublic schools and accredited nonpublic schools which are not specifically approved for the education of disabled students (Naples schools). The district was unable to demonstrate it had received consent of the Commissioner of Education, nor could it demonstrate it had been ordered to place these students by a court of competent jurisdiction, or an administrative law judge.

- **The district will revise its improvement plan to include procedures to ensure payment is not made to parents of students who attend sectarian nonpublic schools. The procedures must further ensure the district does not fund placements in “Naples” schools without receiving commissioner approval or without a judge’s order. The plan must include an administrative oversight component to ensure implementation of the procedures.**

### **X. Transition**

#### **Preschool Transition**

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

During self-assessment, the district accurately identified themselves compliant in the areas of preschool transition planning conference and EIP to PSD by age 3.

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

#### **Transition to Post-School**

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

During self assessment the district accurately identified themselves compliant in the area of agency invitation.

During the self-assessment process, the district identified concerns in the areas of transition service needs, liaison and needed transition services. The improvement plan is insufficient to address these areas of need because it lacks procedures, in-service, a mechanism to determine the effectiveness of training, reasonable timelines and an administrative oversight component to bring about the required changes. The plans need to be revised to include these elements.

An additional area of need was identified during the on-site visit regarding agency involvement.

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

**Agency Involvement** – During the on-site visit, it was determined through record review and staff interviews that when an agency identified as being likely for providing or paying for transition services does not attend the IEP meeting, the district does not consistently make attempts to obtain their participation.

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- **The district will revise its improvement plan to include procedures to ensure the district makes and documents its efforts to obtain the participation of agencies identified in the transition plan of the IEP. The plan must include in-service, a mechanism to determine the effectiveness of training and an administrative oversight component to ensure the consistent, compliant implementation of the procedures.**

### **XI. Discipline**

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

During self-assessment the district accurately identified themselves compliant in the areas of suspension tracking, BIP/FBA, manifestation determination and IAES.

During the self-assessment process, the district identified concerns in the areas of procedures, documentation to case manager and release of student records to authorities. The improvement plan is not sufficient to address these areas of need because it lacks procedures, in-service, a mechanism to determine the effectiveness of training, timelines and an administrative oversight component to bring about the required changes. The plan needs to be revised to include these elements.

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

### **XII. Statewide Assessment**

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

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

During the self-assessment process, the district identified concerns in the areas of SRA and alternative assessments. The improvement plan is not sufficient because it lacks procedures, in-service, a mechanism to determine the effectiveness of training, timelines and an administrative oversight component to bring about required change. The plan needs to be revised to include these components.

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

### **XIII. Graduation**

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

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

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



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### **Area of Need:**

**Written Notice** – During the on-site visit, record review and interviews with staff indicated that the district does not provide parents or adult students with written notice of graduation.

- **The district will revise its improvement plan to include procedures to ensure parents and adult students receive written notice of graduation. The plan must include an administrative oversight component to ensure implementation of the procedure.**

### **XIV. Programs and Services**

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

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

During the self-assessment process, the district identified concerns in the areas of program descriptions, common planning time, lack of speech therapists to deliver services identified in IEPs, case management responsibilities and team teaching. The improvement plan submitted in the area of case management responsibilities is not sufficient because it lacks appropriate procedures, in-service, a mechanism to determine the effectiveness of training and administrative oversight components to bring about required change. The other improvement plans are not sufficient because they lack an administrative oversight component to ensure implementation of the procedures. The plans need to be revised to include these elements.

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

### **XV. Student Records**

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

During self-assessment the district accurately identified themselves compliant in the areas of parent/student access, access sheets, and the maintenance and destruction of records.

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

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

**Documentation of location of records** - During the on-site visit, record review and staff interviews indicated that central files do not identify the location of other student records maintained by the district.

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- **The district will revise its improvement plan to include procedures to ensure the location of other records is documented in central files. The improvement plan must include an administrative oversight component to ensure the implementation of the procedures.**

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## **Summary**

On-site special education monitoring was conducted in the Haddonfield School District on March 4, 5, 6, 7, 2002. 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 comprehensive review conducted during the self-assessment process. As a result of this review the district was able to identify many areas of need and develop an improvement plan that with revision, will be sufficient to bring about systemic change. The district is further commended for the 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 the transition to preschool from early intervention programs. Parents expressed concerns regarding with the district's programs and services in the areas of continuum, least restrictive environment, inclusive preschool, transition, communication between district and parents, curriculum, staff development and IEP implementation. Many of the concerns raised by the parents during the focus group meeting had already been identified by the district during the self-assessment process.

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 school day/year, transfer students, certifications, consent, written notice (except following an IEP) independent evaluations, native language, direct referrals, summer referrals, identification meeting timelines, standardized assessments, multi-disciplinary evaluations, bi-lingual assessments, reevaluation timelines, participants, turning age five, eligibility meetings, documentation of eligibility, 90 day timelines, annual review timelines, preschool planning conference , EIP to PSD by age 3, suspension tracking, BIP/FBA, manifestation determination, IAES, participation in statewide assessment, accommodations/modifications, IEP documentation, documentation of graduation requirements, diploma, participation, class size, age range, home instruction, parent/student access to records, access sheets, maintenance and destruction of records.

During the self-assessment process, the district identified areas of need regarding professional development, documenting the provision of related services, facilities, surrogate parents, notice of meetings, written notice (following an IEP meeting), meetings, referral process, child find activities, health summary vision/hearing screenings, functional assessment, written reports, acceptance/rejection of reports, reevaluation planning meetings, eligibility meeting participants, criteria, copy of evaluation report to parents, age of majority, IEP meeting participants, implementation dates, teacher knowledge/access, consideration/required statements, opportunity to observe programs, goals and objectives/CCCS, transition to secondary school, provision of IEP to parents, individual decision making, regular education access, participation in nonacademic and extracurricular activities, preschool programs, continuum, transition services needs, needed transition services, agency involvement, discipline procedures, documentation to case manager, release of student records to authorities, SRA, alternative assessments, program descriptions, common planning time, lack of speech therapists, case management responsibilities and team teaching.

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The on-site visit identified additional areas of need within the various standards regarding frequency and duration of related services, extended school year, identification meeting participants, preschool identification meetings, written reports, eligibility meeting participants, student programs, agency invitation, written notice of graduation and documentation of locations of student records.

Within forty-five days of receipt of the monitoring report, the district will revise and resubmit the improvement plan to the Office of Special Education Programs to address the areas of need identified during the on-site visit and those areas that require revisions to the improvement plan.

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