



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

The district also provides a "Homework Helper" program where 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade students assist younger students with homework.

### ***Data Summary:***

For the 2001 to the 2003 school years, the Harrington Park School District's classification rate of students requiring special educational programming and services (excluding eligible for speech and language services) has been below the state average with classification rates of 11% (2001), 10.5% (2002) and 11.3% (2003). From 2003 to 2004, for students ages 6 to 21, the percentage of students educated in general education settings for more than 80% of the day increased from 27% to 35% although the district has identified this as an area of need and has incorporated activities for general and special education teachers to participate in training on inclusion. In contrast to the state average (17.3%), the district places significantly fewer students in separate settings (7.1%), that is, excluded from the general education classroom more than 60% of the day. Additionally, review of data indicates that the district has consistently placed preschool students with disabilities in general education early childhood settings. The district has designated the learning consultant as the preschool coordinator to work with the local preschools and provide support to students placed in community preschools.

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

**Reevaluation, Eligibility, Pre-School Transition, Discipline, Programs and Services and Student Records** were determined to be areas of compliance by the district during the self-assessment and by the OSEP during the on-site comprehensive audit.

#### ***Section I: General Provisions***

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

During self-assessment, the district accurately identified compliance 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 in-service training and professional staff and parent training. The district's improvement plan is sufficient to address these areas of need. During the on-site comprehensive audit, it was determined that the district has initiated activities to achieve compliance in this area.

No additional areas of need were identified during the focus group meeting, additional parent interviews and comprehensive desk audit.

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

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

During self-assessment, the district accurately identified compliance in the areas of provision of programs and related services of counseling, occupational and physical therapy including goals and objectives, length of school day and year, transfer students, certifications and facilities.

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During the self-assessment process, the district identified concerns in the area of extended school year. The district's improvement plan is sufficient to address this area. During the on-site comprehensive audit, it was determined that the district has successfully implemented activities to achieve compliance in this area. The district further identified the provision of speech-language services as an area of need. The district's improvement plan is sufficient to address this area. During the on-site comprehensive audit, it was determined that the district has initiated activities to achieve compliance in this area.

No additional areas of need were identified during the focus group meeting, additional parent interviews and comprehensive desk audit.

### ***Section III: Procedural Safeguards***

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

During self-assessment, the district accurately identified compliance in the areas of consent, notices of meetings, written notices, notices in native language, interpreters at meetings and independent evaluations.

During the self-assessment process, the district identified concerns in the areas of surrogate parents and provision and content of notices of meetings for 14 year olds where transition is being discussed. The district's improvement plan is sufficient to address these areas. During the on-site comprehensive audit, it was determined that the district has initiated activities to achieve compliance in these areas.

No additional areas of need were identified during the focus group meeting, additional parent interviews and comprehensive desk audit.

### ***Section IV: Location, Referral and Identification***

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

During self-assessment, the district accurately identified compliance in the areas of referral process, pre-referral interventions, vision and hearing screenings, direct referrals and identification meeting timelines and participants.

During the self-assessment process, the district identified concerns regarding Child Find and health summaries. The district's improvement plan is sufficient to address these areas of need. During the on-site comprehensive audit, it was determined that the district has initiated activities to achieve compliance in these areas.

No additional areas of need were identified during the focus group meeting, additional parent interviews and comprehensive desk audit.

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

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

During self-assessment, the district accurately identified compliance in the areas of multidisciplinary evaluations, standardized assessments, written reports, bilingual evaluations and acceptance and or rejection of outside reports.

During the self-assessment process, the district identified concerns in the areas of functional assessments and the inclusion of a discussion of the instructional implications. The district's improvement plan is sufficient to address this area. During the on-site comprehensive audit, it was determined that the district has successfully implemented activities to achieve compliance in this area.

No additional areas of need were identified during the focus group meeting, additional parent interviews and comprehensive desk audit.

### **Section VIII: Individualized Education Program (IEP)**

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

During self-assessment, the district accurately identified compliance in the areas of IEP meetings and participants, present level of educational performance, goals and objectives aligned with Core Curriculum Content Standards, copy of IEP to parents, implementation dates, annual review timelines, teacher access and responsibility and ninety day timelines.

During the self-assessment process, the district identified concerns in the areas of considerations and required statements. The district's improvement plan is sufficient to address these areas of concern. During the on-site comprehensive audit, it was determined that the district has initiated activities to achieve compliance in this area.

No additional areas of need were identified during the focus group meeting, additional parent interviews and comprehensive desk audit.

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

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

During self-assessment the district accurately identified compliance in the areas of decision making process and continuum of programs.

An additional area of need was identified during the focus group meeting, additional parent interviews and comprehensive desk audit regarding the documentation of least restrictive environment decisions and preschool placement decisions.

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

#### **Documentation of Least Restrictive Environment and Preschool Placement**

**Decisions:** During the comprehensive audit, record review indicated that the district's IEP does not consistently include all four statements required when considering the least restrictive environment.

- **The district will revise the improvement plan to include activities to ensure that the IEP specifies the considerations of appropriate supplementary aids and services and program modifications; the explanation of why the supplementary aids, services and program modifications are not appropriate; the documentation of the comparison of benefits in each setting; the documentation of the comparison of the benefits for the student and the documentation of the extracurricular and nonacademic participation. Implementation of these activities will document the decisionmaking process and more clearly define the rationale for specific placement decisions. The plan must include an administrative oversight component to ensure the consistent implementation of the activities. It is recommended that the district adopt the model IEP developed by the Office of Special Education Programs.**

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

### **Summary of Findings:**

During the self-assessment process, the district identified concerns in the areas of age 14 transition service needs, preferences and interests and provision of notice to student where transition is being discussed (see Procedural Safeguards). The district improvement plan is sufficient to address these areas of concern.

No additional areas of need were identified during the focus group meeting, additional parent interviews and comprehensive desk audit.

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## Summary

Special education monitoring was completed in the **Harrington Park School District** on October 7, 2004. The purpose of this phase of the monitoring process 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 its exceptionally comprehensive review conducted as part of the self-assessment activities. As a result of that review, the district was able to identify nearly all areas of need and to develop an improvement plan that will 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 identified areas were corrected prior to the on-site visit. The district is also commended for the many areas identified as compliant by the district during self-assessment and verified by the Office of Special Education Programs.

A review of data indicated the district has maintained a classification rate of students requiring special educational programming and services (excluding eligible for speech and language services) well below the state average. The rate of students with disabilities, ages 6 to 21, educated in general education settings for more than 80% of their school day has increased from 27% to 35% in the last two years; however, the district has identified a need to provide more access to general education for a greater number of students. Placement data also indicate that the district has significantly increased the number of preschoolers with disabilities educated in general education early childhood settings with support from the learning consultant.

At a public focus group meeting attended by approximately ten parents, participants expressed their satisfaction with many of the district's programs and services. Parents noted that the students with disabilities have access to the general education curriculum in the least restrictive environment including the involvement of special education students in extracurricular activities. Parents overwhelmingly expressed their support of and appreciation for members of the Child Study Team and school staff. Parents of current and past students who attended the regionally supported preschool program also positively commented on their child's progress while in the program and credited the program with the current success of their children.

Areas identified as consistently compliant by the district during self-assessment and verified during the focus meeting, additional parent interviews and comprehensive desk audit included policies and procedures, dissemination of IDEA information, provision of related services for counseling, occupational and physical therapy including goals and objectives and frequency, location and duration, transfer students, length of school day, facilities, certifications, consent, notices of meetings, written notices, notices in native language, interpreters at meetings, independent evaluations, referral process, pre-referral interventions, direct referral, vision and hearing screenings, identification meeting timelines and participants, multidisciplinary evaluations for ESERS, standardized assessments, bilingual evaluations, written reports, acceptance and or rejection of outside reports, reevaluation timelines, planning meetings and participants, reevaluations completed by June 30<sup>th</sup> of student's last year in preschool, eligibility meetings and participants, criteria, statement of eligibility, copy of evaluation reports to parents and or adult students ten days prior to meeting, signatures of agreement or disagreement, IEP meetings and participants, present level of educational performance, goals and objectives aligned with Core Curriculum Content Standards, copy of IEP to

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parents, implementation dates, annual review timelines, teacher access and responsibility, ninety day timelines, decision making process, continuum of programs, preschool transition, discipline procedural safeguards, documentation to case manager, functional behavioral assessment, behavior intervention plan, interim alternative educational setting, manifestation determination, statewide assessment participation, IEP documentation, alternate assessment, class size waivers, age range waivers, group sizes for speech therapy, home instruction, consultation time, parent and adult-student access to records, access sheets, maintenance and destruction of records and documentation of other locations.

During the self-assessment process, the district identified areas of need regarding in-service training for professional staff and parent training, extended school year, provision of speech, surrogate parents, Child Find, health summaries, functional assessments including a discussion of instructional implications, IEP considerations and required statements, age fourteen transition service needs, notice of meeting to student where transition is being discussed and knowledge of approved accommodations and modifications for statewide testing.

During the on-site comprehensive audit, it was determined that the district successfully implemented activities to bring about correction in the self-identified areas of extended school year, functional assessments and a discussion of instructional implications.

The onsite monitoring visit identified an additional area of need regarding documentation of least restrictive environment.

Within forty-five days of receipt of the monitoring report, the Harrington Park School District will revise and resubmit the improvement plan to the Office of Special Education Programs to address the area that requires revisions.