

## New Jersey Department of Education Special Education Monitoring

**District:** Haworth School District

**County:** Bergen

**Monitoring Dates:** October 19, 2006

**Monitoring Team:** Jenifer Spear

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

During the 2004–2005 school year, the Haworth School District conducted a self-assessment of policies, procedures, programs, services and student outcomes. This self-assessment component of the monitoring process provided the Haworth 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 Haworth 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. Where needed, interviews were conducted with the district's special education administrators, building principals, general education and special education teachers, speech-language specialists 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 educated 38 of 49 students with disabilities (77.6%) in the general education setting for more than 80% of the school day. This is above the state placement rate of 42% for that same year. During the 2005-2006 school year, the district educated 3 of 6 preschool students with disabilities (50%) in a general education setting. This is above the state placement rate of 14.5% for that same year. The district's classification rate was 9.72% (excluding students eligible for speech-language services) for the 2005-2006 school year, which was below the state average of 14.85% for that same year.

## New Jersey Department of Education Special Education Monitoring

### Sections Demonstrating Compliance

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
- Statewide Assessments
- Reevaluation
- Graduation
- Transition to Adult Life

### Areas Demonstrating Compliance

The following areas, within the 15 sections reviewed, were identified by the district's self-assessment committee and by the Department of Education 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.

Section	Areas Demonstrating Compliance
Free, Appropriate Public Education (FAPE)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Oversight of individualized education program (IEP) implementation</li> <li>• Provision of related services</li> <li>• Transfer procedures</li> </ul>
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>• Meetings</li> <li>• Provision of written notice</li> <li>• Content of written notice</li> <li>• Notices in 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</li> <li>• Vision and hearing screenings</li> <li>• Identification meeting timelines</li> <li>• Identification meeting participants</li> </ul>
Evaluation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Multi-disciplinary evaluations</li> <li>• Standardized assessments</li> <li>• Functional assessments</li> <li>• Written reports prepared by evaluators</li> </ul>
Eligibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Meeting participants</li> <li>• Eligibility criteria</li> <li>• Statement of eligibility (Specific Learning Disability)</li> </ul>

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

<b>Section</b>	<b>Areas Demonstrating Compliance</b>
Individualized Education Program (IEP)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Meeting participants</li> <li>• Implementation dates</li> <li>• IEP provided to parent prior to implementation</li> <li>• Meetings held annually, or more often if necessary, to review and/or revise the IEP</li> <li>• Annual reviews completed by June 30</li> <li>• Teachers informed of their responsibilities (knowledge of and/or access to IEPs)</li> <li>• 90 day timelines</li> </ul>
Least Restrictive Environment (LRE)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Documentation of LRE decisions</li> <li>• Opportunity for all students with disabilities to access all general education programs</li> <li>• Continuum of programs</li> <li>• Placement decisions based on students' individual needs</li> </ul>
Transition to Preschool	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• IEPs for preschool students with disabilities implemented no later than age 3</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 determination of change in placement</li> <li>• Procedures for conducting functional behavioral assessment and development of behavior intervention plan</li> <li>• Short-term removals resulting in a change of placement</li> <li>• Short-term removals that are not a change in placement—school personnel determining the extent of services to be provided</li> <li>• Interim Alternative Educational Settings</li> <li>• Manifestation determinations</li> </ul>
Programs & Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Class size</li> <li>• Age range</li> <li>• Group size</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. During the on-site monitoring visit, the NJDOE verified that improvement plan activities in these areas had been implemented and the district has demonstrated compliance.

Section	Area	Compliance Review
Free, Appropriate Public Education (FAPE)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Extended school year (ESY) – The district would like to expand the discussion of ESY during the IEP meeting.</li> <li>▪ Provision of programs – The district identified a need to develop an Adaptive Physical Education Program.</li> </ul>	On-site monitoring by the NJDOE verified that improvement plan activities have been implemented and the district has demonstrated compliance.
Procedural Safeguards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Content of notice of a meeting – The district's notice to parents did not indicate that the purpose of the meeting would be to discuss transition.</li> </ul>	On-site monitoring by the NJDOE verified that improvement plan activities have been implemented and the district has demonstrated compliance.
Location, Referral and Identification	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Referral process – The district identified a need to provide additional training to staff on referral procedures.</li> <li>▪ Pre-referral interventions – Interventions attempted in the general education setting were not thorough or well documented.</li> <li>▪ Health summary – The district did not document health summaries when a student was referred to the child study team.</li> </ul>	On-site monitoring by the NJDOE verified that improvement plan activities have been implemented and the district has demonstrated compliance.
Evaluation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Educational impact statement (ESLS) – The instructional implications of a student's difficulty with speech was not documented in the speech-language report.</li> <li>▪ Bilingual evaluations – The district lacked a procedure for conducting evaluations in a language other than English.</li> </ul>	On-site monitoring by the NJDOE verified that improvement plan activities have been implemented and the district has demonstrated compliance.
Eligibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Signature of agreement and/or disagreement – The district lacked a procedure for ensuring that evaluators documented agreement or disagreement in writing.</li> <li>▪ Copy of evaluation reports to parents – The district did not have a procedure to ensure that parents receive copies of evaluations ten days prior to the eligibility meeting.</li> </ul>	On-site monitoring by the NJDOE verified that improvement plan activities have been implemented and the district has demonstrated compliance.

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

Section	Area	Compliance Review
IEP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ IEP required considerations and components – The district lacked a procedure to ensure that all considerations and required statements are included in the IEP.</li> </ul>	On-site monitoring by the NJDOE verified that improvement plan activities have been implemented and the district has demonstrated compliance.
LRE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Notification of and participation in non-academic and extracurricular activities for students educated outside the district – The district lacked a procedure to ensure that students have opportunities to participate in nonacademic and extra-curricular services and activities with their nondisabled peers.</li> </ul>	On-site monitoring by the NJDOE verified that improvement plan activities have been implemented and the district has demonstrated compliance.
Transition to Preschool	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Child study team participation in Transition Planning Conference – The district did not have a procedure to communicate with Early Intervention Program providers to ensure that a CST member attends the transition planning conferences.</li> </ul>	On-site monitoring by the NJDOE verified that improvement plan activities have been implemented and the district has demonstrated compliance.
Discipline	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Notification of removal forwarded to case manager – The district lacked a procedure to ensure that written notice is provided to the case manager when a student is removed from programs for disciplinary reasons.</li> </ul>	On-site monitoring by the NJDOE verified that improvement plan activities have been implemented and the district has demonstrated compliance.
Programs and Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Common planning time – The district lacked a procedure to ensure that resource teachers have common planning time with general education teachers.</li> </ul>	On-site monitoring by the NJDOE verified that improvement plan activities have been implemented and the district has demonstrated compliance.

***Additional Areas of Need***

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

# New Jersey Department of Education Special Education Monitoring

## Summary

On-site special education monitoring was conducted in the Haworth School District on October 19, 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 implement improvement activities to achieve compliance. The district is further acknowledged for all of the 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 educated 38 of 49 students with disabilities (77.6%) in the general education setting for more than 80% of the school day. This is above the state placement rate of 42% for that same year. During the 2005-2006 school year, the district educated 3 of 6 preschool students with disabilities (50%) in a general education setting. This is above the state placement rate of 14.5% for that same year. The district's classification rate was 9.72% (excluding students eligible for speech-language services) for the 2005-2006 school year, which was below the state average of 14.85% for that same year.

During interviews conducted with parents by phone, many parents expressed their satisfaction with the district's programs and services and staff.

Standards identified as consistently compliant by the district during self-assessment and verified during the on-site monitoring visit included:

- General Provisions
- Reevaluation
- Transition to Adult Life
- Statewide Assessments
- Graduation

Areas identified as consistently compliant by the district during self-assessment and verified during the on-site monitoring visit include:

- Oversight of individualized education program (IEP) implementation
- Provision of related services
- Transfer procedures
- Consent
- Implementation without undue delay
- Provision of notice of a meeting
- Meetings
- Provision of written notice
- Content of written notice
- Notices in native language
- Interpreters at meetings
- Independent evaluations
- Child Find ages 3-21
- Direct referrals
- Vision and hearing screenings
- Identification meeting timelines
- Identification meeting participants
- Multi-disciplinary evaluations
- Standardized assessments
- Functional assessments
- Written reports prepared by evaluators
- Eligibility meeting participants
- Eligibility criteria
- Statement of eligibility (Specific Learning Disability)
- IEP meeting participants
- Implementation dates
- IEP provided to parent prior to implementation

## New Jersey Department of Education Special Education Monitoring

- Meetings held annually, or more often if necessary, to review and/or revise the IEP
- Annual reviews completed by June 30
- Teachers informed of their responsibilities (knowledge of and/or access to IEPs)
- 90 day timelines
- Documentation of LRE decisions
- Opportunity for all students with disabilities to access all general education programs
- Continuum of programs
- Placement decisions based on students' individual needs
- IEPs for preschool students with disabilities implemented no later than age 3
- Suspension tracking system
- Discipline procedures employed equitably for all students
- IEP team meeting for first removal beyond 10 days
- Procedures for determination of change in placement
- Procedures for conducting functional behavioral assessment and development of behavior intervention plan
- Short-term removals resulting in a change of placement
- Short-term removals that are not a change in placement—school personnel determining the extent of services to be provided
- Interim alternative educational settings
- Manifestation determinations
- Class size
- Age range
- Group size

Areas of need originally identified by the district but determined to have been corrected prior to the on-site monitoring visit by the NJDOE included:

- Extended school year (ESY)
- Provision of programs
- Content of notice of a meeting
- Referral process
- Pre-referral interventions
- Health summary
- Educational impact statement (ESLS)
- Bilingual evaluations
- Signature of agreement and/or disagreement
- Copy of evaluation reports to parents
- IEP required considerations and components
- Notification of and participation in non-academic and extracurricular activities for students educated outside the district
- Child study team participation in transition planning conferences
- Notification of removal forwarded to case manager
- Common planning time

No additional areas of need were identified during the on-site visit. The district is considered compliant in all areas reviewed as part of the monitoring process. The district is expected to conduct ongoing administrative oversight, as well as provide training and technical assistance as needed, in response to changes in local procedures and federal and state regulations in order to maintain compliance.