

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

District: Hazlet Township School District

County: Monmouth County

Monitoring Dates: April 29 & 30, 2002

Monitoring Team: Georgianna Parlacoski, Jane Marano, Deborah Marsarsky and Stephen Coplin

Background Information:

During the 2000-2001 school year, the Hazlet 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 Hazlet 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 Hazlet Township 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 on March 21, 2001. Information obtained from that meeting was used to direct the focus of the monitoring visit.

During the on-site monitoring, 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.

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District Strengths:

Parent Advisory Committee - The purpose of this committee is to expand and educate parents in all special education issues. The special education director facilitates these meetings on a monthly basis. Guest speakers and staff have participated in these meetings as well.

Area Demonstrating Compliance With All Standards:

Graduation was determined to be an area of compliance by the district during self-assessment and by the Office of Special Education Programs during the on-site visit.

I. General Provisions

Summary of Findings:

During self-assessment the district accurately identified themselves compliant in the areas of Policy and Procedures and public information, parent development and dissemination of IDEA information. The required Statement of Assurances and procedures have been submitted to the county office.

During the self-assessment process, the district identified staff development as an area of need. The district has developed an improvement plan that is sufficient to address this area.

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

Section 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, extended school year for students eligible for special education and related services, goals, objectives, frequency, duration and location for speech therapy, physical therapy, occupational therapy, counseling and adaptive physical education, certification and facilities.

During the self-assessment process, the district identified concerns regarding transfer students and the provision of related services. The district has developed an improvement plan that is sufficient to address these areas of need. During the on-site, it was determined the district has already implemented activities to correct the issue regarding transfer procedures.

An additional area of need was identified during the on-site visit regarding extended school year for students eligible for speech/language services.

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Area of Need:

Extended School Year - During the on-site monitoring visit it was determined through staff interview and record review that extended school year services are not discussed for students eligible for speech/language services.

- **The district will revise the improvement plan to include procedures to ensure that extended school year is discussed/considered for all students at IEP meetings and documented in the IEP. The plan must include an administrative oversight component to ensure implementation of the procedures.**

Section III: Procedural Safeguards

Summary of Findings:

During self-assessment the district accurately identified themselves compliant in all areas of consent, components of notices, notice of a meeting, native language and independent evaluations.

During the self-assessment process, the district identified concerns regarding surrogate parents, 15-day timeline for written notice and the provision of written notice. The district has developed an improvement plan that is sufficient to address these areas of need. During the on-site it was determined the district has already implemented activities to correct the provision of written notice issue.

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

Section IV: Location, Referral, Identification

Summary of Findings:

During self-assessment the district accurately identified themselves compliant in the areas of the referral process, pre-referral interventions, identification meeting participants and identification meetings.

During the self-assessment process, the district identified concerns regarding child find activities, health summary and vision/hearing screening. The district has developed an improvement plan that is sufficient to address this area of need. During the on-site it was determined the district has already implemented activities to correct these areas. The district further identified concerns regarding referral dates and 20-day timelines. The district has developed an improvement plan that does not sufficiently address this area of need because it lacks procedures and an administrative oversight component to bring about the required changes. The plan needs to be revised to include these components.

Additional areas of need were identified during the on-site monitoring visit regarding the participation of regular education teachers at identification meetings for preschoolers.

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Areas of Need:

Teacher Participation - During the on-site monitoring visit it was determined through staff interviews that regular education teachers do not attend identification meetings for preschoolers.

- **The district will revise the improvement plan to include procedures to ensure that regular education teachers attend identification meetings for preschoolers. The improvement plan must include an administrative oversight component to ensure implementation of the procedures.**

Section V: Evaluation

Summary of Findings:

During self-assessment the district accurately identified themselves compliant in the areas of multi-disciplinary evaluations for students eligible for special education and related students, standardized assessments and bilingual evaluations.

During the self-assessment process, the district identified concerns regarding functional assessments, components of written reports, accept/rejection of reports and reliable standardized tests for speech and language. The district has developed an improvement plan that sufficiently addresses these areas of need.

An additional area of need was identified during the on-site monitoring visit regarding multi-disciplinary reports for students eligible for speech/language reports.

Areas of Need:

Multi-Disciplinary Reports - During the on-site monitoring visit it was determined through staff interview that speech/language reports do not contain a written statement regarding the educational impact of the speech problem.

- **The district will revise the improvement plan to include procedures to ensure that written reports contain a written statement regarding the educational impact of the speech problem. The improvement plan must include an administrative oversight component to ensure implementation of the procedures.**

Section VI: Reevaluation

Summary of Findings:

During self-assessment the district accurately identified themselves compliant in the areas of reevaluation meeting participants, reevaluation meetings and reevaluation by age 5.

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During the self-assessment process, the district identified concerns regarding reevaluation timelines. The district has developed an improvement plan that sufficiently addresses this area of need.

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

Section VII: Eligibility

Summary of Findings:

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

During the self-assessment process, the district identified concerns regarding a copy of evaluation reports to parents. The district has developed an improvement plan that sufficiently addresses this area of need. The district further identified concerns regarding components of eligibility statements. The district has developed an improvement plan that does not sufficiently address this area of need because it lacks procedures, in-service and an administrative oversight component to bring about the required changes. The plan needs to be revised to include these components.

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

Section VIII: IEP

Summary of Findings:

During self-assessment the district accurately identified themselves compliant in the areas of IEP considerations/required statements, meeting participants for annual reviews, goals and objectives for core curriculum content standards, age of majority, implementation dates, annual review meetings, teacher access/responsibility and 90-day timelines.

During the self-assessment process, the district identified concerns regarding documentation of frequency and duration for in-class support. The district has developed an improvement plan that is sufficient to address this area of need.

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

Section IX: Least Restrictive Environment

Summary of Findings:

During self-assessment the district accurately identified themselves compliant in the areas of regular education access and continuum of programs.

During the self-assessment process, the district identified concerns regarding least restrictive environment, consideration and documentation of the individualized decision-

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making process and supplemental aids and services. The district has developed an improvement plan that sufficiently addresses these areas of need.

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

Section X: Transition to Post-School

Summary of Findings:

During self-assessment the district accurately identified themselves compliant in the areas of courses of study and preferences/interests.

During the self-assessment process, the district identified concerns regarding invitations to transition participants, agency participation, statement of transition service needs at age 14 and statement of needed transition services at age 16. The district has developed an improvement plan that sufficiently addresses these areas of need. During the on-site it was determined the district has already implemented activities to correct the areas related to transition statements.

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

Section X: Transition to Pre-School

Summary of Findings:

During self-assessment the district accurately identified themselves compliant in the areas of preschool transition planning conference and early intervention program to preschool disabled by age 3

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

Section XI: Discipline

Summary of Findings:

During self-assessment the district accurately identified themselves compliant in the areas of documentation to case managers, suspension tracking, functional behavioral assessments, behavioral intervention plans and interim alternative educational settings.

During the self-assessment process, the district identified concerns regarding manifestation determination meetings. The district has developed an improvement plan that does not sufficiently address this area of need because it lacks procedure, in-service training 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 monitoring visit.

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Section XII: Statewide Assessment

Summary of Findings:

During self-assessment the district accurately identified themselves compliant in the areas of approved accommodations and modifications and IEP documentation of statewide assessments.

During the self-assessment process, the district identified concerns regarding the SRA process and the alternate proficiency assessment. The district has developed an improvement plan that does not sufficiently address these areas of need because it lacks in-service training 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 monitoring visit.

Section XIV: Programs and Services

Summary of Findings:

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

During the self-assessment process, the district identified concerns regarding sufficient staff, teacher collaboration, apportioned time for case management, and the provision of programs and services. The district has developed an improvement plan that does not sufficiently address these areas of need because it lacks procedures, in-service 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 monitoring visit.

Section XV: Student Records

Summary of Findings:

During self-assessment the district accurately identified themselves compliant in the areas of access sheets and maintenance of records.

During the self-assessment process, the district identified concerns regarding destruction of records. The district has developed an improvement plan that is sufficient to address this area of need.

An additional area of need was identified during the on-site monitoring visit regarding documentation of other location(s).

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Area of Need:

Documentation of Other Locations - During the on-site monitoring visit it was determined through record review that the district does not identify the location of other records maintained by the district in the central file.

- **The district will revise the improvement plan to include procedures to ensure the district documents the location of other records maintained by the district in the central files.**

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Summary

On-site special education monitoring was conducted in the Hazlet Township School District on April 29 & 30, 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 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 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.

On March 21, 2002, about 14 parents attended a focus meeting. During this meeting parents indicated that they were pleased with the newly implemented procedures and programs that began this school year. However, they still had concerns regarding communication with special education staff, provision of related services and availability of program options in the general education setting. These concerns had already been identified by the district during self-assessment and addressed them in the district's improvement plan.

Areas identified as consistently compliant by the district during self-assessment and verified during the on-site monitoring visit included the Policy and Procedures, public information, parent development, dissemination of IDEA information, length of school day, extended school year for students eligible for special education and related services, goals, objectives, frequency, duration and location for speech therapy, physical therapy, occupational therapy, counseling, adaptive physical education, certification, facilities, all areas of consent, components of all notices, notice of a meeting, native language, independent evaluations, referral process, pre-referral interventions, identification meeting participants, identification meetings, multi-disciplinary evaluations for students eligible for special education and related students, standardized assessments, bilingual evaluations, reevaluation meeting participants, reevaluation meetings, reevaluation meetings by age 5, eligibility meeting participants, eligibility meetings, eligibility criteria, IEP considerations/required statements, meeting participants for annual reviews, goals and objectives for core curriculum content standards, age of majority, implementation dates, annual review meetings, teacher access/responsibility, 90-day timelines, regular education access, continuum of programs, transition courses, preferences/interests survey for transition, preschool transition planning conference, early intervention program to preschool disabled by age 3, documentation to case managers, suspension tracking, functional behavioral assessments, behavioral intervention plan, interim alternative educational settings, approved accommodations and modifications for statewide assessments, IEP documentation for statewide assessments, class and group size, age range, home instruction, access sheets and maintenance of records.

During the self-assessment process, the district identified areas of need regarding staff development, transfer students, provision of related services, surrogate parents, 15-day timeline for written notice, provision of written notice, child find activities, 20-day timeline, date of referral, health summary, vision/hearing screening, functional assessments, components of written reports, accept/rejection of reports, reliable standardized tests for speech and language, reevaluation timeline, copy of evaluation reports to parents,

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components of eligibility statement, documentation of frequency and duration for in-class support, least restrictive environment, considerations and documentation of the individualized decision making process, supplemental aids and services, invitation to transition participants, agency participation, statement of transition service needs at age 14, statement of needed transition services at age 16, manifestation determination meetings, alternate proficiency assessments, SRA, sufficient staff, teacher collaboration, apportioned time for case management, provision of programs and services and destruction of records.

The on-site visit identified additional areas of need within the various standards regarding extended school year for students eligible for speech/language services, regular education teachers at initial evaluation meetings for preschoolers who were referred, multi-disciplinary reports for students eligible for speech/language reports and documentation of records in other locations.

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. In areas requiring the development of procedures, the improvement plan must include an administrative oversight component to ensure consistent implementation. In addition, any improvement plan activity that requires staff development must include a mechanism to determine the effectiveness of the in-service.

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