

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

**District:** Henry Hudson Regional

**County:** Monmouth

**Monitoring Dates:** January 18, 2005

**Monitoring Team:** Deborah Masarsky

***Background Information:***

During the 2004–2005 school year, the **Henry Hudson Regional School District** conducted a self-assessment of policies, procedures, programs, services, and student outcomes. This self-assessment component of the monitoring process provided the **Henry Hudson Regional 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 **Henry Hudson Regional School District** developed an improvement plan to address identified areas of need.

The Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) conducted a comprehensive desk audit, held a public focus group meeting for parents and community members at the **Henry Hudson Regional High School** on November 18, 2004 and conducted interviews with the director and parents to verify the self-assessment findings, to assess the appropriateness of the improvement plan, and to determine the progress in implementing the plan. Based on these activities, a determination was made by staff from the Office of Special Education Programs that the district had conducted a thorough review during the self-assessment process and had developed a plan that will appropriately address all areas of identified need.

***District Strengths:***

The district is commended for developing a variety of unique programs offered to students with disabilities. The district's **Sandy Hook Program** is administered by the district, the United States Department of the Interior, and the National Park Service. Students have the opportunity to gain work experience at the Sandy Hook Park. Work assignments include grounds maintenance, trail work, painting and clean of buildings, resource management, and other projects that involve the preservation of the historic and natural features of the park. By fostering team work among the participants of this program, students are provided an opportunity to develop a sense of responsibility, cooperation, respect, and understanding of the environment. During the 2003-2004 school year, students completed over 1500 hours of service at the park.

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Participants in the district's ***Internship Program*** become assistants to staff in the following areas: Nursing, Office Staff, Media Center, Technology, or Technology Software. Internships create opportunities for students in this program to gain experience and work skills that are transferable to various occupations.

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

A review of the **Henry Hudson Regional School District's** data indicates a classification rate of 22% (103 of 466 enrolled students) in 2003, which is substantially above the state average of 13.4%. The district indicated in their self-assessment a need to reduce the number of students eligible for special education by improving curriculum delivery and expanding programs to meet students' needs in general education settings. In response to this need, the district's improvement plan includes staff development and the implementation of prereferral interventions in the general education setting for students who need some assistance. The classification rate dropped slightly in 2004 to 20.59%; however, the rate remains significantly above the state average.

Additionally, current data indicate, a considerable drop from 49.5% in 2001 to just 13.6% in 2003 in the percentage of students with disabilities who are presently being educated with their non-disabled peers in general education classes for more than 80% of the school day. The district has also addressed this issue during the self-assessment process by identifying the need to improve individual-decision-making in determining the least restrictive environment, hire sufficient staff to provide resource programs, and the need to provide a full continuum of programs to meet students' needs. Finally, current data indicate, that only 6% of the students with disabilities have been placed in out-of-districts settings during this school year.

### ***Areas 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.

#### ***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 public information.

During the self-assessment process, the district identified a concern in the area of staff development. The district's improvement plan is sufficient to address this area.

An additional area of need was identified during the regarding parent training.

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

**Parent Training** - During monitoring it was determined through interviews the director and parents that the district does not provide sufficient parent training.

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- **The district will revise the improvement plan to include procedures to ensure that training to parents of students with disabilities is provided. The plan must include administrative oversight component to bring about the required changes. As a result of these activities, parents will have the opportunity to become more knowledgeable about special education policies, regulations and procedures, and practices. .**

### ***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, IEP documentation of related services, certifications, and length of school day and year.

During the self-assessment process, the district identified concerns in the areas of extended school year, hearing aid checks, goals and objectives for related services, facilities, and transfer students. The district's improvement plan is sufficient to address these areas.

No additional areas of need were identified during the monitoring process.

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

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

During self-assessment, the district accurately identified compliance in the areas of surrogate parents, notices in native language and interpreters at meeting.

During the self-assessment process, the district identified concerns in the areas of content and provision of notices and independent evaluations. The district's improvement plan is sufficient to address these areas.

No additional areas of need were identified during the monitoring process.

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

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

During self-assessment, the district accurately identified compliance in the areas of child find activities, direct referrals from staff, identification meeting timelines and convening of evaluation planning meetings with required participants.

During the self-assessment process, the district identified concerns in the areas of the referral process, pre-referral interventions and health summaries, and vision and hearing screenings. The district's improvement plan is sufficient to address these areas.

No additional areas of need were identified during the monitoring process.

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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 standardized assessments, functional assessments and multidisciplinary evaluations for students eligible for special education and related services, bilingual evaluations, acceptance rejection of outside reports and bilingual evaluations.

During the self-assessment process, the district identified concerns in the areas of multi-disciplinary evaluations for students eligible for speech and language services and signed and dated written reports. The district's improvement plan is sufficient to address these areas.

No additional areas of need were identified during the monitoring process.

**Section VI: Reevaluation**

**Summary of Finding:**

During self-assessment, the district accurately identified compliance in the area of planning meetings with required participants.

During the self-assessment process, the district identified a concern in the area of reevaluation timelines. The district's improvement plan is sufficient to address these areas.

No additional areas of need were identified during the monitoring process.

**Section VII: Eligibility**

**Summary of Findings:**

During self-assessment the district accurately identified compliance in the areas of eligibility criteria and the statement of eligibility for specific learning disability.

During the self-assessment process, the district identified concerns in the areas of participation of regular education teachers at eligibility conferences, copies of evaluation reports to parents, and agreement/disagreement with eligibility. The district's improvement plan is sufficient to address these areas.

No additional areas of need were identified during the monitoring process.

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

**Summary of Findings:**

During self-assessment, the district accurately identified compliance in the areas of convening annual review meetings within required timelines, age of majority, IEP

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implementation dates, goals and objectives aligned with the core curriculum content standards, teacher access, and teacher knowledge/responsibility to implement IEPs.

During the self-assessment process, the district identified concerns in the areas of IEP considerations and required statements, IEPs to parents prior to implementation, present levels of educational performance statements (PLEPs), 90-day timelines, and attendance of shared time vocational staff at meetings. The district's improvement plan is sufficient to address these areas.

No additional areas of need were identified during the monitoring process.

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

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

During self-assessment, the district accurately identified compliance in the area of regular education access within district.

During the self-assessment process, the district identified concerns in the areas of the individual decision-making process, consideration of supplementary aids/services, continuum of programs, documentation within the least restrictive environment section of the IEP, and notification to out-of-district students regarding extracurricular / non-academic activities within district. The district's improvement plan is sufficient to address these areas.

No additional areas of need were identified during the monitoring process.

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

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

During the self-assessment process, the district identified concerns in the areas of the determination of student interests/preferences, post-secondary transition planning process and documentation within the transition statement for students age 14 and age 16, provision of invitation to students/agencies, provision of transition services and input from agencies when not in attendance. The district's improvement plan is sufficient to address these areas.

No additional areas of need were identified during the monitoring process.

### ***Section X: Transition to Preschool is not applicable in this grade 7-12 district.***

### ***Section XI: Discipline***

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

During self-assessment, the district accurately identified compliance in the areas of documentation to the case manager, suspension tracking, manifestation determination

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meetings, provision of procedural safeguard rights for potentially disabled students and interim alternative educational settings.

During the self-assessment process, the district identified concerns in the areas of IEP meeting by the 10<sup>th</sup> day of suspension, functional behavioral assessments, behavioral intervention plans, the provision of educational services by the 11<sup>th</sup> day of suspension, and transmission of discipline records. The district's improvement plan is sufficient to address these areas.

No additional areas of need were identified during the monitoring process.

### ***Section XII: Statewide Assessment***

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

During self-assessment, the district accurately identified compliance in the areas of student participation in statewide assessment, IEP documentation and the Alternate Proficiency Assessment.

During the self-assessment process, the district identified concerns in the areas of modifications and accommodations and staff knowledge of the SRA process. The district's improvement plan is sufficient to address this area.

No additional areas of need were identified during the monitoring process.

### ***Section XIV: Programs and Services***

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

During self-assessment, the district accurately identified compliance in the areas of class and group sizes, age range, home instruction, and consultation time between general and special education teachers.

During the self-assessment process, the district identified a concern in the area of sufficient staff to provide resource programs. The district's improvement plan is sufficient to address this area.

No additional areas of need were identified during the monitoring process.

### ***Section XV: Student Records***

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

During self-assessment, the district accurately identified compliance in the area of access/requests.

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During the self-assessment process, the district identified a concern in the area of staff knowledge regarding the maintenance and destruction of student records. The district's improvement plan is sufficient to address this area. No additional areas of need were identified during the monitoring process

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## Summary

Monitoring was completed of the **Henry Hudson Regional School District** on January 18, 2005. The purpose of the monitoring 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 that review the district was able to identify all but two areas of need and develop an improvement plan that is sufficient to address the concerns identified during the self-assessment process.

At a focus group meeting held prior to the monitoring, the two parents that attended expressed their general satisfaction with many of the district's programs and services and the communication with staff. However, both parents expressed concerns regarding the lack of programs available to students participating in the shared-time vocational program and scheduling difficulties at the high school. These issues were appropriately addressed by the district during self-assessment.

A review of the **Henry Hudson Regional School District's** data indicate for 2003 a classification rate of 22% which is substantially above the state average. The district indicated in their self-assessment a need to reduce the number of classified students by improving curriculum delivery and the expansion of programs to meet students' needs in general education settings. In response to this need, the district's improvement plan includes staff development and the expansion of prereferral interventions and strategies in the general education setting. Additionally, current data indicate a significant drop in the number of classified students who are presently being educated with their non-disabled peers in general education classes for more than 80% of the school day. The district has also addressed this concern during the self-assessment process by identifying the need to improve individual decision making in determining the least restrictive environment, hiring sufficient staff to provide resource programs, and providing a full continuum of programs to meet students' needs. Finally, current data indicate that the district has been successful educating the vast majority of students with disabilities within district programs. A total of 6% of students with disabilities are being educated in schools outside the district this year.

**Areas identified as consistently compliant by the district during self-assessment and verified during the monitoring visit included** policies/procedures, dissemination of public information, provision of programs and related services as required by students' IEPs, IEP documentation of related services, length of school day/year, certification, surrogate parents, notices in native language, interpreters at meetings, child find activities, direct referrals from parents and staff, evaluation planning meetings convened within the 20-day timeline with required participants, standardized assessments, functional assessments and multidisciplinary evaluations for students eligible for special education and related services, bilingual evaluations, acceptance/rejection of outside reports, reevaluation planning meetings with required participants, eligibility criteria, statement of eligibility for specific learning disability, annual reviews, age of majority, implementation dates goals and objectives aligned with the core curriculum content standards, teacher access/responsibility to implement IEPs, regular education access within district, documentation to the case manager, suspension tracking, manifestation determination meetings, interim alternative educational setting(s), procedural safeguard rights of potentially disabled students, student participation in statewide assessment, IEP documentation, alternate proficiency assessment, graduation requirement in students' IEPs, out-of-district participation, written notice of graduation, age range, class/group



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size, home instruction, consultation time between general and special education teachers, and access to student records.

**Areas of need identified by the district during the self-assessment process included** staff development, extended school year, goals and objectives for related services, hearing aid procedures, transfer students, facilities, content/provision of notices, independent evaluations, referral process, pre-referral interventions, health summaries, vision/hearing screenings, signed/dated reports, multidisciplinary evaluations for students eligible for speech and language services, 3-yr reevaluation timelines, participation of general education teachers at the eligibility conferences, agreement/disagreement with eligibility, eligibility reports to parents, IEP meeting participants, considerations/required statements, present levels of educational performance statements, 90-day timeline to implement initial IEP, provision of IEPs to parents/adult students/teachers prior to implementation, decision-making process, consideration of supplementary aids/services, continuum of programs, LRE documentation, notification to out-of-district students of extra curricular and nonacademic activities within district, determination of students' interests/preferences, post-secondary transition planning process, documentation within the transition statement(s) section of IEPs, participation or input from agency, IEP meeting by 10<sup>th</sup> day of suspension, functional behavioral assessment, behavior intervention plans, provision of services by the 11<sup>th</sup> day of suspension, transmission of discipline records, modifications/accommodations for statewide assessments, and staff knowledge of maintenance/destruction procedure for student records.

An additional area of need was identified during the monitoring regarding parent training.

Within forty-five days of receipt of the monitoring report, the **Henry Hudson Regional School District** will revise the improvement plan to address the additional area of need and submit the revised plan to the Office of Special Education Programs.