

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

District: Keyport Public Schools

County: Monmouth

Monitoring Dates: April 22, 23, 2002

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Background Information:

During the 2000-2001 school year, the Keyport School District conducted a self-assessment of policies, procedures, programs, services, and student outcomes. This self-assessment component of the monitoring process provided the Keyport 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 Keyport 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 11, 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, child study team members, and speech language therapists.

District Strengths:

The following are unique programs that the district offers which include and promote experiences for disabled as well as nondisabled students:

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C.A.R.E.

The Keyport School District, in conjunction with the Monmouth-Ocean Educational Services Commission, thirteen other school districts and Georgian Court College have partnered to implement the C.A.R.E. program. C.A.R.E. is a professional development program for administrators, teachers, staff and parents, which provides training in understanding disabilities, effective instructional practices, communication skills, and cooperative planning between regular and special education staff.

Rainbows

Ten years ago, the Special Education Department introduced a unique program known as Rainbows. Child study team members, and special and regular education teachers serve as facilitators. The program consists of small groups of children who suffered loss through divorce or death. The purpose of the program is to lessen the burden of their grief through different strategies and activities. The program, administered by the vice principal of the elementary school, addresses the needs of both regular and special education students.

First Aid (EMT) Cadet Squad

The First Aid Cadet Squad was initiated by the district to foster a sense of volunteerism with the young adults in the community. The program enrolls students between the ages of 15 - 18. Currently, three special education students participate in the program.

Video Identification Program

The district has a Video Identification Program (VIC) where high school students, including students with disabilities, video the children who attend the High School Child Care Program. As a result of this program, students obtain job related experiences and the parents of the young children have access to video identifications of their children in the event one is ever needed.

Section I: General Provisions

Summary of Findings:

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

An area of need was identified during the on-site visit regarding professional development/effectiveness of training.

Area of Need:

Professional Development/Effectiveness of Training - During the on-site monitoring it was determined through staff interviews that although the district does provide professional development regarding special education topics, insufficient training has been offered regarding the role of the in-class support teacher, supplemental

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aids/services and modification/accommodations. Additionally, the district does not have a mechanism to determine the effectiveness of the training provided.

- **The district will revise the improvement plan to include procedures to ensure that in-service is provided to staff members regarding the role of the in-class support teacher, supplemental aids and services and accommodations/modifications. The improvement plan must include an administrative oversight component and a mechanism to determine the effectiveness of staff training to ensure the consistent, compliant implementation of procedures.**

Section II: F.A.P.E.

Summary of Findings:

During self-assessment the district accurately identified themselves compliant in the areas of extended school year, related services for speech, occupational and physical therapy, length of school day/year, transfer students, facilities and certifications.

During the self-assessment process, the district identified concerns regarding counseling goals/objectives and monitoring the implementation of IEPs. The district has developed an improvement plan that does not sufficiently address these areas of need because it lacks procedures, 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 visit.

Section III: Procedural Safeguards

Summary of Findings:

During self-assessment the district accurately identified themselves compliant in the areas of consent, notices of meetings, written notices, convening meetings, native language and independent evaluations.

During the self-assessment process, the district identified concerns regarding written documentation of attempts to secure parental participation at meetings. The district has developed an improvement plan that is sufficient to address this area of need. The district further identified concerns regarding surrogate parents. The district has developed an improvement plan that does not sufficiently address this area of need because it lacks procedures, in-service training and an administrative oversight component to bring about the required change. The plan needs to be revised to include these elements.

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

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Section IV: Location, Referral and Identification:

Summary of Findings:

During self-assessment the district accurately identified themselves compliant in the areas of the referral process/pre-referral interventions, direct referrals, vision/hearing screening, summer referrals, identification meeting/timelines and participants.

During the self-assessment process, the district identified concerns regarding health and medical summaries. 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 elements. The district also identified a concern regarding an overrepresentation of minorities in special education. The district will participate in a technical assistance session sponsored by the Office of Special Education Programs to address this area of need.

An additional area of need was identified during the on-site monitoring regarding Child Find Outreach Activities.

Area of Need:

Child Find Outreach Activities – During the on-site monitoring it was determined through record review that although the district conducts child find activities, these activities do not include migrant and homeless students.

- **The district will revise the improvement plan to include procedures to ensure that child find activities include migrant and homeless students. The plan must include an administrative oversight component to ensure implementation of the procedures.**

Section V: Protection In Evaluation and Evaluation Procedures:

Summary of Findings:

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

During the self-assessment process, the district identified concerns regarding the components of functional assessments for students eligible for speech/language services and acceptance/rejection of reports. The district has developed an improvement plan that does not sufficiently address these areas of need because it lacks procedures, in-service training and an administrative oversight component to bring about the required changes. The plan needs to be revised to include these elements.

Additional areas of need were identified during the on-site visit regarding written reports and functional assessments for students eligible for special education and related services.

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Area(s) of Need:

Written Reports - During the on-site monitoring it was determined through interviews and record review that evaluators do not date their written reports.

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

Functional Assessments for Students Eligible for Special Education and Related Services - During the on-site monitoring it was determined through record review that functional assessments for students eligible for special education and related services do not include all required components on a consistent basis. It was noted that different components were missing from different reports.

- **The district will revise the improvement plan to include procedures to ensure that functional assessments contain all of the required components identified in N.J.A.C. 6A: 14-3.5(d)2. The improvement plan must include in-service training and an administrative oversight component to ensure the consistent, compliant implementation of these procedures.**

Section VI: Reevaluation

Summary of Findings:

During self-assessment the district accurately identified themselves compliant in the areas of planning meetings, participants at planning meetings and re-evaluations completed by June 30th of the students' last year in pre- school.

During the self-assessment process, the district identified concerns regarding review of existing data to determine the need for additional assessments. 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 change. The plan needs to be revised to include these elements.

An additional area of need was identified during the on-site monitoring regarding three-year timelines for reevaluations.

Area of Need:

Three-year Timeline - During the on-site monitoring it was determined through record review that the district does not meet the three-year timeline for reevaluations.

- **The district will revise the improvement plan to include procedures to ensure that reevaluations are conducted every three years or sooner if conditions warrant. The improvement plan must include an administrative oversight component to ensure implementation of these procedures.**

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Section VII: Eligibility

Summary of Findings:

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

During the self-assessment process, the district identified concerns regarding the statement of eligibility and provision of evaluation reports to parents. The district has developed an improvement plan that does not sufficiently address these areas of need because it lacks procedures, 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 visit.

Section VIII: Individualized Education Program

Summary of Findings:

During self-assessment the district accurately identified themselves compliant in the areas of participants, IEP considerations/required statements, implementation dates, annual review timelines, 90-day timelines and teacher access to IEPs.

During the self-assessment process the district identified concerns regarding teacher responsibility for implementation of the IEP. The district has developed an improvement plan that is sufficient to address this area of need. The district further identified concerns regarding goals/objectives related to the core curriculum content standards, and the provision of IEPs to parents/adult students. The district has developed an improvement plan that does not sufficiently address these areas of need because it lacks procedures, 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 IX: Least Restrictive Environment

Summary of Findings:

During self-assessment the district accurately identified themselves compliant in the area of continuum of programs.

During the self-assessment process, the district identified concerns regarding documentation of placement decision, LRE considerations/required statements, supplemental aids/services, regular education access and non-academic/extracurricular participation. The district has developed an improvement plan that does not sufficiently address these areas of need because it lacks procedures, in-service training and an

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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.

Section X: Transition to Post-School

Summary of Findings:

During self-assessment the district accurately identified themselves compliant in the areas of Statements of Transition Service Needs and Needed Transition Services.

During the self-assessment process the district identified concerns regarding student preparation for discussion of preferences and interests at the transition/IEP meeting. 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 change. The plan needs to be revised to include these elements.

An additional area of need was identified during the on-site monitoring regarding agency invitation to IEP meetings.

Area of Need:

Agency Invitation - During the on-site monitoring it was determined through record review that if the purpose of a meeting was to consider transition services, the district does not invite representatives of other agencies likely to be responsible for providing or paying for transition services.

- **The district will revise the improvement plan to include procedures to ensure that representatives of any other agency that is likely to be responsible for providing or paying for transition services are invited to IEP meetings. The improvement plan must include an administrative oversight component to ensure implementation of the procedures.**

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 conferences and early intervention program to a preschool disabled program by age 3.

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

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Section XI: Discipline

Summary of Findings:

During self-assessment the district accurately identified themselves compliant in the areas of procedures, suspension tracking, functional behavioral assessment, manifestation determination, interim alternative educational settings and procedural safeguards for students identified as potentially disabled.

Additional areas of need were identified during the on-site monitoring visit regarding notice of student suspension to the case manager and components of a behavioral intervention plan.

Area(s) of Need:

Components of a Behavioral Intervention Plan - During the on-site monitoring it was determined through record review that the district does not include all components of a behavioral intervention plan such as: strategies, positive behavioral interventions and supports to address the students' behavior.

- **The district will revise the improvement plan to include procedures to ensure that when developing a behavioral improvement plan, the district includes strategies, positive behavioral interventions and supports to address the students' behavior. The improvement plan must include an administrative oversight component to ensure implementation of the procedures.**

Documentation of Student Suspension to the Case Manager – During the on-site monitoring it was determined through interviews and record reviews that case managers are not consistently notified in writing that a student with disabilities is being suspended.

- **The district will revise the improvement plan to include procedures to ensure the district provides written notification to case managers prior to suspending a student with a disability. The plan must include an administrative oversight component to ensure implementation of the procedures.**

Section XII: Statewide Assessment

Summary of Findings:

During self-assessment the district accurately identified themselves compliant in the areas of statewide assessment and approved accommodations/modifications

During the self-assessment process, the district identified concerns regarding staff knowledge regarding statewide assessment and student participation in the SRA process. The district has developed an improvement plan that is sufficient to address these areas of need. The district further identified concerns regarding student participation in statewide assessment and the need to develop an alternate assessment. The district has developed an improvement plan that does not sufficiently address these

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areas of need because it lacks procedures, 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 visit.

Section XIII: Graduation

Summary of Findings:

During self-assessment the district accurately identified themselves compliant in the areas of choice of diploma and participation in graduation activities for out-of-district students.

During the self-assessment process the district identified concerns regarding graduation requirements in the IEP. The district has developed an improvement plan that does not sufficiently address this area of need because it lacks procedures, in-service training and an administrative oversight component to bring about the required change. 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

During self-assessment the district accurately identified themselves compliant in the areas of program/services schedules, class size/age range waivers and group sizes for speech therapy.

Areas of need were identified during the on-site monitoring regarding home instruction approvals and collaborative time for teachers.

Area(s) of Need:

Home Instruction Approvals - During the on-site monitoring it was determined through record review that although the district obtains approvals for the first 60 day period of home instruction, they do not submit a second request prior to a continuation of the program beyond 60 days.

- **The district will revise the improvement plan to include procedures to ensure it obtains county office approval prior to a continuation of home instruction that exceeds a 60-day period of time. The improvement plan must include an administrative oversight component to ensure the implementation of the procedures.**

Consultation Time - During the on-site monitoring it was determined through staff interviews that special education teachers and general education teachers do not have consultation time regarding students with disabilities they instruct.

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- **The district will revise the improvement plan to include procedures to ensure that special education teachers and general education teachers have consultation time regarding those students with disabilities that they instruct. The improvement plan must include an administrative oversight component to ensure implementation of the procedures.**

Section XV: Student Records

Summary of Findings:

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

Areas of need were identified during the on-site monitoring regarding documentation of locations of other records.

Area of Need:

Documentation of Records in Other Locations - During the on-site monitoring it was determined that the district does not identify the location of other records in the central file.

- **The district will revise the improvement plan to include procedures to ensure that the location of other records maintained by the district is identified in the central file.**

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Summary

On-site special education monitoring was conducted in the Keyport School District on April 22 –23, 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 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.

At a focus group meeting held prior to the monitoring visit, parents expressed their satisfaction with many of the district's programs and services. 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, extended school year, related services for speech, occupational and physical therapy, length of day/year, transfer students, facilities, certification, consent, notices of meetings, written notices, convening meetings, native language, independent evaluations, referral process/pre-referral interventions, direct referrals, vision/hearing screening, summer referrals, identification meeting/timelines/participants, multi-disciplinary evaluation, standardized assessments, bilingual evaluations, planning meetings, participants at planning meeting, reevaluations completed by June 30th, eligibility meetings, eligibility participants, criteria, IEP participants, considerations/required statements, implementation dates, annual review timelines, 90-day timelines, teacher access to IEPs, continuum of programs, Statements of Transition Service Needs and Needed Transition Services, preschool transition planning conferences, early intervention program to a preschool disabled program by age 3, discipline procedures, suspension tracking, functional behavioral assessment, manifestation determinations, interim alternative educational setting, procedural safeguards, approved modifications and accommodations, IEP documentation regarding statewide assessment, choice of diploma, participation in graduation activities for out-of district students, program/service schedules, class size, age range/waivers, group sizes for speech, access/request for student records, maintenance and destruction of records

During the self-assessment process, the district identified areas of need regarding counseling goals/objectives, implementation of IEPs, written documentation of attempts to secure parental participation at meetings, surrogate parents, health/medical summaries, overrepresentation of minority students, components of functional assessments for students eligible for speech/language services, acceptance/rejection of reports, review of existing data prior to determining need for reevaluation, statement of eligibility, provision of IEPs and evaluation reports to parents/adult students, teacher responsibility for IEP, goals/objective relating to core curriculum content standards, documentation of placement decision, LRE/considerations/required statements, supplemental aids/services, regular education access, non-academic/extracurricular participation, student preparation for transition/IEP meeting, staff knowledge of statewide

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assessment, student participation in statewide assessment, alternate assessment, student participation in the SRA process and graduation requirements in the IEP.

The on-site visit identified additional areas of need within the various standards regarding professional development/effectiveness of training, child find outreach activities, functional assessments for students eligible for special education and related services, three-year timelines, agency invitation, notice of suspension to the case manager, components of a behavioral intervention plan, documentation of district-wide assessment, home instruction, consultation time for teachers, 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.