

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

District: Kingsway Regional High School District

County: Gloucester

Monitoring Dates: January 6,7,8, 2003

Monitoring Team: Arlene Popovici, Patricia Fair

Background Information:

During the 2001–2002 school year, the Kingsway Regional High School District conducted a self-assessment of policies, procedures, programs, services, and student outcomes. This self-assessment component of the monitoring process provided the Kingsway Regional High 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 Kingsway Regional High 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.

As the first step in the on-site monitoring process, the New Jersey Department of Education (NJDOE) held a focus group meeting for parents and community members at the Kingsway Regional High School on December 17, 2002. Information obtained from that meeting was used to direct the focus of the monitoring visit.

During the on-site visit, 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.

District Strengths:

The district employs four aides who provide assistance in any large classroom that has classified students who are receiving instruction with their nondisabled peers. These aides are not IEP driven, but instead are in addition to other staff assigned to these

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classrooms to further ensure these students with disabilities derive full educational benefit from the instruction they are receiving.

The Interact Club chooses activities for participation such as, Toys for Tots, Christmas and Thanksgiving baskets, and other fund raisers. These activities include all students, including students with disabilities.

Section I: General Provisions

Summary of Findings:

During self-assessment the district accurately identified themselves compliant in the area of dissemination of IDEA information.

During the self-assessment process, the district identified concerns in the areas of policies and procedures and staff training. The district's improvement plan is sufficient to address these areas.

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

Section II: Free, Appropriate Public Education (FAPE)

Summary of Findings:

During self-assessment the district accurately identified themselves compliant in the areas of facilities, and certification.

During the self-assessment process, the district identified concerns in the areas of extended school year, provision of programs, related services (staffing), counseling, length of school day/year, transfer students and procedures for hearing aides. The district's improvement plan is sufficient to address the areas of provision of programs, related services, counseling and hearing aides. **The district's improvement plan is insufficient to address extended school year, length of school day/year, and transfer students because it lacks in-service training, a mechanism to determine the effectiveness of the training and an administrative oversight component to ensure the consistent, compliant implementation of the procedures.** The plan needs to be revised to include these components.

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 written notice, notice in native language, interpreters at meetings, and independent evaluations.

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During the self-assessment process, the district identified concerns in the areas of surrogate parents and consent. The district's improvement plan is sufficient to address these areas.

An additional area of need was identified during the on-site visit regarding notice of a meeting.

Area(s) of Need:

Notice of a Meeting – During the on-site visit a review of records indicated that notice of a meeting does not inform parents of their right to invite others who have expertise to the meeting. In addition it does not state that the purpose of the meeting is to develop an IEP in the event the student is determined to be eligible for services.

- **The district will revise its notice of meetings to include all required statements and components. It is recommended that the district adopt the model notice forms developed by the Office of Special Education Programs.**

Section IV: Location, Referral and Identification

Summary of Findings:

During self-assessment the district accurately identified themselves compliant in the areas of Child Find 3-21, referrals, direct referrals, and health summary.

During the self-assessment process, the district identified concerns in the areas of pre-referral interventions and identification meeting timelines. The district's improvement plan is sufficient to address these areas.

Additional areas of need were identified during the on-site visit regarding vision and hearing screenings.

Area(s) of Need:

Vision and Hearing Screenings – During the on-site visit a review of records and interviews indicated that vision and hearing screenings are not consistently completed prior to identification meetings.

- **The district will revise its improvement plan to include procedures to ensure that a vision and hearing screening is completed prior to the identification meeting. The plan must include in-service, a mechanism to determine the effectiveness of training and an administrative oversight component to ensure the consistent, compliant implementation of the procedures.**

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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, functional assessments, signed written reports, and bilingual evaluations.

During the self-assessment process, the district identified concerns in the area of acceptance and rejection of reports. **The district's improvement plan is insufficient to address this area because it lacks procedures, in-service, a mechanism to determine the effectiveness of the in-service and an administrative oversight component to bring about the required changes.** The plan needs to be revised to include these elements.

An additional area of need was identified during the on-site visit regarding written reports.

Area(s) of Need:

Written reports – During the on-site visit a review of records indicated that written reports are not dated. As a result it could not be determined when these reports were developed.

- **The district will revise its improvement plan to include procedures to ensure reports are dated by the evaluator. The plan must include an administrative oversight component to ensure the consistent, compliant implementation of the procedures.**

Section VI: Reevaluation

Summary of Finding:

During self-assessment the district accurately identified themselves compliant in the area of planning meetings/participants.

During the self-assessment process, the district identified concerns in the areas of timelines and implementation of activities without undue delay. **The district's improvement plan is insufficient to address these areas because it lacks procedures, in-service, a mechanism to determine the effectiveness of the 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 visit.

Section VII: Eligibility

Summary of Findings:

During self-assessment the district accurately identified themselves compliant in the area of meetings and participants.

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During the self-assessment process, the district identified concerns in the areas of criteria, statement of eligibility for specific learning disabilities (SLD), and the provision of evaluation reports to parents 10 days before the eligibility meeting. The district's improvement plan is sufficient to address the area of provision of reports. **The district's improvement plan is insufficient to address the areas of criteria and statement of eligibility because it lacks procedures, in-service, a mechanism to determine the effectiveness of the in-service and an administrative oversight component to bring about the required changes.** The plan needs to be revised to include these elements.

An additional area of need was identified during the on-site visit regarding signatures of agreement/disagreement rationale with eligibility determinations.

Area(s) of Need:

Signature of Agreement/Disagreement - During the on-site monitoring it was determined through record review that the district does not document the agreement/disagreement with eligibility determinations.

- **The district will revise its improvement plan to include procedures to ensure that the district documents the agreement/disagreement with eligibility determinations by meeting participants. The plan must include an administrative oversight component to ensure the consistent, compliant implementation of the procedures.**

Section VIII: Individualized Education Program (IEP)

Summary of Findings:

During self-assessment the district accurately identified themselves compliant in the areas of considerations and required statements, present level of educational performances, age of majority, annual review timelines, and IEPs to parents.

During the self-assessment process, the district identified concerns in the areas of meetings participants, 90-day timelines, teacher responsibility for IEPs, and meetings not being held prior to implementing changes. The district's improvement plan is sufficient to address the area of teacher responsibility. **The district's improvement plan is insufficient to address the areas of meeting participants, 90-day timelines, and meetings not being held prior to implementing changes because it lacks procedures, in-service, a mechanism to determine the effectiveness of the in-service and an administrative oversight component to bring about the required changes.** The plan needs to be revised to include these elements.

An additional area of need was identified during the on-site visit regarding implementation dates on the IEP.

Area(s) of Need:

Implementation Dates - During the on-site visit, record review and interviews with staff indicated that IEPs do not contain an implementation date.

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- **The district will revise its improvement plan to include procedures to ensure IEP implementation dates are identified in the IEP. The plan must include in-service, a mechanism to determine the effectiveness of training and an administrative oversight component to ensure the consistent, compliant implementation of the procedures.**

Section IX: Least Restrictive Environment (LRE)

Summary of Findings:

During self-assessment the district accurately identified themselves compliant in the areas of the decision-making process, LRE documentation, considerations of supplementary aids and services, and district access to regular education.

During the self-assessment process, the district identified concerns in the areas of notification and participation of out-of-district students in nonacademic and extracurricular activities, and the continuum. The district identified issues with its continuum because some students are not receiving educational services in their home schools. **The district's improvement plan is insufficient to address nonacademic/extracurricular activities because it lacks in-service training, a mechanism to determine the effectiveness of the training and an administrative oversight component to ensure the consistent, compliant implementation of the procedures.** The plan needs to be revised to include these components. **The district's improvement plan is insufficient to address continuum because it lacks appropriate timelines, procedures, 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 X: Preschool Transition is not applicable.

Section X: Transition to Post-School

Summary of Findings:

During self-assessment the district accurately identified themselves compliant in the areas of age 16 transition services.

During the self-assessment process, the district identified concerns in the areas of age 14 transition service needs, preferences/interests and student/agency invitations. The district's improvement plan is sufficient to address these areas.

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 area of suspension tracking.

During the self-assessment process, the district identified concerns in the areas of documentation to the case manager, Functional Behavior Assessments/Behavior Intervention Plans, manifestation determinations, Interim Alternative Educational Settings, and procedural safeguards for potentially disabled students. The district's improvement plan is sufficient to address these areas.

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

Section XII: Statewide Assessment

Summary of Findings:

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

During the self-assessment process, the district identified concerns in the area of the Special Review Assessment. The district's improvement plan is sufficient to address this area.

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 area of participation of out-of-district students in activities.

Areas of need were identified during the on-site visit regarding age 14 graduation requirements and written notice of graduation.

Area(s) of Need:

IEP Components – During the on-site visit a review of records indicated that graduation requirements are not documented in the IEPs for students who are 14 years of age.

- **The district will revise its improvement plan to include procedures to ensure the IEP documents graduation requirements for students who are age 14. The plan must include an administrative oversight component to ensure the consistent, compliant implementation of the procedures.**

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Written Notice of Graduation - During the on-site visit a review of records and interviews indicated that written notice of graduation is not provided.

- **The district will revise its improvement plan to include procedures to ensure that written notice of graduation is provided. The plan must include an administrative oversight component to ensure the consistent, compliant implementation of the procedures.**

Section XIV: Programs and Services

Summary of Findings:

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

During the self-assessment process, the district identified concerns in the areas of group sizes for speech therapy, consultation time, description of special classes, and goals and objectives being linked to the Core Curriculum Content Standards. The district's improvement plan is sufficient to address these areas.

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

Section XV: Student Records

Summary of Findings:

During self-assessment the district accurately identified themselves compliant in the areas of access/requests, access sheets, maintenance and documentation of other locations.

During the self-assessment process, the district identified concerns in the area of destruction of student records. The district's improvement plan is sufficient to address this area.

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

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Summary

On-site special education monitoring was conducted in the Kingsway Regional High School District on January 6, 7, 8, 2003. 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 that review the district was able to identify nearly all areas of need and develop an improvement plan that with some revision will bring about systemic change. The district is further commended for the many areas 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, the two parents that attended expressed their satisfaction with many of the district's programs and services. One parent felt that his out-of-district student should participate in more in-district activities, and the other parent felt that her son should have received in-class support for driver education.

Areas identified as consistently compliant by the district during self-assessment and verified during the on-site monitoring visit included dissemination of IDEA information, facilities, certifications, written notices, notice in native language, interpreters at meetings, independent evaluations, Child-Find 3-21, referral process, direct referrals, health summary, vision and hearing screenings, multi disciplinary evaluations, standardized assessments, functional assessments, written reports, bilingual evaluations, reevaluation planning meetings and participants, eligibility meetings/participants, IEP considerations/required statements, Present Level of Educational Performance, age of majority, Annual Review timelines, IEPs to parents, LRE decision making process, LRE documentation, considerations of supplementary aids and services, regular education access in district, age 16 transition services, suspension tracking, statewide assessment participation, approved accommodations/modifications, IEP documentation, alternate assessment APA, class size/waivers, age range/waivers, home instruction, student record access/requests, access sheets, maintenance, and documentation of other locations.

During the self-assessment process, the district identified areas of need regarding policies and procedures, staff training, extended school year, provision of programs, related services, counseling goals and objectives, length of day/year, transfer students, child study team review, surrogate parents, consent (undue delay), pre-referral interventions, Identification meeting timelines (20 days), acceptance/rejection of reports, reevaluation timelines, eligibility criteria, statement of eligibility SLD, report to parents 10 days prior to meeting, IEP meeting participants, goals and objectives/core curriculum content standards, 90 day timelines, teacher responsibility, meetings not held prior to changes, notification/participation of out of district nonacademic/extracurricular activities, continuum of programs, transition age 14, preferences and interest survey, student/agency invitation, documentation of discipline to case managers, Functional Behavior Assessment/Behavior Intervention Programs, manifestation determination meetings, Interim Alternative Educational Settings, 45 day return, procedural safeguards, participation in Special Review Assessment, speech therapy group sizes, consultation time, description of special classes, and the destruction of student records.

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The on-site visit identified additional areas of need within the various standards regarding notice of meetings, vision and hearing screenings, written reports, signature of agreement/disagreement, IEP implementation dates, age 14 graduation requirements, and written notice of graduation.

Within forty-five days of receipt of the monitoring report, the Kingsway Regional School District will revise and resubmit the improvement plan to the Office of Special Education Programs to address those areas that require revisions.