

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

**District:** Lenape Valley School District

**County:** Sussex

**Monitoring Dates:** October 30 and 31, 2002

**Monitoring Team:** Janet Wright and Damen Cooper

***Background Information:***

During the 2001–2002 school year, the Lenape Valley School District conducted a self-assessment of policies, procedures, programs, services, and student outcomes. This self-assessment component of the monitoring process provided the Lenape Valley 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 Lenape Valley 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 Lenape Valley High School on October 15, 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 is commended for its school based fully operational planetarium which was created by the science department. The planetarium is not only a part of the school curriculum but the district invites elementary school students from neighboring counties

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to participate in the planetarium experience. The shows and information presented during the shows are prepared completely by the students.

The district provides a variety of scholarships and student achievement awards that are based on academics, merit and character.

The district is also a source of community outreach and acts as a community center for afternoon and evening activities.

### ***Areas Demonstrating Compliance With All Standards:***

**Least Restrictive Environment, Transition, Graduation and Programs and Services** were determined to be areas 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 themselves compliant in the areas of policies and procedures, parent development and dissemination of IDEA information.

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

#### **Area(s) of Need:**

**Professional Development** - During the on-site monitoring staff interviews indicated that although they are allowed to participate in out-of-district trainings, there is a need for the administration to provide in-district training to general and special education staff on an ongoing basis on topics such as inclusive education, instructional strategies and behavioral interventions.

- **The district will revise its improvement plan to include procedures to ensure the district identifies training needs and provides staff development in those areas. The plan must include a mechanism to determine the effectiveness of the training to ensure the consistent, compliant implementation of the procedures.**

### ***Section II: Free, Appropriate Public Education (FAPE)***

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

During self-assessment the district accurately identified themselves compliant in the areas of extended school year, length of school day/year, facilities and certifications.

During the self-assessment process, the district identified concerns in the areas of goals and objectives for related services and transfer students. 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 III: Procedural Safeguards**

**Summary of Findings:**

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

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

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

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

**Summary of Findings:**

During self-assessment the district accurately identified themselves compliant in the areas of child find, referral process, direct referral, summer referrals, identification meeting participants and timelines.

During the self-assessment process, the district identified concerns in the areas of pre-referral interventions, health summary 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 on-site visit.

**Section V: Protection in Evaluation and Evaluation Procedures**

**Summary of Findings:**

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

During the self-assessment process, the district identified concerns in the areas of functional assessment and acceptance/rejection of reports. The district's improvement plan is sufficient to address these areas.

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

**Section VI: Reevaluation**

**Summary of Finding:**

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

During the self-assessment process, the district identified concerns in the areas of timelines for reevaluation meetings. The district's improvement plan is sufficient to address this area.

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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 areas of eligibility meetings, participants, statement of eligibility and copies of evaluation reports to parents.

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

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

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

**Summary of Findings:**

During self-assessment the district accurately identified themselves compliant in the areas of IEP participants, alignment of goals and objectives to the core curriculum content standards, age of majority, ninety-day timelines and teacher access/responsibility for IEPs.

During the self-assessment process, the district identified concerns in the areas of considerations and required statements, implementation dates and annual review timelines. The district's improvement plan is sufficient to address these areas.

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

**Section XI: Discipline**

**Summary of Findings:**

During self-assessment the district accurately identified themselves compliant in the areas of documentation to the case managers, suspension tracking, manifestation determination and interim alternative educational setting.

During the self-assessment process, the district identified concerns in the areas of procedural safeguards and functional behavioral assessment and behavioral intervention plans. 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/modifications, IEP documentation and alternate assessment.

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During the self-assessment process, the district identified concerns in the area of child study team knowledge of statewide assessment content. The district's improvement plan is sufficient to address this area.

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 parent/adult student access and requests, access sheets, maintenance of records and documentation of location.

During the self-assessment process, the district identified concerns in the area of destruction of 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 Lenape Valley Public School District on October 30 and 31, 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 that review the district was able to identify all but one area of need and develop an improvement plan that 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, parents expressed their satisfaction with many of the district's programs and services. Parent interviews confirmed their satisfaction with the district's programs and services.

Areas identified as consistently compliant by the district during self-assessment and verified during the on-site monitoring visit included policies and procedures, dissemination and IDEA information, extended school year, length of school day and year, facilities, certifications, consent, notices of meetings, written notices, meetings, native language, independent evaluations, Child Find, referral process, direct and summer referrals, identification meeting participants and timelines, multidisciplinary evaluations, standardized assessments, written reports, bilingual evaluations, reevaluation planning meetings, participants, eligibility meetings, participants, statement of eligibility, copies of evaluation reports to parents, IEP participants, alignment of goals and objectives to the core curriculum standards, age of majority, ninety day timelines, teacher access/responsibility, least restrictive environment, post school transition, documentation to the case manager, suspension tracking, manifestation determination, interim alternative educational setting, statewide assessment participation, approved accommodation/modifications, IEP documentation, alternate assessment, graduation, programs and services, parent/adult student access and requests, access sheets, maintenance of records and documentation of locations.

During the self-assessment process, the district identified areas of need regarding related services, transfer students, surrogate parents, pre-referral interventions, health summary, vision and hearing screenings, functional assessments, acceptance/rejection of reports, reevaluation timelines, criteria, IEP considerations/required statements, implementation dates, annual review timelines, discipline procedures, functional behavioral assessment and behavioral intervention plans, child study team knowledge of contents of statewide assessment and destruction of records.

The on-site visit identified an additional area of need regarding professional development.

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