

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

District: Long Beach Island School District

County: Ocean

Monitoring Dates: June 5, 2003

Monitoring Team: Debbie Masarsky, Stephen Coplin, Kim Murray

Background Information:

During the 2001 – 2002 school year, the Long Beach Island School District conducted a self-assessment of policies, procedures, programs, services, and student outcomes. This self-assessment component of the monitoring process provided the Long Beach Island 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 Long Beach Island 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 Long Beach Island School on May 22, 2003. 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 administrator, superintendent, building principal, speech therapists, general education and special education teachers and child study team members.

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Areas Demonstrating Compliance With All Standards:

General Provisions, Procedural Safeguards, Reevaluation, Transition and Statewide Assessment 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 II: Free, Appropriate Public Education (FAPE)

Summary of Findings:

During self-assessment the district accurately identified themselves compliant in the areas of provision of related services, goals and objectives for related services, documentation of frequency/duration/location for related services, transfer students, length of school day/year, facilities and certifications.

During the self-assessment process, the district identified a concern in the area of extended school year. 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 referral process, identification meetings within timelines with required participants, health summaries and hearing/vision screenings.

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

An additional area of need was identified during the on-site visit regarding child find.

Area(s) of Need:

Child Find - During the on-site monitoring it was determined that the district only conducts child find activities for students ages 3-5 once a year.

- **The district needs to revise the improvement plan to include procedures to ensure that child find activities are conducted in the community throughout the school year, including summer months, to locate, identify and refer potentially disabled children ages 3-13 including migrant and homeless children. The improvement plan must include an administrative oversight component to ensure the consistent 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 and dated reports, bilingual evaluations and independent evaluations.

During the self-assessment process, the district identified concerns in the areas of acceptance/rejection of outside reports and standardized assessments and functional assessments for students eligible for speech/language services. The district's improvement plan is sufficient to address these areas. The district further identified an area of need regarding the development of written reports for students eligible for speech/language services. **During the on-site visit the monitors verified that speech therapists now develop, sign, date and provide parents with evaluation reports.**

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

Area(s) of Need:

Multi-disciplinary Evaluations - During the on-site monitoring it was determined that the speech therapist does not obtain a written educational impact statement from the student's teacher.

- **The district will revise the improvement plan to include procedures to ensure that a written educational impact statement is obtained from the classroom teacher and is included in the written report to fulfill the requirement for a multi-disciplinary evaluation. The improvement plan must include an administrative oversight component to ensure the consistent implementation of the procedures.**

Section VII: Eligibility

Summary of Findings:

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

An area of need was identified during the on-site visit regarding the provision of copies of evaluation reports to parent(s) for students eligible for special education and related services.

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Area(s) of Need:

Evaluation Reports - During the on-site monitoring it was determined that copies of evaluation reports for student eligible for special education and related services are not consistently provided to parent(s) ten days prior to eligibility meetings.

- **The district will revise the improvement plan to include procedures to ensure that the district consistently provides copies of evaluation reports to parent(s) ten days prior to eligibility meetings. The improvement plan must include an administrative oversight component to ensure the consistent 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 IEP considerations/required statements, implementation dates on IEPs, provision of IEPs to parent(s), annual goals/objectives aligned with the core curriculum content standards, annual review timelines and 90-day timelines.

During the self-assessment process, the district identified concerns in the areas of IEP teacher access/responsibility, documentation of modifications/supports for extra-curricular/nonacademic activities and goals/objectives based on the present levels of educational performance statement (PLEPs). The district's improvement plan is sufficient to address these areas.

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

Section IX: Least Restrictive Environment (LRE)

Summary of Findings:

During self-assessment the district accurately identified themselves compliant in the areas of regular education access for in-district students and participation with non-disabled peers in extracurricular/nonacademic activities.

During the self-assessment process, the district identified concerns in the areas of the individual decision-making process, supplementary aids and services, the LRE section of the IEP and continuum of programs. The director reports that these areas of need reflect issues relating to documentation and not the actual provision of programs and services. In addition, the district identified a concern with the consideration of placement of preschool disabled students in an integrated preschool setting. The director reports that the district does not have a regular pre-school program within the district and does not currently have any linkages with regular nursery schools in the area. The district's improvement plan is sufficient to address these areas.

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

Section X: Transition to Post-School is not applicable in this pre-K through 6th grade school district.

Section XI: Discipline

Summary of Findings:

During self-assessment the district accurately identified themselves compliant in the area of procedural safeguard rights for potentially disabled students.

During the self-assessment process, the district identified concerns in the areas of written notification to the case manager, suspension tracking, functional behavioral assessments, development of behavior interventions plans (BIPs), manifestation determination meetings and interim alternative educational settings. The district's improvement plan is sufficient to address these areas.

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

Section XIII: Graduation is not applicable in this pre-K- 6th grade district.

Section XIV: Programs and Services

Summary of Findings:

During self-assessment the district accurately identified themselves compliant in the areas of consultation time between regular and special education teachers, class and group size and age range.

During the self-assessment process, the district identified concerns in the areas of early childhood programs (addressed in Section IX) and description of special class programs. 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 to student records and staff knowledge of student record policies/procedures.

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An area of need was identified during the on-site visit regarding the documentation of other locations of student records.

Area(s) of Need:

Documentation of Other Locations of Student Record(s) - During the on-site monitoring it was determined that the district does not document in the central file the location of other student record(s) maintained by the district.

- **The district needs to revise the improvement plan to include procedures to ensure that the district documents in the central file the location of other student record(s) maintained by the district.**

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Summary

On-site special education monitoring was conducted in the Long Beach Island School District on June 5, 6, 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 will bring about systemic change. The district is further commended for the 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 parents of two students expressed their satisfaction with the district's programs and services. The parents of one of the students commented extensively regarding the inclusion of her child for part of the day in a regular classroom setting.

Areas identified as consistently compliant by the district during self-assessment and verified during the on-site monitoring visit included parent/staff development, policies/procedures, dissemination of public information, provision of related services, goals/objectives for related services, documentation of frequency/duration/location for related services, transfer students, length of school day/year, facilities, certification, surrogate parents, consent, content/provision of notices, meetings/participants, notices in native language, interpreter at meetings, referral process, identification meetings within timelines with required participants, health summaries, vision/hearing screenings, multi-disciplinary evaluations, standardized assessments, functional assessments, signed/dated reports, bilingual evaluations, independent evaluations, reevaluation meeting timelines with required participants, reevaluation by June 30th of a students last year in a pre-school program, eligibility meetings with required participants, eligibility criteria, statement of eligibility, copies of evaluation reports to parent(s) for students eligible for speech/language services, IEP considerations/required statements, implementation dates on IEPs, provision of IEPs to parent(s), annual goals/objectives aligned with the core curriculum content standards, annual review/90-day timelines, regular education access, participation with non-disabled peers in extracurricular/nonacademic activities, pre-school planning conferences, early intervention to pre-school by age three, procedural safeguard rights for potentially disabled students, participation in statewide assessments, alternate proficiency assessments, accommodation/modification in statewide assessments, IEP documentation of statewide assessments, consultation time between regular and special education teachers, age range, class/group size, access to student records, documentation of other locations of student records and staff knowledge of student record policies/procedures.

During the self-assessment process, the district identified areas of need regarding extended school year, pre-referral interventions, acceptance rejection of outside reports, standardized assessments/functional assessments/development of written reports for students eligible for speech/language services, IEP teacher access/responsibility, IEP documentation of modification/supports for extra-curricular/nonacademic activities, goals/objectives based on present levels of educational performance statement (PLEPs), individualized decision-making process/supplementary aids/services, LRE

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documentation, continuum of programs, integrated preschool programs, written notification to case manager, suspension tracking, functional behavioral assessments, behavior intervention plans (BIPs), manifestation determination meetings and interim alternative educational settings, early childhood programs and descriptions of special class programs.

The on-site visit identified additional areas of need within the various standards regarding child find activities, multidisciplinary evaluations for students eligible for speech/language services, provision of copies of evaluation reports to parents and documentation of other locations of student records in the central file.

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