

New Jersey Department of Education Special Education Monitoring

District: Mannington School District

County: Salem

Monitoring Dates: January 26, 2006

Monitoring Team: Patricia Fair, Cheryl Merical

Background Information:

During the 2004-2005 school year, the Mannington School District conducted a self-assessment of policies, procedures, programs, services and student outcomes. This self-assessment component of the monitoring process provided the Mannington 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 Mannington 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.

During the on-site visit, the New Jersey Department of Education (NJDOE) monitoring team reviewed district documents, including district policies and procedures, student count information, master student lists, class lists, schedules of students, teachers and related service personnel, and other relevant information. A representative sample of student records was also reviewed. Interviews were conducted with the district's special education administrators, building principals, general education and special education teachers, speech language specialists and child study team members. Parents of students with disabilities were interviewed by phone.

Data Summary:

A review of the district's data for students with disabilities included in the district's self-assessment indicated that the district enrollment for the 2004-2005 school year was 208 students, ages 3 through 21. The district had a classification rate of 17.79% which was above the state rate for that year of 16.8%. The district educated 48.8% (21 students) of students with disabilities, ages 6 through 21, in the general education setting for more than 80% of the school day. This rate increased from the previous year by nearly 10% (38.9%). No students with disabilities, ages 6 through 21, were educated outside of the district that year.

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Sections Demonstrating Compliance with All Standards

The self-assessment process required the district to review implementation of federal and state regulations categorized into 15 sections. Within each section, a number of areas were reviewed. The on-site monitoring visit involved verification that the sections and areas identified as compliant by the district in their self-assessment were compliant with regulations. These sections were identified by the district during self-assessment and the NJDOE during the monitoring process as compliant:

General Provisions, Evaluation, Discipline, Transition to Preschool, Statewide Assessment, Graduation and Programs and Services,

Areas Demonstrating Compliance

The following areas were identified by the district's self-assessment committee and by the NJDOE as compliant. These areas were reviewed for students eligible for special education and related services (ESERS) and students eligible for speech and language services (ESLES). Areas compliant for only one group of students are noted.

Section	Areas Demonstrating Compliance
Free, Appropriate Public Education (FAPE)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Oversight of individualized education program (IEP) implementation ▪ Provision of programs ▪ Transfer procedures
Procedural Safeguards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Consent (ESERS) ▪ Implementation without undue delay ▪ Provision of notice of a meeting (ESERS) ▪ Content of notice of a meeting (ESERS) ▪ Meetings (ESERS) ▪ Provision of written notice (ESERS) ▪ Content of written notice (ESERS) ▪ Notices in native language ▪ Interpreters at meetings ▪ Independent evaluations
Location, Referral and Identification (LRI)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Referral process ▪ Pre-referral interventions ▪ Direct Referrals ▪ Identification meeting timelines (ESERS) ▪ Identification meeting participants
Reevaluation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Reevaluation when change of eligibility is considered (ESERS) ▪ Timelines ▪ Planning meetings participants ▪ Reevaluations prior to age 5 ▪ Procedures when parental consent cannot be obtained ▪ Documentation of efforts to obtain parental consent

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Section	Areas Demonstrating Compliance
Eligibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Meeting participants ▪ Eligibility Criteria ▪ Signature of agreement and/or disagreement and rationale ▪ Statement of eligibility (Specific Learning Disability) ▪ Copy of evaluation reports to parents (ESERS)
Individualized Education Program (IEP)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Meeting participants ▪ Implementation dates ▪ IEP provided to parent prior to implementation ▪ Meetings held annually, or more often if necessary, to review and/or revise the IEP ▪ Annual reviews completed by June 30 ▪ Teachers informed of their responsibilities (knowledge of and/or access to IEPs) ▪ 90 day timelines
Least Restrictive Environment (LRE)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Documentation of LRE decisions ▪ Notification of and participation in non-academic and extracurricular activities for students educated outside of the district

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Areas of Noncompliance – Improvement Plan Review

The following table lists the results of the review of the improvement plan, developed to correct noncompliance identified in the self-assessment, submitted by the district. Areas verified as compliant during the monitoring visit are noted. The district must implement an oversight mechanism to ensure correction and ongoing compliance for each area listed.

Section	Area	Compliance Review
FAPE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Extended school year (ESY) determination – Although ESY is corrected for ESERS it is still not considered and documented for students eligible for speech and language services ▪ Provision of related services – Goals and objectives were not included for adaptive physical education. 	<p>The district did not meet the timeline for correction established in the self-assessment. The district must ensure that ESY is considered and documented for all students eligible for speech and language services.</p> <p>The district has demonstrated compliance in this area with an oversight mechanism in place to ensure correction and ongoing compliance.</p>
LRI	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Child Find 3-21 – There were no written procedures for locating students who may have a disability. ▪ Health summary and vision and hearing screenings were not available at the time of the identification meeting. 	<p>The district has demonstrated compliance in this area with an oversight mechanism in place to ensure correction and ongoing compliance.</p> <p>The district has demonstrated compliance in this area with an oversight mechanism in place to ensure correction and ongoing compliance.</p>
IEP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ IEP considerations and components – IEPs did not include all considerations and components. 	<p>The district has demonstrated compliance in this area with an oversight mechanism in place to ensure correction and ongoing compliance.</p>

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Section	Area	Compliance Review
LRE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continuum of programs, opportunity for all students to access general education and individual decision making – A continuum of placement options is needed, as well as expansion of the availability of supplementary aids and services, to educate more students in general education settings. 	The improvement plan is sufficient.
Transition to Adult Life	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Beginning at age 14, IEP statement of “Transition service needs” – There was a need to ensure that individual assessments for post-secondary outcomes were conducted as appropriate. 	The district has demonstrated compliance in this area with an oversight mechanism in place to ensure correction and ongoing compliance.

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Additional Areas of Need

The following areas were originally identified by the district's self-assessment committee as compliant, but were found to be noncompliant by the NJDOE during the on-site monitoring.

Section	Area	Activity
Procedural Safeguards	Consent (ESLS) – Written consent for evaluations is not consistently obtained. Parents are contacted by phone call.	The district is directed to ensure that written consent is obtained prior to any evaluation conducted. Improvement activities must include development of procedures, in-service training and an administrative oversight component to ensure correction and ongoing compliance.
	Provision and content of notice of a meeting (ESLS) – Notice of a meeting is inconsistently provided and does not include all the required components. Parents are contacted by phone call.	The district is directed to ensure that notice of a meeting including required components, is consistently provided to parents of students referred, evaluated and/or eligible for speech and language services. It is recommended that the district adopt the notices developed by the OSEP. Improvement activities must include development of procedures, in-service training and an administrative oversight component to ensure correction and ongoing compliance.
	Meetings (ESLS) – Required meetings are inconsistently held.	The district is directed to ensure that meetings for students referred and found eligible for speech and language services are consistently held with the required participants. The district must review recently revised New Jersey Administrative Code Title 6A, Chapter 14 to ensure that procedures comply with current regulations. Improvement activities must include development of procedures, in-service training and an administrative oversight component to ensure correction and ongoing compliance.
	Provision and content of written notice (ESLS) – Written notice is inconsistently	The district is directed to ensure that written notice, which includes all required components, is consistently provided to parents as required regarding students who are referred for speech and language services. It is recommended that the district adopt the written notice

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Section	Area	Activity
	provided and does not contain all the required components.	letters developed by the NJDOE. Improvement activities must include development of procedures, in-service training and an administrative oversight component to ensure correction and ongoing compliance.
LRI	Identification Meeting – Timelines (ESLS) – Identification meeting timelines could not be established because meeting dates were not maintained.	The district is directed to ensure that identification meetings occur when a student is referred for speech and language services within the 20-day required timeline. Improvement activities must include development of procedures, in-service training and an administrative oversight component to ensure correction and ongoing compliance.
Reevaluation	Reevaluation when change of eligibility is considered (ESLS) – Reevaluation planning meetings are not conducted for students who may no longer be eligible for speech and language services.	The district is directed to ensure that reevaluation planning meetings are conducted for students when dismissal from services is being considered. Improvement activities must include development of procedures, in-service training and an administrative oversight component to ensure correction and ongoing compliance.
Eligibility	Copy of evaluation report to parents (ESLS) There is no documentation that parents receive copies of evaluation reports 10 days prior to eligibility meetings.	The district is directed to ensure that documentation is maintained of the provision of evaluation reports to parents 10 days prior to eligibility meetings for students who are referred for speech and language services. Improvement activities must include development of procedures, in-service training and an administrative oversight component to ensure correction and ongoing compliance.

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Summary

On-site special education monitoring was conducted in the Mannington School District on January 26, 2006. 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 acknowledged for the comprehensive review conducted during the self-assessment process. As a result of that review, the district was able to identify areas of need and develop an improvement plan that will correct noncompliance. The district is further acknowledged for the many areas determined by the district and verified by the OSEP as compliant with federal and state statutes and regulations.

A review of the district's data for students with disabilities included in the district's self-assessment indicated that the district enrollment for the 2004-2005 school year was 208 students, ages 3 through 21. The district had a classification rate of 17.79% which was above the state rate for that year of 16.8%. The district educated 48.8% (21 students) of students with disabilities, ages 6 through 21, in the general education setting for more than 80% of the school day. This rate increased from the previous year by nearly 10% (38.9%). No students with disabilities, ages 6 through 21, were educated outside of the district that year.

During interviews conducted with parents by phone, many parents expressed their satisfaction with the district's programs and services and staff. Parents report frequent contact with teachers and child study team case managers.

Standards identified as consistently compliant by the district during self-assessment and verified during the on-site monitoring visit included: General Provision, Evaluation, Discipline, Statewide Assessment, Graduation and Programs and Services.

Areas identified as consistently compliant by the district during self-assessment and verified during the on-site monitoring visit included parent training, oversight of individualized education program (IEP) implementation, consent (ESERS), implementation without undue delay, provision of notice of a meeting (ESERS), content of notice of a meeting (ESERS), notice in native language, interpreters at meeting, independent evaluations, referral process, pre-referral interventions, direct referrals, identification meeting timelines (ESERS), reevaluation when change of eligibility is considered (ESERS), timelines, reevaluation prior to age 5, procedures when parental consent cannot be obtained, documentation of efforts to obtain parental consent, meeting participants, eligibility criteria, signature of agreement and/or disagreement and rationale, statement of eligibility, copy of evaluation reports to parents (ESLS), implementation dates, IEP provided to parent prior to implementation, meetings held annually, or more often if necessary, to review and/or revise the IEP, annual review completed by June 30, teachers informed of their responsibilities, 90 day timelines, documentation of LRE decisions, notification of and participation in non-academic and extracurricular activities for students educated outside of the district and student agency invitation.

Areas of need originally identified by the district, but determined to have been corrected prior to the on-site monitoring visit by the NJDOE, included: provision of related services, child find, health summary and vision and hearing screenings, IEP consideration and components and beginning at age 14, the IEP statement of transition service needs.

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During the self-assessment process, the district identified areas of need regarding extended school year and continuum and individual decision making which need to be corrected.

The on-site visit identified additional areas of need within the various standards, regarding students referred for speech and language problems including written parental consent, notice of a meeting, conducting meetings, written notice, meetings, identification meeting timelines, reevaluation when change of eligibility is considered and copy of evaluation reports to parents.

The improvement plan submitted to the OSEP has been reviewed and approved. The district is expected to implement the activities in the district's improvement plan and those described in the monitoring report to achieve compliance in all areas of need within six months of the date of this report. Verification of compliance will be conducted by the County Office of Education.