

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

District: Manville Public School District

County: Somerset

Monitoring Dates: March 24, 25, 27, 2003

Monitoring Team: Dorothenia Boyd-Jackson, Stephen Coplin

Background Information:

During the 2001– 2002 school year, the Manville Public School District conducted a self-assessment of policies, procedures, programs, services, and student outcomes. This self-assessment component of the monitoring process provided the Manville Public 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 Manville Public 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 Manville Public School District on March 20, 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 administrators, building principals, general education and special education teachers, speech therapists and child study team members.

District Strengths:

The district is commended for involving special needs students in the “**Dare to Dream**” Program which is held at community colleges throughout New Jersey. Students with disabilities, staff and parents participate in the all day program with others students from

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around the State in workshops focusing on transition to post-school outcomes and desires.

The district is further commended for its efforts in providing a hearing impaired student with a computer-aided speech to print transcription system known as **C-Print** which was developed at the National Technical Institute for the Deaf. C-Print is a support service option for some deaf and hard of hearing students which is an alternative to interpreters and notetakers. C-Print is considered to be the latest technology to enhance the student's educational experience in the mainstream environment. It involves a hearing captionist (transcriber) typing the words of the teacher and other students as they are being spoken. As this process occurs, the captionist provides a real-time text display which the hearing impaired student can read. The district has one teacher who has been trained and certified in C-Print and the system is in operation at the middle school level where the student attends school.

The district also provides special needs students at the Alexander Batcho Intermediate School with the opportunity to operate the **A.B.I.S. School Store**. The store has been in existence since 1998. It serves as a "real life" experience allowing students to develop skills they will need in the future. The students are responsible for ordering supplies and merchandise for the store either on-line or by telephone, pricing items, displaying and selling products, monitoring inventory and maintaining the physical setting of the store. Students are afforded the opportunity to not only develop functional math skills but needed interpersonal skills. All monies raised belong to the students and are deposited in a group checking account. At the end of each year, students decide how they would like to spend the money.

Areas Demonstrating Compliance With All Standards:

General Provisions, Statewide Assessment and Graduation 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 regarding related services goals/objectives, length of school day/year, facilities and certifications.

During the self-assessment process, the district identified concerns regarding the provision of programs/related services due to a shortage of personnel, hearing aids worn by students, extended school year and staff knowledge of the student transfer process. The district's improvement plan is sufficient to address these areas. During the on-site visit, a review of records and staff interviews indicated that the district has appropriately implemented specific activities to bring about correction in these areas. Additionally, the district identified concerns regarding changes to students' programs/related services prior to convening an IEP meeting. 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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Section III: Procedural Safeguards

Summary of Findings:

During self-assessment the district accurately identified themselves compliant regarding consent, provision of notices and independent evaluations.

During the self-assessment process, the district identified concerns regarding provision of written notice, notices in native language and interpreters/translators at meetings. The district's improvement plan is sufficient to address these areas. During the on-site visit, a review of records and staff interviews indicated that the district has appropriately implemented specific activities to bring about correction in these areas. Additionally, the district identified a concern regarding surrogate parents. The district's improvement plan is sufficient to address this area.

An additional area of need was identified during the on-site visit regarding content of notices.

Area(s) of Need:

Content of Notices – During the on-site monitoring, it was determined that the content of the district's notices inconsistently contain all required components.

- **The district will revise its notices to include all required components. It is recommended the district adopt the notice forms developed by the New Jersey Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs.**

Section IV: Location, Referral and Identification

Summary of Findings:

During self-assessment the district accurately identified themselves compliant regarding the referral process, direct referrals, identification meetings/timelines and participants.

During the self-assessment process, the district identified concerns regarding child find, health summary information, vision/hearing screenings and documentation of dates of referrals. The district's improvement plan is sufficient to address these areas. During the on-site visit, a review of records and staff interviews indicated that the district has appropriately implemented specific activities to bring about correction in these areas. Additionally, the district identified concerns regarding pre-referral interventions. 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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Section V: Protection in Evaluation and Evaluation Procedures

Summary of Findings:

During self-assessment the district accurately identified themselves compliant regarding multi-disciplinary evaluations for students eligible for special education/related services, bilingual evaluations, signed and dated written reports for students eligible for special education/related services and acceptance/rejection of reports.

During the self-assessment process, the district identified concerns regarding functional assessments and standardized tests. The district's improvement plan is sufficient to address these areas. During the on-site visit, a review of records and staff interviews indicated that the district has appropriately implemented specific activities to bring about correction in these areas. Additionally, the district identified a concern regarding multi-disciplinary evaluations for students eligible for speech/language services. The district's improvement plan is sufficient to address this area. The district further identified a concern regarding the development of written reports for students eligible for speech/language services. **The district's improvement plan is insufficient to address this area of need because it lacks 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 VI: Reevaluation

Summary of Finding:

During self-assessment the district accurately identified themselves compliant regarding reevaluation planning meetings/participants, three-year timelines for students eligible for special education/related services and reevaluations completed by June 30th of a students' last year in preschool.

An area of need was identified during the on-site visit regarding three - year reevaluation timelines for students eligible for speech/language services.

Area(s) of Need:

Three-Year Reevaluation Timelines for Students Eligible for Speech/Language Services - During the on-site visit, it was determined that the district does not complete reevaluations for students eligible for speech/language services within the required timelines.

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

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Section VII: Eligibility

Summary of Findings:

During self-assessment the district accurately identified themselves compliant regarding eligibility meetings, statement of eligibility for specific learning disability, documentation of eligibility and signatures of agreement/disagreement.

During the self-assessment process, the district identified concerns regarding eligibility meeting participants, criteria, statistical formula for specific learning disability and provision of evaluation reports to parents/adult students. The district's improvement plan is sufficient to address these areas. During the on-site visit, a review of records and staff interviews indicated that the district has appropriately implemented specific activities to bring about correction in these areas.

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 regarding IEP meetings, present levels of educational performance (PLEP), goals/objectives aligned with the core curriculum content standards, age of majority, IEPs to parents, teacher access to IEPs, 90-day timelines and annual review timelines for students eligible for special education/related services.

During the self-assessment process, the district identified concerns regarding IEP meeting participants, teacher and other district personnel responsibility in implementing IEPs, implementation of the IEPs without delay, IEPs in effect at the beginning of the school year for every student eligible for special education/related services and IEP considerations/required statements. The district's improvement plan is sufficient to address these areas. During the on-site visit, a review of records and staff interviews indicated that the district has appropriately implemented specific activities to bring about correction in these areas.

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

Area(s) of Need:

Annual Reviews for Students Eligible for Speech/Language Services – During the on-site visit, it was determined through record review that annual reviews for students eligible for speech/language services are not completed within the required timelines.

- **The district will revise its improvement plan to include procedures to ensure the district completes annual reviews for students eligible for speech/language services within the required timelines. The improvement plan must include an administrative oversight component to ensure the consistent implementation of the procedures.**

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Section IX: Least Restrictive Environment (LRE)

Summary of Findings:

During self-assessment the district accurately identified themselves compliant regarding decision-making process/least restrictive environment, regular education access, notification/participation for out-of-district students in non-academic/extra-curricular activities and continuum of program options.

During the self-assessment process, the district identified a concern regarding supplementary aids/services. The district's improvement plan is sufficient to address this area.

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

Section X: Transition to Preschool

Summary of Findings:

During self-assessment the district accurately identified themselves compliant regarding early intervention to preschool by age 3.

During the self-assessment process, the district identified a concern regarding preschool transition planning conferences. The district's improvement plan is sufficient to address this area. During the on-site visit, a review of records and staff interviews indicated that the district has appropriately implemented specific activities to bring about correction in this area.

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 regarding transition service needs, preferences/interests and student/agency invitation.

During the self-assessment process, the district identified concerns regarding the statement of needed transition services. The district's improvement plan is sufficient to address this area. During the on-site visit, a review of records and staff interviews indicated that the district has appropriately implemented specific activities to bring about correction in this area. Additionally, the district identified concerns regarding agency attendance when invited to transition meetings, development of community resources/partnerships, students with disabilities enrolling in post-secondary education experiences and the identification of programs/services/outcomes which promote successful transition. 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 regarding documentation of suspension to the case manager, suspension tracking and interim alternative educational setting.

During the self-assessment process, the district identified concerns regarding functional behavioral assessments, behavioral intervention plans and the provision of records to local authorities. The district's improvement plan is sufficient to address these areas. During the on-site visit, a review of records and staff interviews indicated that the district has appropriately implemented specific activities to bring about correction in these areas. Additionally, the district identified a concern regarding manifestation determinations. The district's improvement plan is sufficient to address this area. The district further identified concerns regarding procedural safeguards for the potentially disabled student. **The district's improvement plan is insufficient to 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.**

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

Section XIV: Programs and Services

Summary of Findings:

During self-assessment the district accurately identified themselves compliant regarding class size, age range, group sizes for speech therapy and home instruction.

During the self-assessment process, the district identified a concern regarding students in state facilities. The district's improvement plan is sufficient to address this area. During the on-site visit, a review of records and staff interviews indicated that the district has appropriately implemented specific activities to bring about correction in this area. Additionally, the district identified concerns regarding collaborative consultation time for teachers and students in state facilities. 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 regarding access/requests, access sheets, maintenance/destruction of student records and documentation of records in other locations outside of the central office.

During the self-assessment process, the district identified concerns regarding staff knowledge of policies and procedures pertaining to student records. The district's

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improvement plan is sufficient to address this area. During the on-site visit, a review of records and staff interviews indicated that the district has appropriately implemented specific activities to bring about correction in this area.

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Summary

On-site special education monitoring was conducted in the Manville Public School District on March 24, 25, 27, 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 as well as the implementation of activities to bring about correction in many of the areas identified as noncompliant during the self-assessment process.

At a focus group meeting held prior to the monitoring visit, 14 parents attended the evening session. Many expressed their satisfaction with the district's programs and services. Particularly, parents applauded the director, child team staff and teachers for being most accommodating and flexible. Additionally, favorable comments were made regarding the excellent communication between parents and staff. Parents voiced concerns regarding IEPs not being distributed at the beginning of the school year (was not verified during the on-site visit), scheduling conflicts with student programs and the lack of elevators to accommodate students with physical challenges.

Standards identified as consistently compliant by the district during self-assessment and verified during the on-site monitoring included General Provisions, Statewide Assessment and Graduation.

Areas identified as consistently compliant by the district during self-assessment and verified during the on-site monitoring visit included related services goals/objectives, length of school day/year, facilities, certifications, consent, provision of notices, independent evaluations, referral process, direct referrals, identification meetings/timelines/participants, multi-disciplinary evaluations for students eligible for special education/related services, bilingual evaluations, signed and dated written reports for students eligible for special education/related services, acceptance/rejection of reports, reevaluation planning meetings/participants, three-year timelines for students eligible for special education/related services, reevaluations completed by June 30th of a student's last year in a preschool program, eligibility meetings, statement of eligibility for specific learning disability, signatures of agreement/disagreement, IEP meetings, present levels of educational performance, goals/objectives aligned with the core curriculum content standards, age of majority, IEPs to parents, teacher access to IEPs, 90-day timelines, annual review timelines for students eligible for special education/related services, decision making process/least restrictive environment, regular education access, notification/participation of nonacademic/extracurricular activities, continuum of program options, early intervention to pre-school by age three, transition service needs, preferences/interests, student/agency invitation, documentation of suspension to case managers, suspension tracking, interim alternative educational settings, class size, age range, group sizes for speech, home instruction, access/requests, access sheets, maintenance/destruction of student records and documentation of records in other locations.

During the self-assessment process, the district identified areas of need regarding the provision of programs/related services due to a shortage of personnel, hearing aids worn

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by students, extended school year, making changes in a student's program/related service prior to convening an IEP meeting, staff knowledge of transfer process, surrogate parents, notices in native language, interpreters/translators at meetings, child find, health summary information, vision/hearing screenings, pre-referral interventions, documentation of date of referral, standardized assessments, functional assessments, multi-disciplinary evaluations for students eligible for speech/language services, development of written reports for students eligible for speech/language services, eligibility participants, the provision of evaluation reports to parents/adult students, eligibility criteria, statistical formula for specific learning disability, teacher/district personnel responsibility in implementing the IEP, IEP participants, implementation of the IEP without delay, IEP considerations/required statements, IEPs in effect at the beginning of the school year, implementation of IEPs without delay, supplementary aids/services, preschool transition planning conferences, agency attendance at transition meetings, development of community resources/partnerships, statement of needed transition services, students with disabilities enrolling in post-secondary education experiences, identification of programs/services/outcomes which promote successful transition, functional behavioral assessments, behavioral intervention plans, manifestation determinations, procedural safeguards for potentially disabled students, provision of records to local authorities when students are associated with criminal activity, collaborative consultation time, students in state facilities and staff knowledge of policies/procedures regarding student records.

The on-site visit identified additional areas of need within the various standards regarding content of district notices and annual review/reevaluation timelines for students eligible for speech/language services.

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