

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

District: Monmouth Beach School District

County: Monmouth

Monitoring Dates: November 29, 2001

Monitoring Team: Stephen Coplin, Robby Friedman, Dorothenia Boyd-Jackson

Background Information:

During the 2000-2001 school year, the Monmouth Beach School District conducted a self-assessment of policies, procedures, programs, services, and student outcomes. This self- assessment component of the monitoring process provided the Monmouth Beach 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 Monmouth Beach School District developed an improvement plan to address identified areas of need.

The Office of Special Education Programs conducted an on-site monitoring to verify the self-assessment findings, determine the appropriateness of the improvement plan, and determine the progress in implementing the plan.

As the first step in the on-site monitoring process, the NJDOE held a focus group meeting for parents and community members on November 13, 2001. Information obtained from that meeting was used to direct the focus of the monitoring visit.

During the on-site, 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, and child study team members.

Area Demonstrating Compliance with All Standards:

General Provisions, 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 II: FAPE

Summary of Findings:

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

During the self-assessment process, the district identified concerns with extended school year, availability of service providers, the implementation of IEPs for all students and goals/objectives for related services. The district has developed an improvement plan that does not sufficiently address these areas of need because it lacks an administrative oversight component to ensure the consistent implementation of procedures. The district will revise the improvement plan to include this component. The district further identified concerns with provision of programs and services as per the IEP and transfer procedures. The district has developed an improvement plan that does not sufficiently address these areas of need because it lacks procedures, in-service and an administrative oversight component to bring about required changes. The district will revise the improvement plan to include these elements.

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

Section III: Procedural Safeguards

Summary of Findings:

During self-assessment the district accurately identified themselves compliant in the areas of native language and meetings.

During the self-assessment process, the district identified concerns with surrogate parents, consent, content of notices of meetings, content and provision of written notices within timelines, independent evaluations and documentation of attempts to secure parental participation. The district has developed an improvement plan that does not sufficiently address these areas of need because it lacks an administrative oversight component to ensure the consistent implementation of procedures. The district will revise the improvement plan to include this component. It is recommended that the district use the notices developed by the Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs.

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

Section IV: Location, Referral & Identification

Summary of Findings:

During self-assessment the district accurately identified themselves compliant in the area of referral process.

During the self-assessment process, the district identified concerns with pre-referral interventions, identification meetings within timelines, appropriate participants at meetings, nature and scope of the evaluation, health summary, and audiometric and vision screenings. The district has developed an improvement plan that does not sufficiently address these areas of need because it lacks an administrative oversight component to ensure the consistent implementation of procedures. The district will revise the improvement plan to include this component.

An additional area of need was identified during the on-site monitoring visits regarding Child Find activities.

Area of Need:

Child Find Activities – During the on-site monitoring it was determined that the district's Child Find activities are not sufficient to identify students between the ages of 3-15 (pre-kindergarten-eighth grade) who are potentially disabled because information is not disseminated widely enough throughout the community, activities do not continue through the summer months and they are not extended to the homeless and migrant population.

- **The district will revise the improvement plan to include procedures to ensure that Child Find activities to locate and refer potentially disabled students between the ages of 3-15 are conducted on a district wide basis, that the activities continue through the summer months and that these activities are extended to the homeless and migrant population.**

Section V: Evaluation

Summary of Findings:

During self-assessment the district accurately identified themselves compliant in the areas of multi-disciplinary evaluations for students eligible for special education and related services, standardized assessments and bilingual evaluations.

During the self-assessment process, the district identified concerns with functional assessments for students eligible for special education and related services, signed and dated reports and acceptance/rejection of all or parts of reports. The district has developed an improvement plan that does not sufficiently address these areas of need because it lacks an administrative oversight component to ensure the consistent implementation of procedures. The district will revise the improvement plan to include this component.

Additional areas of need were identified during the on-site monitoring visit regarding multidisciplinary evaluations and functional assessments for students eligible for speech/language services.

Areas of Need:

Multidisciplinary Evaluations for Students Eligible for Speech/Language Services -

During the on-site monitoring it was determined that the district does not include written information from the classroom teacher regarding the educational impact created by the speech problem.

- **The district will revise the improvement plan to include procedures to ensure that all required components of a multidisciplinary evaluation are conducted for students evaluated for speech/language services. The improvement plan must include staff training and an administrative oversight component to ensure the implementation of the procedures.**

Functional Assessments – During the on-site monitoring it was determined that functional assessments for students eligible for speech/language services do not contain the required components.

- **The district will revise the improvement plan to include procedures to ensure that functional assessments contain the required components. The improvement plan must include staff training and an administrative oversight component to ensure the implementation of the procedures.**

Section VI. Reevaluation

Summary of Findings:

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

During the self-assessment process, the district identified concerns with reevaluation timelines. The district has developed an improvement plan that does not sufficiently address this area of need because it lacks an administrative oversight component to ensure the consistent implementation of procedures. The plan must be revised to include this component.

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

Section VII. Eligibility

Summary of Findings:

During self-assessment the district accurately identified themselves compliant in the areas of statement of eligibility, eligibility meetings, meeting participants and provision of evaluation reports to parents.

During the self-assessment process, the district identified concerns with eligibility criteria. The district has developed an improvement plan that does not sufficiently address this area of need because it lacks an administrative oversight component to ensure the consistent implementation of procedures. The plan must be revised to include this component.

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

Section VIII: Individualized Education Program

Summary of Findings:

During the self-assessment process, the district identified concerns regarding IEP meetings to revise the IEP, meeting participants, signatures of participants, provision of IEPs to parents, implementation of IEPs, informing teachers and providers of their responsibilities related to IEPs, PLEPs, annual goals/objectives, considerations/required statements, annual review and 90-day timelines. The district has developed an improvement plan that does not sufficiently address these areas of need because it lacks an administrative oversight component to ensure the consistent implementation of procedures. The plan must be revised to include this component. It is recommended that the district use the IEP form developed by the Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs and provide in-service training for staff.

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

Section IX: Least Restrictive Environment

Summary of Findings:

During self-assessment the district accurately identified themselves compliant in the area of nonacademic and extracurricular participation of students

During the self-assessment process, the district identified concerns with the individualized decision-making process, supplementary aids and services, continuum of programs and LRE considerations. The district has developed an improvement plan that does not sufficiently address these areas of need because it lacks in-service and an administrative oversight component to ensure the consistent implementation of procedures. The plan must be revised to include these components.

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

Section X: Transition from School to Post-School

Summary of Findings:

During the self-assessment process, the district identified concerns with student and agency invitations, notice of a meeting and statement of transition service needs (at age 14 or younger if appropriate). The district has developed an improvement plan that does

not sufficiently address these areas of need because it lacks an administrative oversight component to ensure the consistent implementation of procedures. The plan must be revised to include this component. It is recommended that the district use the IEP form and notice of a meeting developed by the Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs. The district further identified a concern regarding students' preferences and interests when they do not attend an IEP meeting. The district has developed an improvement plan that does not sufficiently address this area of need because it lacks procedures for 7th and 8th grade students and an administrative oversight component to ensure the consistent implementation of procedures to about the required changes. The plan must be revised to include these elements.

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

Section X: Transition from Preschool

Summary of Findings:

During self-assessment the district accurately identified themselves compliant in the area of preschool transition planning conference.

During the self-assessment process, the district identified a concern regarding the implementation of IEPs no later than age three. The district has developed an improvement plan that does not sufficiently address this area of need because it lacks an administrative oversight component to ensure the consistent implementation of procedures. The district will revise the improvement plan to include this component.

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

Section XI: Discipline

Summary Of Findings:

During self-assessment the district accurately identified themselves compliant in the areas of discipline procedures, notification to case manager, suspension tracking, functional behavioral assessments, behavior intervention plans, manifestation determinations and interim alternative educational settings.

During the self-assessment process, the district identified a concern with procedural safeguards for potentially disabled students. The district has developed an improvement plan that does not sufficiently address this area of need because it lacks an administrative oversight component to ensure the consistent implementation of procedures. The district will revise the improvement plan to include this component.

No additional areas of need were identified during the on-site monitoring 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 alternative assessment.

During the self-assessment process, the district identified a concern with team members having knowledge about the content of statewide assessments. The district has developed an improvement plan that does not sufficiently address this area of need because it lacks an administrative oversight component to ensure the consistent implementation of procedures. The district will revise the improvement plan to include this component. It is recommended that each child study team member receive a copy of "The Directory of Test Specifications" (DTS) for each content area and/or the sample form of the ESPA and GEPA.

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

Section XIV: Programs and Services

Summary of Findings:

During self-assessment the district accurately identified themselves compliant in the areas of group size for resource programs and age range.

During the self-assessment process, the district identified concerns with employment of sufficient child study team members, speech/language therapists, and other school personnel, operation of preschool programs 5 days a week, team teaching, supplementary instruction, group size for speech-language services and home instruction. The district has developed an improvement plan that does not sufficiently address these areas of need because it lacks an administrative oversight component to ensure the consistent implementation of procedures. The district will revise the improvement plan to include this component.

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

Section XV: Student Records

Summary of Findings:

During self-assessment the district accurately identified themselves compliant in the areas of documentation of access to student records, access sheets and maintenance and destruction of pupil records.

During the self-assessment process, the district identified concerns with staff knowledge of student record policies/procedures. The district has developed an improvement plan that does not sufficiently address this area of need because it lacks an administrative

oversight component to ensure the consistent implementation of procedures. The plan must be revised to include this component.

An additional area of need was identified during the on-site monitoring regarding the location of other records.

Area of Need:

Location of Other Records – During the on-site monitoring visit, it was determined that although central files document the location of child study/speech/504/PAC records, it does not document the location of health records.

- **The district will revise the improvement plan to include procedures to ensure that central files identify the location of all student records maintained by the district.**

SUMMARY

On-site special education monitoring was conducted in the Monmouth Beach School District on November 29, 2001. 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 thorough and comprehensive review conducted during the self-assessment process. As a result of this review the district was able to identify most areas of need and develop an improvement plan that with some revisions, will be sufficient to bring about systemic change. The district is further commended for the many areas that were 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, very positive comments were expressed regarding the close communication between parents and administration-staff. In addition, the parents were very pleased with the progress that their children are making in the special education programs provided by the district.

Areas identified as consistently compliant by the district during self-assessment and verified during the on-site monitoring visit included policies/procedures, professional development, dissemination of IDEA information, length of day/year, facilities, certification of staff, meetings, native language, the referral process, multi-disciplinary evaluations for students eligible for special education and related services, standardized assessments, bilingual evaluations, participants at planning meeting for reevaluations, participants at eligibility meetings, statement of eligibility, copy of evaluation reports to parents, nonacademic/extracurricular participation, pre-school transition planning conference, discipline procedures, documentation to case managers, suspension tracking, behavioral intervention plans, functional behavioral assessments, manifestation determinations, interim alternative educational setting, participation in statewide assessment, approved accommodation/modifications, elementary diploma, participation in eighth grade graduation, group size for resource programs , age range, and access sheets.

During the self-assessment process, the district identified areas of need regarding extended school year, availability of service providers, goals and objectives for related services, transfer procedures, surrogate parents, consent, all timelines (i.e.20-day, 90-day, 3-year, annual review), content of notices of meetings, content and provision of written notices within timelines, independent evaluations, pre-referral interventions, identification meetings with appropriate participants, health information, functional assessments for students eligible for special education and related services, signed and dated written reports, acceptance/rejection of reports, eligibility criteria, IEP considerations and required statements, goals and objectives/ Core Curriculum Content Standards, implementation of IEPs, teacher IEP access/responsibility, LRE considerations, continuum of programs, post-school transition needs, implementation of IEPs by age 3, procedural safeguards for potentially disabled students, knowledge of content of statewide assessment, employment of sufficient professional staff, group size for speech-language services, home instruction and knowledge of policies regarding student records.

The on-site visit identified additional areas of need within the various standards regarding Child Find activities, multidisciplinary evaluations and functional assessments for students eligible for speech/language services and location of other records.

Within forty-five days of receipt of the monitoring report, the district will revise and resubmit the improvement plan to the Office of Special Education Programs to address the areas of need identified during the on-site visit and those areas that require revisions to the improvement plan.