

## New Jersey Department of Education Special Education Monitoring

**District:** National Park School District

**County:** Gloucester

**Monitoring Dates:** January 4 and 9, 2006

**Monitoring Team:** Jane Marano, Patricia Fair, Ken Richards, Robert Schweitzer

### ***Background Information:***

During the 2004-2005 school year, the National Park School District conducted a self-assessment of policies, procedures, programs, services and student outcomes. This self-assessment component of the monitoring process provided the National Park 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 National Park 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 State 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 administrator, building principal, general education and special education teachers, speech-language specialist and child study team members. Parents of students with disabilities were interviewed by telephone.

### **Data Summary:**

A review of the district's data for students with disabilities indicates that during the 2004-2005 school year, the district educated 37.3% of students with disabilities (or 28 students) between the ages 6-21 in the general education setting for more than 80% of the school day. This is below the state average of 42% for that year. The majority of the district's students with disabilities, 42.7 % (or 32 students), were educated in general education classes 40-80% of the day. During that same year, two students received special education and related services in private day schools. Additionally, three of the district's four preschool age students with disabilities were educated in a special education early childhood setting in another school district and one preschool student

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

attended a separate public school special education early childhood program. The district’s classification rate was 18.98% in 2005 as compared to the state classification rate for that year of 14.85%.

**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
- Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE)
- Least Restrictive Environment (LRE)
- Transition to Preschool
- Discipline
- Statewide Assessment
- Programs and Services

**Sections Not Reviewed**

These sections were not reviewed by the NJDOE because the district does not serve a population of students who would require these services:

- Transition to Adult Life
- Graduation

**Areas Demonstrating Compliance**

The following areas, within the 15 sections reviewed, 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 (ESLS). Areas compliant for only one group of students are noted.

<b>Section</b>	<b>Areas Demonstrating Compliance</b>
Procedural Safeguards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Consent</li> <li>▪ Implementation without undue delay</li> <li>▪ Provision of notice of meeting</li> <li>▪ Content of notice of meeting</li> <li>▪ Meetings</li> <li>▪ Content of written notice (ESERS)</li> <li>▪ Provision of written notice (ESERS)</li> <li>▪ Notices in native language</li> <li>▪ Interpreters at meeting</li> <li>▪ Independent evaluations</li> </ul>
Location, Referral and Identification (LRI)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Referral process</li> <li>▪ Pre-referral interventions</li> </ul>

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

Section	Areas Demonstrating Compliance
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Direct referrals</li> <li>▪ Identification meeting timelines</li> <li>▪ Identification meeting participants</li> </ul>
Evaluation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Multi-disciplinary evaluations</li> <li>▪ Standardized assessments</li> <li>▪ Functional assessment (ESERS)</li> <li>▪ Bilingual evaluations</li> <li>▪ Written reports prepared by evaluators</li> </ul>
Reevaluation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Reevaluation when change of eligibility is considered (ESERS)</li> <li>▪ Timelines (ESERS)</li> <li>▪ Planning meeting participants</li> <li>▪ Reevaluations prior to age 5</li> <li>▪ Procedures when parental consent cannot be obtained</li> <li>▪ Documentation of efforts to obtain parental consent</li> </ul>
Eligibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Meeting participants</li> <li>▪ Eligibility criteria</li> <li>▪ Statement of eligibility (Specific Learning Disability)</li> <li>▪ Signature of agreement and/or disagreement and rationale</li> <li>▪ Evaluation reports to parents (ESERS)</li> </ul>
Individualized Education Program (IEP)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ IEP meeting participants (ESLS)</li> <li>▪ IEP required considerations and components (ESERS)</li> <li>▪ Implementation dates</li> <li>▪ Meetings held annually, or more often if necessary, to review and/or revise the IEP</li> <li>▪ Annual reviews completed by June 30</li> <li>▪ Teachers informed of their responsibilities (knowledge of and/or access to IEPS)</li> <li>▪ 90-day timelines</li> </ul>



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

<b>Section</b>	<b>Area</b>	<b>Plan Is Sufficient</b>	<b>Plan Needs Revision</b>	<b>Implemented and the district has demonstrated compliance</b>
	<p><b>completion of these activities have not been met. The district needs to identify new timelines and include an administrative oversight component to ensure that speech evaluations include the educational impact statement.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li> <p><b>▪ Functional assessments (ESLS) – Evaluation reports do not include all parts of a functional assessment. The district’s improvement plan is insufficient to address this issue because timelines identified for completion of these activities have not been met. The district needs to identify new timelines and include an administrative oversight component to ensure that speech evaluations have all the parts of a functional assessment.</b></p> </li> </ul>		X	
Reevaluation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li> <p><b>▪ 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’s improvement plan is insufficient to address this issue because timelines identified for completion of these activities have not been met. The district needs to identify new timelines and include an administrative oversight component to ensure that reevaluation planning meetings are conducted for students prior to discharge from speech and language services.</b></p> </li> <li> <p><b>▪ Reevaluation timelines (ESLS) – Reevaluations are not conducted within three years of the previous classification, or sooner, if warranted. The district’s improvement plan is insufficient to address this issue because timelines identified for completion of these activities have</b></p> </li> </ul>		X	

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

Section	Area	Plan Is Sufficient	Plan Needs Revision	Implemented and the district has demonstrated compliance
	<p><b>not been met. The district needs to identify new timelines and include an administrative oversight component to ensure that reevaluations are conducted in a timely manner.</b></p>			
Eligibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Copies of evaluation reports to parents (ESLS) – Evaluation reports are not provided 10 days prior to eligibility meeting. <b>The district’s improvement plan is insufficient to address this issue because timelines identified for completion of these activities have not been met. The district needs to identify new timelines and include an administrative oversight to ensure that speech evaluations are provided to parents 10 days prior to the eligibility meeting.</b></li> </ul>		X	
IEP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Meeting participants (ESERS) – General education teachers are not present at IEP meetings for pre-school students with disabilities. <b>The district’s improvement plan is insufficient to address this issue because the district needs to include an administrative oversight to ensure that general education teachers are present at IEP meetings for preschool students.</b></li> <li>• IEP provided to parent prior to implementation.</li> <li>• IEP required considerations and components (ESLS) – IEPs do not contain “Parental Concerns for Enhancing the Education of Their Child.” The IEP form used by the district does not contain this component. <b>–The district’s improvement plan is insufficient to address this issue because the district needs to include an administrative oversight component to ensure that all required consideration and</b></li> </ul>		<p align="center">X</p> <p align="center">X</p>	<p align="center">X</p>

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

<b>Section</b>	<b>Area</b>	<b>Plan Is Sufficient</b>	<b>Plan Needs Revision</b>	<b>Implemented and the district has demonstrated compliance</b>
	<b>components are consistently included in the IEP.</b>			

***Additional Areas of Need***

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

<b>Section</b>	<b>Area</b>	<b>Activity</b>
LRI	Health summary and vision and hearing screenings – When a parent makes a direct referral to the child study team, health summary and vision and hearing screenings are not completed prior to the identification meeting.	The district is directed to revise the improvement plan to include activities to ensure that when a direct referral is made by the parent to the child study team, a health summary and vision and hearing screenings are completed prior to the identification meeting and results are forwarded to the team. These activities must include procedures, in-service training and an administrative oversight component to ensure the implementation of the plan.

# New Jersey Department of Education Special Education Monitoring

## *Summary*

On-site special education monitoring was conducted in the National Park School District on January 4 and January 9, 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 nearly all areas of need and develop an improvement plan that with some revisions will bring about systemic change. 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 indicates that during the 2004-2005 school year, the district educated 37.3% of students with disabilities (or 28 students) between the ages 6-21 in the general education setting for more than 80% of the school day. This is below the state average of 42% for that year. The majority of the district's students with disabilities, 42.7 % (or 32 students), were educated in general education classes 40-80% of the day. During that same year, two students received special education and related services in private day schools. Additionally, three of the district's four preschool age students with disabilities were educated in a special education early childhood setting in another school district and one preschool student attended a separate public school special education early childhood program. The district's classification rate was 18.98% in 2005 as compared to the state classification rate for that year of 14.85%.

During interviews conducted with parents by phone, parents expressed their satisfaction with the district's programs and services and staff.

Sections identified as consistently compliant by the district during self-assessment and verified during the on-site monitoring visit include:

- General Provisions
- Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE)
- Least Restrictive Environment (LRE)
- Transition to Preschool
- Discipline
- Statewide Assessment (SWA)
- Programs and Services

Sections not reviewed by the NJDOE because the district does not serve a population of students who would require these services include:

- Transition to Adult Life
- Graduation from High School

Areas within the remaining sections that were identified as consistently compliant by the district during self-assessment and verified during the on-site monitoring visit include:

- Consent
- Implementation without undue delay
- Provision of notice of meeting
- Content of notice of meeting
- Meetings
- Content of written notice (ESERS)



## New Jersey Department of Education Special Education Monitoring

- Provision of written notice (ESERS)
- Notices in native language
- Interpreters at meeting
- Independent evaluations
- Referral process
- Pre-referral interventions
- Direct referrals
- Identification meeting timelines
- Identification meeting participants
- Multi-disciplinary evaluations
- Standardized assessments
- Functional assessment (ESERS)
- Bilingual evaluations
- Written reports prepared by evaluators
- Reevaluation when change of eligibility is considered (ESERS)
- Timelines (ESERS)
- Planning meeting participants
- Reevaluations prior to age 5
- Procedures when parental consent cannot be obtained
- Documentation of efforts to obtain parental consent
- Eligibility meeting participants
- Eligibility criteria
- Statement of eligibility (Specific Learning Disability)
- Signature of agreement and/or disagreement and rationale
- Copies of evaluation reports to parents (ESERS)
- IEP meeting participants (ESLS)
- IEP required considerations and components (ESERS)
- Implementation dates
- 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

Areas of need originally identified by the district but determined to have been corrected prior to the on-site monitoring visit by the NJDOE include:

- Child Find
- IEP provided to parents prior to implementation

During the self-assessment process, the district identified areas of need regarding:

- Provision of written notice (ESLS)
- Content of written notice (ESLS)
- Educational impact statement (ESLS)
- Functional assessments (ESLS)
- Reevaluation when change of eligibility is considered (ESLS)
- Reevaluation timelines (ESLS)
- Copies of evaluation reports to parents (ESLS)
- IEP meeting participants (ESERS)
- IEP required consideration and components (ESLS)

The on-site visit identified areas of need within the various standards regarding:

- Health summary and vision and hearing screenings

Within 45 days of receipt of the monitoring report, the National Park School District will revise and resubmit the improvement plan to the OSEP to address those areas that require revisions.