

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

District: New Providence School District

County: Union

Monitoring Dates: April 18, 2006

Monitoring Team: Barbara J. Tucker and Robert Schweitzer

Background Information:

During the 2004-2005 school year, the New Providence School District conducted a self-assessment of policies, procedures, programs, services and student outcomes. This self-assessment component of the monitoring process provided the New Providence 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 New Providence School District developed an improvement plan to address identified areas of need.

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:

The New Providence School District serves students preschool through eighth grade. A review of the district's data for students with disabilities ages 3-21, reported in December 2005, indicates that a total of 12.99% of students enrolled were receiving special education and related services. This rate was below the state rate for that year of 14.85%. During the 2005-2006 school year, the district educated 49.1% of students with disabilities, ages 6 through 21, in general education settings for more than 80% of the school day as compared to the state rate of 42% for that year. During that same year, 11.1% of preschool students with disabilities, ages 3 to 5, were educated in a general education setting, compared to the state rate of 11.2%.

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Sections Demonstrating Compliance

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 onsite 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
- Statewide Assessment
- Free, Appropriate Public Education
- Graduation
- Reevaluation
- Programs & Services
- Transition to Preschool

Areas Demonstrating Compliance

The following areas, within the remaining 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.

Section	Areas Demonstrating Compliance
Procedural Safeguards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consent • Implementation without undue delay • Provision of notice of a meeting • Content of notice of a meeting • Meetings • Content of written notice • Notices in native language • Interpreters at meetings • Independent evaluations
Location, Referral and Identification (LRI)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Child Find Ages 3-21 • Referral process • Pre-referral interventions • Health summary • Vision and hearing screenings • Direct referrals • Identification meeting participants
Evaluation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Multi-disciplinary evaluations • Educational impact statement (ESLS) • Standardized assessments • Bilingual evaluations
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)

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Section	Areas Demonstrating Compliance
Individualized Education Program (IEP)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implementation dates • IEP required considerations and components • 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 for students exiting preschool • Teachers informed of their responsibilities (knowledge of and/or access to IEPs)
Least Restrictive Environment (LRE)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Documentation of LRE decisions • Opportunity for all students with disabilities to access all general education programs • Placement decisions based on students' individual needs
Transition to Adult Life	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Beginning at age 14, IEP statement of "transition service needs" • Beginning at age 16, IEP statement of "needed transition services" • Identification of post-secondary liaison • Student and agency invitation to IEP meetings
Discipline	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Notification of removal forwarded to case manager • Suspension tracking system • IEP team meeting for first removal beyond 10 days • Procedures for determination of change in placement • Short-term removals resulting in a change of placement • Short-term removals that are not a change in placement—school personnel determining the extent of services to be provided • Interim Alternative Educational Settings • Manifestation determinations

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Areas of Noncompliance - Improvement Plan Review

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

Section	Area of Non-Compliance	Compliance Review
Procedural Safeguards	Provision of written notice-The district identified an area of need regarding procedures to ensure that parents are provided written notice at the required times.	The district has demonstrated compliance in this area with an administrative oversight mechanism in place to ensure correction and ongoing compliance.
Location, Referral and Identification (LRI)	Identification meeting timelines-The district identified an area of need regarding conducting identification meetings within required timelines.	The district has demonstrated compliance in this area with an administrative oversight mechanism in place to ensure correction and ongoing compliance.
Evaluation	Functional assessments- The district identified an area of need regarding procedures for developing functional assessments.	The district has demonstrated compliance in this area with an administrative oversight mechanism in place to ensure correction and ongoing compliance.
Evaluation	Written reports prepared by evaluators- The district identified an area of need regarding procedures to develop written speech and language reports.	The district has demonstrated compliance in this area with an administrative oversight mechanism in place to ensure correction and ongoing compliance.
Eligibility	Copy of evaluation reports to parents-The district identified an area of need regarding the provision of evaluation reports to parents 10 days prior to the eligibility meeting.	The district has demonstrated compliance in this area with an administrative oversight mechanism in place to ensure correction and ongoing compliance.
Individualized Education Program (IEP)	Meeting participants-The district identified an area of need regarding the attendance of all required participants at meetings.	The district has demonstrated compliance in this area with an administrative oversight mechanism in place to ensure correction and ongoing compliance.
Individualized Education Program (IEP)	90-day timeline-The district identified an area of need regarding the completion of initial evaluations and implementation of IEPs within 90 days of parental consent to	The district has demonstrated compliance in this area with an administrative oversight mechanism in place to ensure correction and ongoing compliance.

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Section	Area of Non-Compliance	Compliance Review
	evaluate.	
Least Restrictive Environment (LRE)	Notification of and participation in non-academic and extra-curricular activities for students educated outside the district – The district identified the need to notify out-of-district students of non-academic and extracurricular activities.	The district has demonstrated compliance in this area with an administrative oversight mechanism in place to ensure correction and ongoing compliance.
Least Restrictive Environment (LRE)	Continuum of programs- The district identified a concern regarding the availability of a continuum of programs for language arts and math in grades K-6.	The district has demonstrated compliance in this area with an administrative oversight mechanism in place to ensure correction and ongoing compliance.
Transition to Adult Life	Activities, annual goals and benchmarks related to the student's desired outcomes- The district identified an area of need regarding the development of benchmarks related to the student's desired outcomes.	The district has demonstrated compliance in this area with an administrative oversight mechanism in place to ensure correction and ongoing compliance.
Discipline	Discipline procedures employed equitably for all students-The district identified an area of need regarding the development of written disciplinary procedures.	The district has demonstrated compliance in this area with an administrative oversight mechanism in place to ensure correction and ongoing compliance.
Discipline	Procedures for conducting functional behavioral assessments and development of behavior intervention plans-The district identified an area of need regarding a lack of procedures for conducting functional behavioral assessments, as appropriate.	The district has demonstrated compliance in this area with an administrative oversight mechanism in place to ensure correction and ongoing compliance.

No additional areas of need were identified during the monitoring process.

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Summary

On-site special education monitoring was conducted of the New Providence School District on April 18, 2006. The purpose 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 as part of the self-assessment process and the correction of all areas of need identified prior to the monitoring visit.

A review of the district's data for students with disabilities ages 3-21, reported in December 2005, indicates that a total of 12.99% of students enrolled were receiving special education and related services. This rate was below the state rate for that year of 14.85%. During the 2005-2006 school year, the district educated 49.1% of students with disabilities, ages 6 through 21, in general education settings for more than 80% of the school day as compared to the state rate of 42% for that year. During that same year, 11.1% of preschool students with disabilities, ages 3 to 5, were educated in a general education setting, compared to the state rate of 11.2%.

Parents were randomly selected and interviewed by phone. Parents expressed overwhelming support for the programs and services provide by the district and stated that they enjoy the communication between themselves and their child's case manager.

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

- General Provisions
- Free, Appropriate Public Education
- Reevaluation
- Transition to Preschool
- Statewide Assessment
- Graduation
- Programs and Services

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

- Consent
- Implementation without undue delay
- Provision of notice of meeting
- Content of notice of meeting
- Meetings
- Content of written notice
- Notices in native language
- Interpreters at meetings
- Independent evaluations
- Child find ages 3-21
- Referral process
- Pre-referral interventions
- Health summary
- Vision and hearing screenings
- Direct referrals
- Identification meeting participants
- Multidisciplinary evaluations
- Educational impact statement (ESLS)
- Standardized assessments
- Bilingual evaluations
- Eligibility criteria
- Signature of agreement and/or disagreement and rationale
- Statement of eligibility
- Eligibility meeting participants
- IEP required statements and considerations
- 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 for students exiting preschool

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- Teachers informed of their responsibilities
- Documentation of least restrictive environment (LRE) decisions
- Opportunity to access general education programs
- Placement decisions based on individual students' needs
- Beginning at age 14, IEP statement of transition service needs
- Beginning at age 16, IEP statement of needed transition services
- Identification of post-secondary liaison
- Student and agency invitation to IEP meetings
- Notification of removal forwarded to case manager
- Suspension tracking system
- IEP team meeting for first removal beyond 10 days
- Procedures for determination of change in placement
- Short-term removals resulting in a change in placement
- Short-term removals that are not a change in placement (school personnel determining the extent of services to be provided)
- Interim alternative educational settings
- Manifestation determination meetings

The following areas of need were originally identified by the district during self-assessment as non-compliant, but were found to be compliant by the NJDOE during the onsite monitoring visit:

- Provision of written notice
- Identification meeting timelines
- Functional assessments
- Written reports prepared by speech and language evaluators
- Copies of evaluation reports to parents
- IEP meeting participants
- Notification of and participation in non-academic and extracurricular activities for students educated outside the district
- 90-day timelines
- Continuum of programs
- Activities, annual goals and benchmarks related to students' desired outcomes
- Discipline procedures employed equitably for all students
- Procedures for conducting functional behavioral assessments

No additional areas of need were identified during the monitoring process. The improvement plan submitted by the district resulted in the correction of all areas of noncompliance. The district must conduct oversight activities to ensure ongoing compliance.