

Department of Education Special Education Monitoring

District: North Warren Regional School District

County: Warren

Monitoring Dates: May 22, 2006

Monitoring Team: Michelle Fenwick and Jenifer Spear

Background Information:

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

Based on a review of the data from the 2005-2006 school year, this 7-12th grade regional high school district maintained a 16% classification rate for students with disabilities, including those eligible for speech-language services, which is slightly below the state

**Department of Education
Special Education Monitoring**

rate of 16.8% for that same year. During the 2005-2006 school year, the district educated 56.4% of students with disabilities in the general education setting for more than 80% of the school day, which is above the state average of 42% for that same year.

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
- Reevaluation
- Eligibility
- Least Restrictive Environment (LRE)
- Transition to Adult Life
- Statewide Assessments
- Graduation
- Programs & Services

Sections Not Reviewed

The Transition to Preschool section was not reviewed since the district does not serve a population of students for whom these regulations apply.

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.

Section	Areas Demonstrating Compliance
Free, Appropriate Public Education (FAPE)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Oversight of individualized education program (IEP) implementation • Extended school year • Provision of programs
Procedural Safeguards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consent • Implementation without undue delay • Provision of notice of a meeting • Meetings • Content of notice of a meeting (ESERS) • Provision of written notice • Content of written notice • Notices in native language

**Department of Education
Special Education Monitoring**

Section	Areas Demonstrating Compliance
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 • Identification meeting timelines • Identification meeting participants
Evaluation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Multi-disciplinary evaluations • Educational impact statement (ESLS) • Standardized assessments • Bilingual evaluations • Written reports prepared by evaluators
Individualized Education Program (IEP)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 • 90-day timelines
Discipline	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Notification of removal forwarded to case manager • Suspension tracking system • Discipline procedures employed equitably for all students • 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

**Department of Education
Special Education Monitoring**

Areas of Noncompliance - Improvement Plan Review

The following areas were identified by the district’s self-assessment committee as noncompliant. An improvement plan was submitted and implemented by the district. Correction of noncompliance was verified during the on-site visit in all areas of need listed below. In addition, there is administrative oversight to ensure ongoing compliance.

Section	Area
Free, Appropriate Public Education (FAPE)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provision of related services -Services were not always provided at the time of IEP implementation due to an insufficient availability of service providers.[N.J.A.C. 6A:14-3.9(a)]
Location, Referral and Identification (LRI)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Direct referrals– Referrals to the CST by the speech-language specialist did not consistently have adequate documentation. [N.J.A.C. 6A:14-3.3(d)]
Evaluation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Functional assessments - The district identified that evaluation reports did not include all required components of a functional assessment.[N.J.A.C. 6A:14-3.4(d)2]
Individualized Education Program (IEP)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Meeting participants - The district identified that required IEP team members were not consistently present at IEP meetings. [N.J.A.C. 6A:14-2.3(i)2] IEP required considerations and components - The district identified that its IEP did not contain the required statements and components.[N.J.A.C. 6A:14-3.7(c-f)] Teachers informed of their responsibilities (knowledge and/or access)- Teachers were not consistently informed of their roles and responsibilities for implementing the IEP.[N.J.A.C. 6A:14-3.7(a)3]
Discipline	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Procedures for conducting functional behavioral assessment (FBA) and development of behavior intervention plan (BIP) - Documentation of procedures for conducting FBA and BIPs was not clearly defined. [N.J.A.C. 6A:14-Appendix A(k)1(B)]

Additional Area of Need

The area of content of notice of a meeting for students referred for speech-language evaluations was originally identified by the district’s self-assessment committee as compliant. The district corrected the area following the monitoring visit as verified by the County Office of Education.

Department of Education Special Education Monitoring

Summary

On-site special education monitoring was conducted in the North Warren Regional School District on May 22, 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 corrected noncompliance. The district is further acknowledged 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.

Based on a review of the data from the 2005-2006 school year, this 7-12th grade regional high school district maintained a 16% classification rate for students with disabilities, including those eligible for speech-language services, which is slightly below the state rate of 16.8% for that same year. During the 2005-2006 school year, the district educated 56.4% of students with disabilities in the general education setting for more than 80% of the school day, which is above the state average of 42% for that year.

During interviews conducted with parents by phone, many 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 included:

- General Provisions
- Reevaluation
- Eligibility
- Least Restrictive Environment (LRE)
- Transition to Adult Life
- Statewide Assessments
- Graduation
- Programs & Services

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

- Oversight of individualized education program (IEP) implementation
- Extended school year
- Provision of programs
- Consent
- Implementation without undue delay
- Content of notice of a meeting (ESERS)
- Provision of notice of a meeting
- Meetings
- Provision of written notice
- 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
- Identification meeting timelines
- Identification meeting participants
- Multi-disciplinary evaluations

Department of Education Special Education Monitoring

- Educational impact statement (ESLS)
- Standardized assessments
- Bilingual evaluations
- Written reports prepared by evaluators
- 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
- 90-day timelines
- Child study team participation in transition planning conferences
- Notification of removal forwarded to case manager
- Suspension tracking system
- Discipline procedures employed equitably for all students
- IEP team meeting for first removal beyond 10 days
- Procedures for determination of a 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

Areas of need originally identified by the district as noncompliant, but determined to have been correct prior to the on-site monitoring visit included:

- Provision of related services
- Direct referrals
- Functional assessments
- IEP required considerations and components
- Teachers informed of their responsibilities (knowledge of and/or access to IEPs)
- Procedures for conducting functional behavioral assessments and development of behavior intervention plans

An additional area of need was identified during the onsite monitoring process regarding content of notice of a meeting for parents of students eligible for speech and language services; however, the district submitted documentation of correction prior to the issuing of this report.

The improvement plan submitted to the OSEP has been approved and implemented. Correction of all areas of noncompliance has been verified. The district is expected to conduct oversight activities to ensure ongoing compliance with special education regulations.