

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

District: Ocean Township School District

County: Monmouth

Monitoring Dates: June 9, 2005

Monitoring Team: Vanessa Leonard

Background Information:

During the 2003-2004 school year, the Ocean Township School District conducted a self-assessment of policies, procedures, programs, services, and student outcomes. This self-assessment component of the monitoring process provided the Ocean Township 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 Ocean Township 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 Ocean Township Intermediate School, on June 1, 2005. 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. A representative sample of student records was also reviewed. Interviews were conducted with the district's special education administrators, general education and special education teachers, speech therapists and child study team members.

District Strengths:

High school students with learning disabilities collaborated with the co-op vocational program and received a grant for the Workplace Readiness Life Skills Training for Transitioning Future Workers Program. Students use a realistic, visual business simulation computer technology program. The students learn life skills, gain knowledge of business, merchandising and finance management.

New Jersey Department of Education Special Education Monitoring

Data Summary

Ocean Township School District had an enrollment rate of 4,503 students, with 531 students eligible for special needs and related services and 144 eligible for speech/language services for 2004. The classification rate was 11.79% for students eligible for special needs and related services. 59% of students ages 6-21 were included in the general education setting for more than 80% of the school day. This is 17.1% higher than the state average of 41.9% for 2004. 9.9% of students ages 3-5 were educated in the special education setting. This is 4.7% lower than the state average of 14.6% for 2004. The district has developed an improvement plan to create general education classes for students ages 3-5 for the 2005-2006 school year.

Areas Demonstrating Compliance With All Standards:

General Provisions, Reevaluation, Discipline, Statewide Assessment, Programs and Services and Student Records 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 compliance in the areas of extended school year, provision of programs, frequency/duration/location for related services, length of school day and year, facilities and certifications.

During the self-assessment process, the district identified concerns in the areas of hearing aids, goals and objectives for counseling and transfer students. The district's improvement plan is sufficient to address these areas.

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

Section III: Procedural Safeguards

Summary of Findings:

During self-assessment, the district accurately identified compliance in the areas of surrogate parents, consent, provision of written notice/notice of meetings, notices in native language, interpreters at meetings and independent evaluations.

During the self-assessment process, the district identified concerns in the area of content of written notice/notice of meetings. The district's improvement plan is sufficient to address this area.

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

New Jersey Department of Education Special Education Monitoring

Section IV: Location, Referral and Identification

Summary of Findings:

During self-assessment, the district accurately identified compliance in the areas of referral process, direct referrals, identification meetings and participants.

During the self-assessment process, the district identified concerns in the areas of child find, pre-referral interventions, health summaries, vision and hearing screenings, and identification timelines. The district's improvement plan is sufficient to address these areas.

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

Section V: Protection in Evaluation and Evaluation Procedures

Summary of Findings:

During self-assessment, the district accurately identified compliance in the areas of multidisciplinary reports for students eligible for special education and related services, standardized assessments, functional assessments, written reports signed and dated, bilingual evaluations and acceptance and rejection of reports.

During the self-assessment process, the district identified concerns in the area of multidisciplinary evaluations for students eligible for speech language 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 VII: Eligibility

Summary of Findings:

During self-assessment, the district accurately identified compliance in the areas of eligibility meetings and participants.

During the self-assessment process, the district identified concerns in the areas of criteria, statement of eligibility, signature of agreement/disagreement and evaluation reports to parents. The district's improvement plan is sufficient to address these areas of need.

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

New Jersey Department of Education Special Education Monitoring

Section VIII: Individualized Education Program (IEP)

Summary of Findings:

During self-assessment, the district accurately identified compliance in the areas of IEP meetings/participants, goals and objectives, age of majority, implementation dates, annual review timelines, 90 day timelines and teacher access/responsibility.

During the self-assessment process, the district identified concerns in the areas of considerations/required statements, Present Levels of Educational Performance and IEPs to staff/parents prior to implementation. The district's improvement plan is sufficient to address these areas.

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

Section IX: Least Restrictive Environment (LRE)

Summary of Findings:

During self-assessment, the district accurately identified compliance in the areas of considerations of supplementary aids and services and regular education.

During the self-assessment process, the district identified concerns in the areas of decision making process, LRE documentation, continuum of programs for students ages 3-5 and notification/participation of out-of-district nonacademic and extracurricular activities. The district's improvement plan is sufficient to address these areas.

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

Section X: Transition to Post-School

Summary of Findings:

During the self-assessment process, the district identified concerns in the areas of Transition Service Needs, preferences/interests survey/assessments, Needed Transition Services and student/agency invite. The district's improvement plan is sufficient to address these areas.

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 compliance in the areas of preschool transition planning conference and early intervention to preschool disabled by age 3.

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

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

Section XIII: Graduation

Summary of Findings:

During self-assessment, the district accurately identified compliance in the areas of IEP requirements and written notice of graduation.

During the self-assessment process, the district identified concerns in the areas of out-of-district participation. The district's improvement plan is sufficient to address these areas.

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

New Jersey Department of Education Special Education Monitoring

Summary

On-site special education monitoring was conducted in the Ocean Township School District on June 9, 2005. 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.

Twenty parents attended a focus group meeting held prior to the monitoring visit. Parents expressed their satisfaction with many of the district's programs and services. Many parents commented on the high quality of the district's preschool disabilities program. Several parents voiced concern with the district's transition planning for students age 14 and older. They felt that there was not enough emphasis put on transition planning. The district has developed an improvement plan to address transition services.

General Provisions, Reevaluation, Discipline, Statewide Assessment, Programs and Services and Student Records 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.

Areas identified as consistently compliant by the district during self-assessment and verified during the on-site monitoring visit included extended school year, provision of programs, frequency/duration/location for related services, length of school day/year, facilities, certifications, surrogate parents, consent, provision of notice of meetings/written notice, notices in native language, interpreters at meetings, independent evaluations, referral process, direct referrals, identification meetings/participants, multidisciplinary reports for students eligible for special education and related services, standardized assessments, functional assessments, written reports signed and dated, bilingual evaluations, acceptance and rejection of reports, eligibility meetings/participants, IEP meetings/participants, goals and objectives, age of majority, implementation dates, annual review timelines, 90 day timelines, teacher access/responsibility, considerations of supplementary aids and services, regular education, preschool transition planning conference, early intervention to preschool disabled by age 3, IEP requirements and written notice of graduation.

During the self-assessment process, the district identified areas of need regarding hearing aids, goals and objectives for counseling, transfer students, content of written notice/notice of meetings, child find, pre-referral interventions, health summaries, vision and hearing screenings, identification timelines, multidisciplinary evaluations for students eligible for speech language services, criteria, statement of eligibility, signature of agreement/disagreement, evaluation reports to parents, considerations/required statements, Present Levels of Educational Performance, IEPs to staff/parents prior to implementation, decision making process, LRE documentation, continuum of programs for students ages 3-5, notification/participation of out-of-district nonacademic and extracurricular activities, Transition Service Needs, preferences/interests survey/assessments, Needed Transition Service, student/agency invitation and out-of-district participation.

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

The improvement plan submitted to the New Jersey Department of Education in June of 2004 will be forwarded to the Director, Office of Special Education Programs for

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

approval. Verification of implementation of the improvement of will be conducted by the County Office of Education