

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

**District:** Oceanport Borough School District

**County:** Monmouth

**Monitoring Dates:** April 11, 2005 and June 9, 2005

**Monitoring Team:** Kim Murray, Nicole Buten

***Background Information:***

During the 2003-2004 school year, the Oceanport Borough School District conducted a self-assessment of policies, procedures, programs, services, and student outcomes. This self-assessment component of the monitoring process provided the Oceanport Borough 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 Oceanport Borough 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 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, building principals, general education and special education teachers, and child study team members.

**Data Summary:**

Including students receiving only speech-language services, the Oceanport Borough School District has had an average classification rate of 15.2% over the last three years. This is slightly below the state average of 16.57%. With regards to placing students in the least restrictive environment, Oceanport Borough School District placed 53.3% of classified students in general education for more than 80% of the day during the 2004-2005 school year. In addition, 36.7% of students were educated in general education for 40%-80% of the day.

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### **District Strengths:**

The district is commended for recognizing the importance of instructing general education students about acceptance and understanding differences. Students in grades 3, 5 and 7 participated in the “Changing Attitudes” program which teaches students about disabilities.

### ***Areas Demonstrating Compliance With All Standards:***

**General Provisions, Procedural Safeguards, Least Restrictive Environment, Transition and Statewide Assessment** 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 length of school day and year, provision of programs, extended school year, facilities and certifications.

During the self-assessment process, the district identified concerns in the areas of goals and objectives for related services and child study team review of records of transfer students. The improvement plan developed by the district is sufficient to address these areas of need.

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

### ***Section IV: Location, Referral and Identification***

#### **Summary of Findings:**

During self-assessment, the district accurately identified compliance in the areas of child find procedures, referral process, pre-referral interventions, direct referrals, participants at identification meetings and identification meeting timelines.

During the self-assessment process, the district identified concerns in the areas of health summary and vision and hearing screenings. The improvement plan developed by the district is sufficient to address these areas of need.

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

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### **Section V: Protection in Evaluation and Evaluation Procedures**

#### **Summary of Findings:**

During self-assessment, the district accurately identified compliance in the areas of multidisciplinary evaluations, standardized assessments, functional assessments, signed and dated written reports, bilingual evaluations and acceptance and rejection of outside reports.

During the self-assessment process, the district identified concerns in the areas of development of written reports by the speech therapist and conducting evaluations necessary to determine eligibility within a suspected disability category. The improvement plans developed by the district are sufficient to address these areas of need.

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

### **Section VI: Reevaluation**

#### **Summary of Finding:**

During the self-assessment process, the district identified compliance in the areas of 3-year timelines and planning meeting participants.

During the self-assessment process, the district identified concerns in the areas of revision to the IEP following a reevaluation and students receiving a reevaluation prior to exiting the preschool disabled program. The improvement plan submitted by the district is sufficient to address these areas of need.

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 meeting participants, eligibility criteria and statement of eligibility for students with specific learning disabilities.

During the self-assessment process, the district identified concerns in the areas of signatures of agreement or disagreement with eligibility determination and copies of evaluation reports to parents 10 days prior to the eligibility meeting. The improvement plan submitted by the district is sufficient to address these areas of need.

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

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**Section VIII: Individualized Education Program (IEP)**

**Summary of Findings:**

During self-assessment, the district accurately identified compliance in the areas of IEP meeting participants, statements of present levels of education performance, goals and objectives aligned with the core curriculum content standards and provision of copies of IEPs to parents.

During the self-assessment process, the district identified concerns in the areas of considerations and required statements, age of majority and annual review timelines. The improvement plan submitted by the district is sufficient to address these areas of need.

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

**Section XI: Discipline**

**Summary of Findings:**

No findings could be made in this area as the Oceanport Borough School District has not suspended any students eligible for special education and related services.

**Section XII: Graduation Requirements**

As Oceanport Borough is a k-8 district there are no findings in this area.

**Section XIV: Programs and Services**

**Summary of Findings:**

During self-assessment, the district accurately identified compliance in the areas of class sizes and age ranges, group sizes for speech therapy, home instruction and consultation time.

During the self-assessment process, the district identified a concern in the area of common planning time. The improvement plan developed by the district is sufficient to address this area of need.

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

**Section XV: Student Records**

**Summary of Findings:**

During self-assessment, the district accurately identified compliance in the areas of requests for access to records, access sheets and maintenance and destruction of student records.

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During the self-assessment process, the district identified a concern in the area of documentation of other locations of records. The improvement plan developed by the district is sufficient to address this area of need.

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

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## **Summary**

On-site special education monitoring was conducted in the Oceanport Borough School District on April 11, 2005 and 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. The district is commended for a thorough review conducted as part of the self-assessment and an improvement plan that addresses all areas of need identified as part of the process.

Parents reported that they are generally satisfied with the special education and related services being provided by the Oceanport Borough School District. Parents indicated that they are invited to IEP meetings, participate in the decision-making process and receive progress reports on a regular basis. Some concerns were voiced regarding teacher training and a lack of communication between teachers from grade to grade and the impact on students' performance.

General Provisions, Procedural Safeguards, Least Restrictive Environment, Transition and Statewide Assessment were determined to be areas demonstrating compliance with all standards 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 length of school day and year, provision of programs, extended school year, facilities, certifications, child find procedures, referral process, pre-referral interventions, direct referrals, participants at identification meetings, identification meeting timelines, multidisciplinary evaluations, standardized assessments, functional assessments, signed and dated written reports, bilingual evaluations, acceptance/rejection of outside reports, three-year timelines, planning meeting participants, eligibility meeting participants, eligibility criteria, statement of eligibility for specific learning disabled students, IEP meeting participants, statements of present levels of education performance, goals and objectives aligned with the core curriculum content standards, provision of copies of IEPs to parents, class sizes and age ranges, group sizes for speech therapy, home instruction, consultation time, requests for access to records, access sheets and maintenance and destruction of student records.

During the self-assessment process, the district identified areas of need regarding goals and objectives for related services, child study team review of records of transfer students, health summary, vision and hearing screenings, development of written reports by the speech therapist, conducting evaluations necessary to determine eligibility within a suspected disability category, revision to the IEP following a reevaluation, students receiving a reevaluation prior to exiting the preschool disabled program, signatures of agreement/disagreement with eligibility determination, copies of evaluation reports to parents 10 days prior to the eligibility meeting, considerations and required statements, age of majority, annual review timelines, common planning time and documentation of other locations of records.

The original improvement plan submitted to the Office of Special Education Programs will be reviewed for final approval. No revisions will be necessary. Verification of implementation of the plan will be conducted by the County Office of Education.