

Department of Education Special Education Monitoring

District: Ogdensburg School District

County: Sussex

Monitoring Dates: May 11, 2006

Monitoring Team: Michelle Fenwick and Jenifer Spear

Background Information:

During the 2004-2005 school year, the Ogdensburg School District conducted a self-assessment of policies, procedures, programs, services and student outcomes. This self-assessment component of the monitoring process provided the Ogdensburg 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 Ogdensburg 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 and parent intake information 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.

Data Summary:

In December 2005, the Ogdensburg School District, which serves students preschool through eighth grade, reported a classification rate of 15.7%, which was lower than the state average of 16.5% for that year. The district educated 42.9% of students with disabilities (24 of 56 students) in the general education setting for more than 80% of the school day which was higher than the state average of 41.9% for that year. An additional 50% of students with disabilities were educated in general education settings between 40 and 80% of the day (28 of 56 students). No students with disabilities were educated

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outside of the district. Five of the six preschool students with disabilities were educated in a special education setting.

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
- Procedural Safeguards
- Location, Referral, Identification
- Evaluation
- Reevaluation
- Eligibility
- Transition to Preschool
- Transition to Adult Life
- Discipline
- Statewide Assessments
- Graduation
- Programs & Services

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).

| 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 • Provision of related services |
| Individualized Education Program (IEP) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meeting participants • 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 transitioning from preschool and students transitioning from elementary to secondary programs • Teachers informed of their responsibilities (knowledge of and/or access to IEPs) • 90 day timelines |
| Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Notification of and participation in non-academic and extracurricular activities for students educated outside of the district |

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| Section | Areas Demonstrating Compliance |
|---------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Placement decisions based on students' individual needs • Opportunity for all students with disabilities to access all general education programs • Continuum of programs |

Area of Noncompliance - Improvement Plan Review

The following area was identified by the district's self-assessment committee as noncompliant; however, the district implemented the improvement plan and compliance in this area was verified during the monitoring visit.

| Section | Area |
|---------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| IEP | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IEP required considerations and components - The district identified that its IEP did not contain the required statements and components. |

No additional areas of need were identified during the onsite monitoring visit.

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Summary

On-site special education monitoring was conducted in the Ogdensburg School District on May 11, 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. 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.

In December 2005, the Ogdensburg School District, which serves students preschool through eighth grade, reported a classification rate of 15.7%, which was lower than the state average of 16.5% for that year. The district educated 42.9% of students with disabilities (24 of 56 students) in the general education setting for more than 80% of the school day which was higher than the state average of 41.9% for that year. An additional 50% of students with disabilities were educated in general education settings between 40 and 80% of the day (28 of 56 students). No students with disabilities were educated outside of the district. Five of the six preschool students with disabilities were educated in a special education setting.

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
- Procedural Safeguards
- Location, Referral, Identification (LRI)
- Evaluation
- Reevaluation
- Eligibility
- Transition to Preschool
- Transition to Adult Life
- Discipline
- Statewide Assessments
- Graduation
- Programs & Services

Areas identified as consistently compliant by the district during self-assessment and verified during the onsite monitoring visit include:

- Oversight of individualized education program (IEP) implementation
- Extended school year
- Provision of programs
- Provision of related services
- IEP meeting participants
- 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
- Teachers informed of their responsibilities (knowledge of and/or access to IEPs)
- 90 day timelines
- Notification of and participation in non-academic and extracurricular activities for students educated outside of the district
- Opportunity for all students with disabilities to access all general education programs

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- Continuum of programs
- Placement decisions based on students' individual needs

During the self-assessment process, the district identified an area of need regarding IEP required considerations and components; however, compliance in this area was verified during the onsite visit. The district must conduct oversight to ensure ongoing compliance.