

New Jersey Department of Education Special Education Monitoring

District: Passaic County Technical Institute

County: Passaic

Monitoring Dates: November 21 and 22, 2005

Monitoring Team: Jenifer Spear, Tracey Pettiford-Bugg and Michelle Fenwick

Background Information:

During the 2004-2005 school year, the Passaic County Technical Institute conducted a self-assessment of policies, procedures, programs, services and student outcomes. This self-assessment component of the monitoring process provided the Passaic County Technical Institute 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 Passaic County Technical Institute 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 monitoring 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 and child study team members. Parents of students with disabilities were interviewed by phone.

Data Summary:

A review of the school's placement data indicates that in 2004, 33.8% of students with disabilities were educated in the general education setting for more than 80% of the school day. While this rate was below the state average for that year, and percentages for 2002 and 2003 were also below the state averages, comparisons must be made with caution since the district draws students with disabilities from many districts for their specialized programs. For the 2004-2005 school year, a total of 49.3% of students with disabilities participated in general education settings between 40 and 80% of the day. This rate was well above the state average for that year. Students who attend the Passaic County Technical Institute receive their academic subjects in general and/or special education settings, but receive their technical training in the general education setting or within the community. Students are given additional opportunities to be

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

educated with their nondisabled peers by participating in vocational and community-based employment programs.

The percentages of students attending the district who were classified in 2004, 2003 and 2002, were 17.46%, 18.11% and 17.68% respectively. Although these figures are above the state averages for those years, it should be noted that Passaic County Technical Institute reserves 20% of their enrollment for students with disabilities to ensure access to their programs for students from across the county and surrounding areas.

Areas and Standards not Applicable:

Transition to preschool was not reviewed by the New Jersey Department of Education (NJDOE) because the district does not serve a population of students for which the NJDOE would require these services.

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 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; Transition to Adult Life; Statewide Assessment; Graduation and Programs and Services.

Areas Demonstrating Compliance

The following areas were identified by the district’s self-assessment committee and by the NJDOE as compliant. These areas were reviewed for both students eligible for special education and related services (ESERS) and students eligible for speech-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 ▪ Transfer procedures
Procedural Safeguards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Consent ▪ Implementation without undue delay ▪ Meetings ▪ Provision of written notice ▪ Content of written notice ▪ Notices in native language ▪ Interpreters at meeting ▪ Independent evaluations

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

Section	Areas Demonstrating Compliance
Location, Referral and Identification (LRI)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Direct Referrals ▪ Identification meeting timelines ▪ Identification meeting participants
Evaluation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Multi-disciplinary evaluations ▪ Standardized assessments ▪ Functional assessments ▪ Bilingual evaluations ▪ Written reports prepared by evaluators
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 ▪ 90-day timelines
Discipline	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Notification of removal forwarded to case manager ▪ Discipline procedures employed equitably for all students

**New Jersey 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. The district must revise the improvement plan for any area where there is an ‘X’ in the ‘Needs Revision’ column.

Section	Area	Improvement Plan Review		
		Sufficient	Needs Revision	Implemented and the district has demonstrated compliance
FAPE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Provision of Related Service – Speech services begin after October and terminate before June. 	X		
Procedural Safeguards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Content of Notice of a Meeting – When transition will be discussed, notices do not indicate that purpose. ▪ Provision of Notice of a Meeting – Notice is not provided to students when transition is being discussed at meetings. 	X X		
LRI	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Child Find ages 3-21 – Efforts to locate and refer students are not expansive enough and do not include all requirements for locating migrant and homeless students. ▪ Referral Process – In-service must be provided to staff. ▪ Pre-referral Interventions – The district identified that procedures do not include timelines for review of interventions. ▪ Health Summary – No procedure is in place to document required health information. ▪ Vision and Hearing Screening - No procedure is in place to document required information regarding vision and hearing information. 	X X X		X X
Evaluation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Educational Impact Statement – No procedure is in place to document teacher information regarding the educational impact of a potential speech disability. 	X		
IEP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individualized Education Program considerations and components – Case managers are inappropriately indicating “not applicable” on the IEP. • Teachers Informed of Their Responsibility - No procedure is in place to document in writing that teachers have been made aware of their responsibilities. 			X X

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

Additional Areas of Need

The following area was originally identified by the district's self-assessment committee as compliant but was found to be noncompliant by the NJDOE during the on-site monitoring.

Section	Area	Activity
Discipline	<p>The district lacks comprehensive discipline procedures. The following components are not addressed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Suspension tracking • IEP meeting for first removal beyond ten days • Procedures for determination of change of placement • Procedures for conducting functional behavior assessments and behavior intervention programs • 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 alternate educational settings • Manifestation determination meetings 	<p>The district is directed to revise the improvement plan to include activities to ensure that discipline procedures are implemented according to state and federal regulations. These activities must include procedures, in-service training and oversight to ensure that discipline procedures are properly implemented and students are afforded programs and procedural safeguards aligned with state and federal regulations.</p>

New Jersey Department of Education Special Education Monitoring

Summary

On-site special education monitoring was conducted in the Passaic County Technical Institute on November 21 and 22, 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 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 will bring about systemic change. The district is further commended 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.

A review of the district's placement data indicates that in 2004, 33.8% of students with disabilities were educated in the general education setting for more than 80% of the school day. While this rate was below the state average for that year, and percentages for 2002 and 2003 were also below the state averages, comparisons must be made with caution since the district draws students with disabilities from many districts for their specialized programs for students with disabilities. For the 2004-2005 school year, a total of 49.3% of students with disabilities participated in general education settings between 40 and 80% of the day. This rate was well above the state average for that year. Students who attend the Passaic County Technical Institute receive their academic subjects in general and/or special education settings, but receive their technical training in the general education setting or within the community. Students are given additional opportunities to be educated with their nondisabled peers by participating in vocational and community-based employment programs.

The percentages of students attending the district who were classified in 2004, 2003 and 2002, were 17.46%, 18.11% and 17.68% respectively. Although these figures are above the state averages for those years, it should be noted that Passaic County Technical Institute reserves 20% of their enrollment for students with disabilities to ensure access to their programs for students from across the county and surrounding areas.

During interviews conducted with parents by phone, many parents expressed their satisfaction with the district's varied programs and services. Parents were most pleased with the vocational opportunities and training afforded to students who would not otherwise receive the extensive training to meet post-secondary goals from their sending district.

Standards 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, Transition to Adult Life, Statewide Assessment, Graduation and Programs and 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, transfer procedures, consent, implementation without undue delay, meetings, provision of written notice, content of written notice, notices in native language, interpreters at meeting, independent evaluations, direct referrals, identification meeting timelines, identification meeting participants, multi-disciplinary evaluations, standardized assessments, functional assessments, bilingual evaluations, written reports prepared by evaluators, IEP meeting participants, implementation dates, IEP provided to parent prior to

New Jersey Department of Education Special Education Monitoring

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, documentation of disciplinary action to case managers and discipline procedures employed equitably for all students.

During the self-assessment process, the district identified areas of need regarding provision of related services, content of notice of a meeting, provision of notice of a meeting, Child Find ages 3-21, health summary, vision and hearing screening and educational impact statement.

Areas of need originally identified by the district but determined to have been corrected prior to the on-site monitoring visit by the NJDOE include referral process, pre-referral interventions, IEP required considerations and statements and informing teachers of responsibility for implementing IEPs.

The on-site visit identified an additional area of need within the various standards, regarding discipline procedures.

Within 45 days of receipt of the monitoring report, the Passaic County Technical Institute will revise and resubmit the improvement plan to the Office of Special Education Programs to address the area that requires revision.