

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

District: Randolph Township School District

County: Morris

Monitoring Dates: April 2, 3 and 4, 2002

Monitoring Team: Gladys Miller, Damen Cooper, Michael J. Lee, Zola Mills and Janet Wright

Background Information:

During the 2000 – 2001 school year, the Randolph 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 Randolph Township School District with an opportunity to evaluate its 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 Randolph Township School District developed an improvement plan to address identified areas of need.

The Office of Special Education Programs conducted an on-site monitoring to verify the self-assessment findings, determine the appropriateness of the improvement plan, and determine the progress in implementing the plan.

As the first step in the on-site monitoring process, the NJDOE held a focus group meeting for parents and community members at the school on March 26, 2002. Information obtained from that meeting was used to direct the focus of the monitoring visit.

During the on-site, 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, including a representative sample of student records. Interviews were conducted with the district's special education administrators, building principals, general education and special education teachers, and child study team members.

District Strengths:

The district is commended for the collegial environment between special education and general education teachers. In addition, the district is commended for activities that

New Jersey Department of Education Special Education Monitoring

support transition from elementary to middle school and from middle school to high school.

To foster cooperation, problem solving, leadership and peer relationships, all freshman participate in outdoor orientation activities with seniors and high school staff prior to entering the high school.

The REAL program assists students in the district to find hidden interests/talents through exploration and projects in theme-related topics and interest categories. The Renaissance program acknowledges faculty/student achievement and creates a positive school environment. The district also provides guidance counselors at all levels. As a result, these counselors are able to address social/emotional issues through programs such as the "lunch buddies" program. The district also provides family math and science programs in the evenings to promote parent/child interaction.

The district offers a variety of course selections and electives for all students within the area of the art, music and foreign languages programs.

The district is also commended for its support of the Parent of Exceptional Children organization.

Areas Demonstrating Compliance With All Standards:

Reevaluation 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.

Area of Noncompliance Resulting from Documentation Issues:

Although it has been determined the district has appropriately implemented specific procedures, the following area is noncompliant because the district has not consistently documented these activities:

Area of Need:

Copy of Evaluation Reports to Parents - Although copies of evaluation reports are being sent ten days prior to the meeting, documentation is not consistently maintained in the student file.

- **The district will revise its improvement plan to include procedures to ensure it documents the activities it conducts to provide copies of evaluation reports to parents. The plan must include an administrative oversight component to ensure consistent implementation of these procedures.**

I. General Provisions

Summary of Findings:

New Jersey Department of Education Special Education Monitoring

During self-assessment the district accurately identified themselves compliant in the area of dissemination of IDEA information.

During the self-assessment process, the district identified concerns in the areas of policies/procedures and professional/parent development. The district's improvement plan is sufficient to address the area of policies/procedures. The district's improvement plan is insufficient to address the area of professional/parent development because it lacks a mechanism to determine the effectiveness of the in-service training. The plan needs to be revised to include this component.

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

II. F.A.P.E.

Summary of Findings:

During self-assessment the district accurately identified themselves compliant in the areas of extended school year, related services, length of school year/day, transfer students and certification.

During the self-assessment process, the district identified a concern with related services for out-of-district students and facilities for related services in district. The district's improvement plan is sufficient to address facilities. The district's improvement plan is insufficient to address related services because it lacks an administrative oversight component to ensure implementation of the procedures. The plan needs to be revised to include this component.

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

III. Procedural Safeguards

Summary of Findings:

During self-assessment the district accurately identified themselves compliant in the areas of consent, notices of meetings, written notices, meetings and independent evaluations.

During the self-assessment process, the district identified concerns in the areas of surrogate parents and native language. The district's improvement plan is sufficient to address these areas of need.

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

IV. Location, Referral, Identification

Summary of Findings:

During self-assessment the district accurately identified themselves compliant in the areas of direct referrals, summer referrals, vision/hearing screenings and identification meeting participants and timelines.

New Jersey Department of Education Special Education Monitoring

During the self-assessment process, the district identified a concern in the areas of referral process and health summary. The district's improvement plan is insufficient to address these areas of need because it lacks a mechanism to determine the effectiveness of the in-service training. The plan needs to be revised to include this component.

An additional area of need was identified during the on-site visit regarding Child Find.

Area of Need:

Child Find – During the on-site visit it was determined the district's child find activities are limited to preschool aged students.

- **The district will revise its improvement plan to include procedures to ensure that Child Find activities include students between the ages of three and twenty-one, including migrant and homeless children. The plan must include an administrative oversight component to ensure implementation of the procedures.**

V. Evaluation

Summary of Findings:

During self-assessment the district accurately identified themselves compliant in the areas of multi-disciplinary and standardized assessments, written reports, bilingual evaluations and acceptance or rejection of reports.

During the self-assessment process, the district identified a concern regarding functional assessments and racially and culturally biased evaluative measures. The district's improvement plan is sufficient to address these areas. During the on-site visit, it was determined the district has already implemented activities to address these issues.

An additional area of need was identified during the on-site visit regarding written reports for speech language services.

Area of Need:

Written reports for speech language – During the on-site visit, a review of reports indicated speech language reports contained statements regarding eligibility determinations.

- **The district will revise its improvement plan to include procedures to ensure speech-language reports do not include statements regarding eligibility determinations that may only be made by a duly constituted IEP team. The plan must include in-service and an administrative oversight component to ensure the consistent, compliant implementation of the procedures.**

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

VII. Eligibility

Summary of Findings:

During self-assessment, the district accurately identified themselves compliant in the areas of meetings, participants and criteria.

During the self-assessment process the district identified concerns with the statement of eligibility. The district's improvement plan is sufficient to address this area. During the on-site, it was determined the district has already implemented the plan and this area has been corrected.

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

VIII. IEP

Summary of Findings:

During self-assessment the district accurately identified themselves compliant in the areas of participants and implementation dates, goals and objectives aligned with core curriculum content standards and age of majority.

During the self-assessment process, the district identified concerns in the areas of considerations/required statements, annual review and ninety-day timelines, and teacher access/responsibility. The district's improvement plan is sufficient to address the areas of considerations/required statements, annual review and ninety-day timelines. The district's improvement plan is insufficient to address teacher knowledge because it lacks a mechanism to determine the effectiveness of in-service training. The plan needs to be revised to include this component.

An additional area of need was identified during the on-site monitoring visit regarding location of related services.

Area of Need:

Location of Related Services – During the on-site, a review of IEPs indicated that although the IEP format identifies frequency and duration of related services, it does not identify the location.

- **The district will revise its improvement plan to include procedures to ensure IEPs identify the location of the provision of related services. The improvement plan must include an administrative oversight component to ensure the consistent implementation of the procedures.**

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

IX. LRE

Summary of Findings:

During self-assessment the district accurately identified themselves compliant in the areas of individualized decision making, Oberti factors, considerations/documentation and nonacademic/extracurricular participation.

During the self-assessment process, the district identified concerns in the areas of use of supplemental aids and services, regular education access and continuum. The district's improvement plan is insufficient to address these areas of need because it lacks in-service training and a mechanism to determine the effectiveness of the training. The plan needs to be revised to include these components.

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

X. Transition

Summary of Findings:

During self-assessment the district accurately identified themselves compliant in the areas of pre-school transition planning conference, early intervention program to pre-school disabled by age three, age fourteen preferences/interests and needed transition services at age sixteen.

During the self-assessment process the district identified concerns regarding age fourteen transition courses of study, agency involvement and student/agency invitations. The district's improvement plan is sufficient to address these areas of concern.

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

XI. Discipline

Summary of Findings:

During self-assessment the district accurately identified themselves compliant in the areas of procedures, suspension tracking, behavioral intervention plans/functional behavioral assessments (BIP/FBA), manifestation determinations and interim alternative educational setting (IAES).

During the self-assessment process the district identified a concern regarding documentation to case manager. The district's self improvement plan is sufficient to address this area of need.

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

New Jersey Department of Education Special Education Monitoring

XII. Graduation

Summary of findings:

During self-assessment the district accurately identified themselves compliant in the areas of IEP requirements, choice of diploma, out-of-district participation and written notice of graduation for in-district students.

An area of need was identified during the on-site visit regarding written notice of graduation for out-of-district students.

Areas of Need:

Written notice of graduation for out-of-district students – During the on-site, a review of records indicated the district is not providing notice of graduation to students placed in out-of-district placements.

- **The district will revise its improvement plan to include procedures to ensure students in out-of-district placements receive written notice of graduation. The plan must include an administrative oversight component to ensure implementation of the procedures.**

XIV. Programs and Services

Summary of Findings:

During self-assessment the district accurately identified themselves compliant in the areas of class size waivers, age range waivers, group sizes for speech and home instruction approvals.

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

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

XV. Student Records

Summary of Findings:

During self-assessment the district accurately identified themselves compliant in the areas of access sheets, maintenance and destruction of records.

During the self-assessment process the district identified an area of need regarding parent/adult student access to records. The district's improvement plan is insufficient to address this area of need because it lacks procedures to bring about the required changes. The plan needs to be revised to include these procedures.

An additional area of need was identified during the on-site regarding documentation of other locations.

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

Area of Need:

Documentation of other locations - During the on-site visit interviews and record review indicated that the district does not identify the location of other records maintained by the district in the central file.

- **The district will revise its improvement plan to include procedures to ensure that central files identify the locations of other student records maintained by the district.**

New Jersey Department of Education Special Education Monitoring

Summary

On-site special education monitoring was conducted in the Randolph Township Public School District on April 2, 3 and 4, 2002. 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 exceptionally comprehensive review conducted during the self-assessment process. As a result of this review the district was able to identify nearly all areas of need and develop an improvement plan that with some revision, will be sufficient to bring about systemic change. The district is further commended for the prompt implementation of corrective action to address some of the areas of need identified during the self-assessment process. The district is also commended for the many areas that were determined by the district and verified by the Office of Special Education Programs as compliant with federal and state statutes and regulations.

At a focus group meeting held prior to the monitoring visit, parents expressed their satisfaction with many of the district's programs and services. Although some parents shared concerns regarding least restrictive environment issues, they generally felt that the teachers and school staff were very supportive of their children. Many of the other concerns raised by the parents during the focus group meeting had already been identified by the district during the self-assessment process.

Areas identified as consistently compliant by the district during self-assessment and verified during the on-site monitoring visit included dissemination of IDEA information, extended school year, provision of related services, length of school year/day, transfer students, certifications, consent, notices of meetings, written notice, holding of meetings, independent evaluations, direct referrals (parent/staff), summer referrals, vision and hearing screenings, participants and timelines for identification meeting, multi-disciplinary and standardized assessments, written reports (ESERS), bilingual evaluations, acceptance/rejection of reports, reevaluation, eligibility meetings and participants, criteria, IEP participants, implementation dates, goals and objectives aligned with core curriculum content standards, age of majority, individualized decision making, Oberti factors, considerations and documentation, nonacademic and extracurricular participation, preschool transition planning conference, early intervention to preschool disabled by age three, age fourteen transition preferences and interests, age sixteen needed transition service needs, discipline procedures, documentation, suspension tracking, BIP/FBA, manifestation determinations, Interim Alternative Educational Setting, participation in statewide assessment, IEP documentation, alternate proficiency assessment, graduation IEP requirements, diploma, participation, written notice for in district students, programs and services, access sheets, maintenance and destruction of student records.

During the self-assessment process, the district identified areas of need regarding policies and procedures, professional/parent development, facilities, related services for out of district students, surrogate parents, native language, referral processes, health summaries, functional assessments, statement of eligibility, annual review and ninety-day timelines, teacher knowledge/access, supplementary aids and services, continuum, regular education access, student/agency invite, agency involvement in transition, age fourteen transition courses, documentation to case manager and parent/adult student access to student records.

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

The on-site visit identified additional areas of need within the various standards regarding Child Find, written reports, approved accommodations/modifications, written notice of graduation and documentation of locations.

Within forty-five days of receipt of the monitoring report, the district will revise and resubmit the improvement plan to the Office of Special Education Programs to address the areas of need identified during the on-site visit and those areas that require revisions to the improvement plan.