

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

**District:** Readington Township School District

**County:** Hunterdon

**Monitoring Dates:** May 8, 2003

**Monitoring Team:** Michelle Davis, Barbara Tucker, Kimberly Murray,  
Deborah Masarsky and Stephen Coplin

***Background Information:***

During the 2001–2002 school year, the Readington 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 Readington 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 Readington 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 Readington Middle School on May 1, 2003. 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, 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, speech therapists and child study team members.

**District Strength:**

Each fall all middle school students are invited to audition for parts in the **Middle School Musical Production** that is performed for parents, students, staff and members of the Readington community each spring. This activity promotes interaction between students

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

with disabilities and their nondisabled peers in a nonacademic setting and serves to foster higher levels of self-esteem and self-confidence in all students.

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

**Eligibility, Discipline, Statewide Assessment, Graduation 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 I: General Provisions***

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

During self-assessment the district accurately identified themselves compliant in the areas of policies and procedures, parent training and dissemination of IDEA information.

During the self-assessment process, the district identified a concern in the area of staff in-service training. **The district's improvement plan is insufficient to address this area of need because it lacks a mechanism to determine the effectiveness of the in-service training and an administrative oversight component to ensure implementation of the procedures. The plan needs to be revised to include these elements.**

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

### ***Section II: Free, Appropriate Public Education (FAPE)***

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

During self-assessment the district accurately identified themselves compliant in the areas of goals and objectives and frequency/duration/location of related services, length of school day/year, transfer students, facilities and certifications.

During the self-assessment process, the district identified concerns in the areas of adaptive physical education, extended school year, the provision of related services and goals and objectives for counseling. The district's improvement plan is sufficient to address these areas of need. During the on-site visit, a review of records and staff interviews indicated that the district has appropriately implemented specific activities to ensure compliance in these areas.

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 themselves compliant in the areas of selection and training of surrogate parents, consent, content/provision of written notice, interpreters at meetings and independent evaluations.

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

During the self-assessment process, the district identified a concern in the area of provision/content of notice of meetings for students eligible for speech/language services. The district has developed an improvement plan that sufficiently addresses this area of need. During the on-site visit, a review of records and staff interviews indicated that the district has appropriately implemented specific activities to ensure compliance in this area. Additionally, the district identified a concern in the area of notices in native language. The district has developed an improvement plan that sufficiently addresses this area 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 themselves compliant in the areas of child find, pre-referral interventions, direct referral from parents and staff, health summaries, vision and hearing screenings and identification meeting participants.

During the self-assessment process, the district identified a concern in the area of referral process. The district's improvement plan is sufficient to address this area of need. During the on-site visit, a review of records and staff interviews indicated that the district has appropriately implemented specific activities to ensure compliance in this area. Additionally, the district identified a concern in the area of identification meeting timelines. 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.

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

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

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

During the self-assessment process, the district identified concerns in the areas of signed/dated written reports and functional assessments for students eligible for speech/language services. The district's improvement plan is sufficient to address these areas of need. During the on-site visit, a review of records and staff interviews indicated that the district has appropriately implemented specific activities to bring about correction in these areas.

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

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

**Section VI:   Reevaluation**

**Summary of Finding:**

During self-assessment the district accurately identified themselves compliant in the area of reevaluation meeting participants.

During the self-assessment process, the district identified concerns in the areas of three-year reevaluation meeting timelines, planning meetings and reevaluations completed by June 30<sup>th</sup> of a student's last year in preschool and undue delay for reevaluations when requested. 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.

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

**Summary of Findings:**

During self-assessment the district accurately identified themselves compliant in the areas of IEP meeting participants, present levels of educational performance statements, goals/objectives aligned with core curriculum content standards, age of majority, IEPs to parents and teacher access/responsibility.

During the self-assessment process, the district identified a concern in the area of considerations and required statements for students eligible for speech/language services. The district's improvement plan is sufficient to address this area of need. During the on-site visit, a review of records and staff interviews indicated that the district has appropriately implemented specific activities to bring about compliance in this area. Additionally, the district identified concerns in the areas of 90-day timelines, annual review timelines and IEP implementation dates for student eligible for speech/language services. 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.

**Section IX:   Least Restrictive Environment (LRE)**

**Summary of Findings:**

During self-assessment the district accurately identified themselves compliant in the areas of decision-making process, documentation of least restrictive environment, consideration of supplementary aides and services and continuum of programs.

During the self-assessment process, the district identified concerns in the areas of access to regular education and notification/participation of out-of-district students in nonacademic and extracurricular activities. The district's improvement plan is sufficient to address these areas of need. During the on-site visit, a review of records and staff interviews indicated that the district has appropriately implemented specific activities to bring about correction in these areas.

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

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

**Section X: Transition to Post-School**

**Summary of Findings:**

During self-assessment the district accurately identified themselves compliant in the areas of statement of "Transition Service Needs" and preferences/interests surveys and assessments.

No 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 themselves compliant in the area of preschool transition planning conference.

During the self-assessment process, the district identified a concern in the area of early intervention program to pre-school disabled by age three. 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.

**Section 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 therapy, home instruction and consultation time for teachers.

During the self-assessment process, the district identified concerns in the areas of sufficient staff to complete child study team responsibilities, apportioned amount of time for case management duties and early childhood programs in a nonsectarian setting. 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

## Summary

On-site special education monitoring was conducted in the Readington Township School District on May 8, 2003. 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 exceptionally comprehensive review conducted during the self-assessment process. As a result of this review the district was able to identify all areas of need and develop an improvement plan that with a minor revision will be sufficient to bring about systemic change. The district is further commended for the prompt implementation of corrective action to address the areas of need identified during the self assessment process. As a result, many of those identified areas were corrected prior to the on-site visit. Additionally, the district is 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.

Eight parents attended a focus group meeting held prior to the monitoring visit on May 1, 2003. Parents expressed their satisfaction with many of the programs and services provided by the district including in-class support, out-of-district placements, and the provision of related services. Parents also stated that they feel the district ensures parental participation in the decision-making process and development of the IEP. Parents expressed concerns regarding the district's intention to reduce the in-class support programs from 90 minute sessions to 45 minute sessions.

Areas identified as consistently compliant by the district during self-assessment and verified during the on-site monitoring visit included policies and procedures, parent training, dissemination of IDEA information, goals/objectives and frequency/duration/location of related services, length of school day/year, transfer students, facilities, certifications, selection and training of surrogate parents, consent, content/provision of written notice, interpreters at meetings, independent evaluations, child find, pre-referral interventions, direct referral from parents and staff, health summaries, vision and hearing screenings, identification meeting participants, multi-disciplinary evaluations, standardized assessments, bilingual evaluations, acceptance/rejection of evaluation reports, three-year reevaluation meeting participants, IEP meeting participants, present levels of educational performance statements, goals/objectives aligned with core curriculum content standards, age of majority, IEPs to parents, teacher access/responsibility, decision-making process, documentation of least restrictive environment, consideration of supplementary aides and services, continuum of programs, statement of "Transition Service Needs", preferences/interests surveys/assessments, preschool transition planning conference, class size/waivers, age range/waivers, group sizes for speech therapy, home instruction and consultation time for teachers.

During the self-assessment process, the district identified areas of need regarding staff in-service training, adaptive physical education, extended school year, the provision of related services, goals and objectives for counseling, provision/content of notice of meetings for students eligible for speech/language services, notices in native language, referral process, identification meeting timelines, referrals for students eligible for speech/language services, signed/dated written reports, functional assessments for students eligible for speech/language services, three-year reevaluation timelines, planning meetings and reevaluations completed by June 30<sup>th</sup> of students' last year in preschool, undue delay for reevaluations when requested, considerations and required statements for students eligible for speech/language services, 90-day timelines, annual

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

review timelines, IEP implementation dates for student eligible for speech/language services, access to regular education, notification/participation of out-of-district students in nonacademic and extracurricular activities, early intervention program to pre-school disabled by age three, sufficient staff to complete child study team responsibilities, apportioned amount of time for case management duties and early childhood programs in a nonsectarian agency.

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

Within forty-five days of receipt of the monitoring report, the Readington Township School District will revise and resubmit the improvement plan to the Office of Special Education Programs to address those areas that require revisions.