

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

District: Red Bank Borough

County: Monmouth

Monitoring Dates: March 4, 5, 2001

Monitoring Team: Georgianna Parlacoski & Roberta Friedman

Background Information:

During the 2000-2001 school year, the Red Bank 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 Red Bank Borough 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 Red Bank Borough 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 on February 27, 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, speech therapist and child study team members.

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District Strengths:

Parents in Partnership- The district conducts monthly meetings for parents of special education students entitled “Parents in Partnership.” The purpose of these meetings is to provide parents with an opportunity to address any questions or concerns about their children’s education with the case managers. Additionally, these meetings afford parents the opportunity to participate in discussion groups about any relevant topics in special education. At times, guest speakers may facilitate these meetings.

Areas Demonstrating Compliance With All Standards:

General Provisions and Statewide Assessments 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: F.A.P.E.

Summary of Findings:

During self-assessment, the district accurately identified themselves compliant in the areas of frequency, duration and location of related services, facilities, certification and length of school day.

During the self-assessment process, the district identified concerns regarding transportation for students in out-of-district placements, extended school year, goals and objectives of related services and provision of related services. The district has developed an improvement plan that does not sufficiently address these areas of need because it lacks procedures, in-service and an administrative oversight component to bring about the required changes. The plan must be revised to include these elements. The district further identified concerns regarding transfer students. The district has developed an improvement plan that is sufficient to address this area of need.

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 components of notices, consent for evaluations, implementation of the IEP and all meeting participants.

During the self-assessment process, the district identified concerns regarding the provision of written notice for students eligible for special education and related services, 15 and 20-day timelines, native language and independent evaluations. The district has developed an improvement plan that does not sufficiently address these areas of need

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because it lacks procedures and an administrative oversight component to bring about the required changes. The plan must be revised to include these elements. The district further identified concerns regarding surrogate parents, components of notice of a meeting, securing parental participation and the provision of procedural safeguards to parents. The district has developed an improvement plan that is sufficient to address these areas of need.

An additional area of need was identified during the on-site visit regarding the provision of notices for students eligible for speech and language services.

Provision of Notices - During the on-site monitoring, it was determined through record review and staff interviews that notices for students eligible for speech and language services were not consistently provided.

- **The district will revise the improvement plan to include procedures to ensure the district provides notices to parents of students determined eligible for speech and language services. The improvement plan must include a mechanism to document these provisions and an administrative oversight component to ensure the implementation of the procedures.**

Section IV: Location, Referral, Identification

Summary of Findings:

During self-assessment, the district accurately identified themselves compliant in the area of parent referrals.

During the self-assessment process, the district identified concerns regarding pre-referral interventions, health summary, vision and hearing, child find and speech specialist as part of the child study team for preschool identification meetings. The district has developed an improvement plan that does not sufficiently address these areas of need because it lacks procedures and an administrative oversight component to bring about the required changes. The plan must be revised to include these elements.

An additional area of need was identified during the on-site monitoring visit regarding staff referrals.

Areas of Need:

Staff Referrals - During the on-site monitoring, it was determined through interviews with staff that they do not have the right to directly refer a students to the child study team.

- **The district will revise the improvement plan to include procedures to ensure staff have the ability to directly refer a student to the child study team and to participate in meetings when they believe the nature of the student's problem is such that an evaluation is warranted without delay. At that meeting, a decision may be made that an evaluation is not warranted and that the student needs to be referred to PAC. The**

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improvement plan must include a mechanism to establish a criteria that identifies the type of documentation that would support a staff request for a direct referral. The plan must further include in-service and an administrative oversight component to ensure full, consistent implementation of these activities.

Section V: Evaluation

Summary of Findings:

During self-assessment, the district accurately identified themselves compliant in the areas of multi-disciplinary evaluation, standardized assessments, bilingual evaluations and nature and scope of an evaluation.

During the self-assessment process, the district identified concerns regarding academic functioning documented in written reports, interventions documented by the classroom teacher for students eligible for speech and language services and dated written reports for students eligible for speech and language services. The district has developed an improvement plan that does not sufficiently address these areas of need because it lacks procedures and an oversight mechanism to bring about the required changes. The plan must be revised to include these elements. The district further identified concerns regarding the accept/rejection of reports. The district has developed an improvement plan that is sufficient to address this area of need.

Additional areas of need were identified during the on-site monitoring visit regarding functional assessments and dated reports.

Areas of Need:

Functional Assessments - During the on-site monitoring it was determined through record review and staff interviews that functional assessments for students eligible for special education and related services inconsistently included the interventions attempted in the general education setting. Additionally, functional assessments for students eligible for speech/language services did not contain informal measures, parent interviews, teacher interviews and interventions attempted.

- **The district will revise the improvement plan to include procedures to ensure that functional assessments contain the required components identified in NJAC 6A:14-3(d)2. The improvement plan must include staff training and an administrative oversight component to ensure the consistent, compliant implementation of the procedures.**

Section VI: Reevaluation

Summary of Findings:

During self-assessment, the district accurately identified themselves compliant in the area of conducting a reevaluation.

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During the self-assessment process, the district identified concerns regarding reevaluation timelines and reevaluation by June 30th for preschoolers. The district has developed an improvement plan that is sufficient to address these areas of need.

Additional areas of need were identified during the on-site monitoring visit regarding reevaluations for students eligible for speech and language services.

Areas of Need:

Reevaluations for Students Eligible for Speech and Language Services - During the on-site monitoring, it was determined through interview with staff and record review that reevaluations are not conducted for students eligible for speech and language services.

- **The district will revise the improvement plan to include procedures to ensure that reevaluations are conducted for students eligible for speech and language services within three years of the previous classification as required by NJAC 6A:14-3.8. The improvement plan must include staff training and an administrative oversight component to ensure the consistent, compliant implementation of these procedures.**

Section VII: Eligibility

Summary of Findings:

During self-assessment, the district accurately identified themselves compliant in the areas of eligibility statement.

During the self-assessment process, the district identified concerns regarding the provision of evaluation reports to parents and eligibility criteria. The district has developed an improvement plan that does not sufficiently address these areas of need because it lacks procedures and in-service to bring about the required changes. The plan must be revised to include these elements.

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

Section VIII: IEP

Summary of Findings:

During self-assessment, the district accurately identified themselves compliant in the areas of IEP components, teacher access, conducting annual reviews and annual review timelines for students eligible for special education and related services.

During the self-assessment process, the district identified concerns regarding IEP goals and objectives, teacher responsibility for the IEP, informing parents of student's progress, PLEP statements for students eligible for special education and related services, provision of IEPs to parents for students eligible for special education and

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related services and implementation of the IEP. The district has developed an improvement plan that does not sufficiently address these areas of need because it lacks procedures and an administrative oversight component to bring about the required changes. The plan must be revised to include these elements. The district further identified concerns regarding 90-day timeline, IEP considerations/required statements and parent observation of the proposed program. The district has developed an improvement plan that is sufficient to address these areas of need.

Additional areas of need were identified during the on-site monitoring visit regarding annual review timelines for students eligible for speech and language services, PLEP statements for students eligible for speech and language services and provision of IEP to parents for students eligible for speech and language services.

Areas of Need:

Annual Review Timelines - During the on-site monitoring, it was determined that the annual reviews for students eligible for speech and language services are not conducted within the required timelines.

- **The district will revise the improvement plan to include procedures to ensure that annual reviews for students eligible for speech and language services are conducted within required timelines. The improvement plan must include an administrative oversight component to ensure the implementation of these procedures.**

PLEP Statements - During the on-site monitoring, it was determined through record review that PLEP statements for students eligible for speech and language services do not indicate how the student's disability affects his/her progress in the general education curriculum or the educational needs that result from the student's disability.

- **The district will revise the improvement plan to include procedures to ensure PLEP statements include the required components. The improvement plan must include an administrative oversight component to ensure the implementation of these procedures.**

Provision of IEP to Parents for Students Eligible for Speech and Language Services - During the on-site monitoring, it was determined through staff interview that parents receive copies of speech IEPs only upon request.

- **The district will revise the improvement plan to include procedures to ensure and document that parents receive a copy of the IEP prior to implementation. The improvement plan must also include an administrative oversight component to ensure the implementation of these procedures.**

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Section IX: Least Restrictive Environment

Summary of Findings:

During the self-assessment process, the district identified concerns regarding the individualized decision-making process, considerations and required statements, student's placement in the LRE and supplemental aids and services. The district has developed an improvement plan that does not sufficiently address these areas of need because it lacks in-service and an administrative oversight component to bring about the required changes. The plan must be revised to include these elements. The district further identified concerns regarding the continuum of placement options, regular education access and nonacademic and extracurricular participation. The district has developed an improvement plan that is sufficient to address these areas of need.

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

Section X: Transition to Post-School

Summary of Findings:

During the self-assessment process, the district identified concerns regarding statement of transition services at age 14, preferences and interests, activities and required goals related to student's desired outcomes, and student and agency invitation and involvement. The district has developed an improvement plan that does not sufficiently address these areas of need because it lacks procedures and administrative oversight component to bring about the required changes. The plan must be revised to include these elements.

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

Section X: Transition to Pre-School

Summary of Findings:

During self-assessment, the district accurately identified themselves compliant in the area of EIP to preschool by age three.

During the self-assessment process, the district identified concerns regarding participation in the pre-school transition planning conference. The district has developed an improvement plan that does not sufficiently address this area of need because it lacks procedures and an administrative oversight component to bring about the required changes. The plan must be revised to include these elements.

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

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Section XI: Discipline

Summary of Findings:

During self-assessment, the district accurately identified themselves compliant in the area of interim alternative educational setting.

During the self-assessment process, the district identified concerns regarding written notification to case managers, manifestation determination meetings and functional behavior assessment. The district has developed an improvement plan that does not sufficiently address these areas of need because it lacks procedures and administrative oversight component to bring about the required changes. The plan must be revised to include these elements. The district further identified concerns regarding behavioral intervention plans and procedural safeguards for potentially disabled students. The district has developed an improvement plan that is sufficient to address these areas of need.

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

Section XIV: Programs and Services

Summary of Findings:

During self-assessment, the district accurately identified themselves compliant in the area of age span.

During the self-assessment process, the district identified concerns with instructional group size, team teaching, teacher collaboration and home instruction. The district has developed an improvement plan that does not sufficiently address these areas of need because it lacks procedures and an administrative oversight component to bring about the required changes. The plan must be revised to include these elements. The district further identified concerns regarding the description of special education programs. The district has developed an improvement plan that is sufficient to address this area of need.

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

Section XV: Student Records

Summary of Findings:

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

During the self-assessment process, the district identified concerns regarding access to records, policies and procedures for staff regarding student records, and documentation of the location of other records. The district has developed an improvement plan that is sufficient to address these areas of need.

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Additional areas of need were identified during the on-site monitoring visit regarding access sheets for students eligible for speech and language services and consent for the release of records.

Areas of Need:

Access Sheets - During the on-site monitoring, it was determined through record review that files for students eligible for speech/language services do not contain access sheets.

- **The district will revise the improvement plan to include procedures to ensure that access sheets are maintained in files for students eligible for speech/language services. The plan must include an administrative oversight component to ensure implementation of the procedures.**

Release of Records - During the on-site monitoring, it was determined through record review the district does not consistently obtain consent prior to releasing student records.

- **The district will revise the improvement plan to include procedures to ensure that consent is obtained prior to releasing records. The plan must include an administrative oversight component to ensure implementation of the procedures.**

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Summary

On-site special education monitoring was conducted in the Red Bank Borough School District on March 3 & 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 the exceptionally comprehensive review conducted during the self-assessment process. As a result of this review the district was able to identify 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 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.

On February 27, 2002, twelve parents, the superintendent of schools and the interim director attended the public focus group meeting. The purpose of the meeting was to provide parents with an opportunity to express their views of the special education programs and services their children receive. Parents unanimously stated that they are an integral part of the IEP team; their children's placements were appropriate; and their children were progressing in the least restrictive environment. The concerns parents raised during the focus group meeting regarding pre-referral interventions and IEP implementation had already been addressed by the district prior to the monitoring process.

Areas identified as consistently compliant by the district during self-assessment and verified during the on-site monitoring visit include Policies and Procedures, professional development, dissemination of IDEA information, frequency, location and duration of related services, facilities, certification, length of school day, components of notices, consent for evaluation and implementation of the IEP, meeting participants, parent referrals, multi-disciplinary evaluation, standardized assessments, bilingual evaluation, nature and scope of evaluation, reevaluations conducted for change in placement or by request, eligibility statement, IEP components, teacher access, conducting annual reviews for students eligible for special education and related services, annual review timelines for students eligible for special education and related services, EIPs to preschoolers by age three, interim alternative educational settings, participation in statewide assessments, accommodations and modifications for statewide assessments, IEP documentation of statewide assessments, APA, age span and maintenance and destruction of records.

During the self-assessment process, the district identified areas of need regarding transportation, extended school year, related services, transfer students, written notice for students eligible for special education and related services, 15 and 20-day timelines, native language, independent evaluations, surrogate parents, notice of a meeting, securing parental participation, provision of procedural safeguards, pre-referral interventions, health summary, vision/hearing screening, child find, speech specialist as part of the child study team for preschool, components of written reports, dated written reports for students eligible for speech and language services, accept/rejection of reports, reevaluation timeline and reevaluation by June 30th, provision of evaluation reports to parents, eligibility criteria, IEP goals and objectives, teacher responsibility, student progress, PLEP statements for students eligible for special education and

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related services, copy of IEPs to parents for students eligible for special education and related services, implementation of IEP, 90-day timeline, IEP considerations/required statements, parent observation of programs, individualized decision making process, LRE considerations/required statements, students placement in the LRE, supplemental aids/services, continuum of placement options, regular education access, nonacademic and extracurricular participation, transition services for students aged 14, student's preferences and interests, activities and required goals related to student's desired outcomes, student and agency invitation and involvement, preschool transition planning conference, written notification to case managers, manifestation determination, functional behavior assessment, behavioral intervention plan, potentially disabled, group size, team teaching, teacher collaboration, home instruction and description of special education programs, access of records, policies and procedures for staff regarding student records and documentation of the location of other records.

The on-site visit identified additional areas of need within the various standards regarding provision of notices, staff referrals, functional assessments, reevaluations, annual review timelines, PLEP statements, provision of IEPs, access sheets and release of records.

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.

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