

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

**District:** Red Bank Regional High School                      **County:** Monmouth

**Monitoring Dates:** April 8, 9, 2002

**Monitoring Team:** Dorothenia Boyd-Jackson, Barbara Tucker

**Background Information:**

During the 2000-2001 school year, the Red Bank Regional High 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 Regional High 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 Regional High 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 March 26, 2000. 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, child study team members and speech/language therapists.

**District Strengths:**

The district is commended for the following unique programs:

**Source: A Comprehensive School Based Youth Services Program** – The district has developed a comprehensive school-based youth services program for students and their families. Services include individual, group, family and substance abuse counseling,

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conflict resolution, and preventative and reproductive health services. The staff works closely with guidance counselors, teachers and child study team members to assist in the development of academic strategies for academic success. A job coach is also available to assist students with resumes, applications and finding jobs in the community. Currently, over 50% of the students in the program are students with disabilities.

**S.E.E.D. (Seeking Educational Equity and Diversity)** –The objective of this program is to build a community filled with respectful, responsible and caring individuals. Nearly 60 of the district's staff participate on a monthly basis. Students who participate in the program reflect the demographics of the school population based on race, gender, ethnicity, and class.

**Self-Advocacy in the Resource Center Academic Support** – Within this program, special education students are exposed to a self-advocacy curriculum through the academic support classes offered during the four years of their high school career.

**Parent Transition Group** – This group was formed last year to enhance services to families with moderate to severely disabled students. The primary goal of the program is ensure the provision of quality transition services from high school to post-secondary adult life in an effort to ensure disabled students have the opportunity to more fully participate in a variety of activities after they leave high school. Another goal of the program is to provide self-help, networking and mutual support for the parents of disabled students. The Parent Transition Group encourages directors of special services from surrounding districts to refer parents to the meetings that take place during the school year.

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

**General Provisions** was determined to be an area of compliance by the district during self-assessment and by the Office of Special Education Programs during the on-site.

### **Section II: F.A.P.E.**

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

During self-assessment the district accurately identified themselves compliant in the areas of extended school year, provision of related services, approved facilities and certification of staff.

During the self-assessment process, the district identified concerns regarding length of school day/year, contracting substitutes for provision of related services and IEP changes prior to convening meetings. The district has developed an improvement plan that is sufficient to address these areas of need. The district further identified concerns regarding hearing aids, provision of programs, related services goals and objectives and knowledge of transfer procedures by administrators and staff. The district has developed an improvement plan that does not sufficiently address these areas of need because it lacks procedures, staff training and an administrative oversight component to

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bring about the required changes. The plan needs to be revised to include these elements.

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

**Section III: Procedural Safeguards**

**Summary of Findings:**

During the self-assessment process, the district identified concerns regarding surrogate parents. The district has developed an improvement plan that is sufficient to address this area of need. The district further identified concerns regarding components of notice, provision of written notice, notice/meetings in the native language of parents, accommodating parents when scheduling meetings, independent evaluations and 15-day timelines. The district has developed an improvement plan that does not sufficiently address these areas of need because it lacks procedures, staff training and an administrative oversight component to bring about the required changes. The plan needs to be revised to include these elements.

An additional area of need was identified during the on-site visit regarding written consent prior to conducting an evaluation.

**Area of Need:**

**Written Consent Prior to Conducting an Evaluation** - During the on-site monitoring, it was determined through record review that the district does not obtain written consent prior to conducting an initial speech/language evaluation.

- **The district will revise the improvement plan to include procedures to ensure that written consent is obtained prior to conducting an initial evaluation. The improvement plan must include an administrative oversight component to ensure consistent implementation of the procedures.**

**Section IV: Location, Referral, Identification (LRI)**

**Summary of Findings:**

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

During the self-assessment process, the district identified concerns regarding pre-referral interventions, documentation of effectiveness of interventions, and overrepresentation of minority students referred due to inconsistent referral procedures. The district has developed an improvement plan that is sufficient to address these areas of need. The district will participate in a technical assistance session to be conducted by

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the Office of Special Education Programs regarding the overrepresentation issue and the appropriateness of the improvement plan activities.

Additional areas of need were identified during the on-site visit regarding the referral process, summer referrals and Child Find activities.

### **Areas of Need:**

**Referral Process** - During the on-site monitoring, it was determined that upon receipt of a referral, the speech/language therapist conducts a screening to determine the need for an evaluation. Based on the results of the screening, the therapist either refers the student to the child study team or contacts the parent to determine whether the parent has concerns that need to be addressed at an identification meeting.

- **The district will revise the improvement plan to include procedures to ensure that upon receipt of a referral for speech/language services, an identification meeting, not a screening, is conducted with the required participants within 20-days. The improvement plan must include an administrative oversight component to ensure implementation of these procedures.**

**Summer Referrals** – During the on-site monitoring, it was determined through staff interviews that the district discourages referrals between the months of May and August because the district does not employ child study team members or a speech language therapist during the summer.

- **The district will revise the improvement plan to include procedures to ensure staff and parents have the opportunity to refer students at any time of the year. While these procedures would encourage identification and referral early in the school year, the district must ensure child study team members and instructional staff members are available to participate in meetings and conduct assessments during the summer months. The improvement plan must also include an administrative oversight component to ensure implementation of these procedures.**

**Child Find Activities** – During the on-site monitoring, it was determined that the district's Child Find activities do not include migrant and homeless students who are potentially disabled.

- **The district will revise the improvement plan to include procedures to ensure that Child Find activities include migrant and homeless students. The plan must include an administrative oversight component to ensure implementation of these procedures.**

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**Section V: Protection In Evaluation And Evaluation Procedures:**

**Summary of Findings:**

During self-assessment the district accurately identified themselves compliant in the areas of standardized assessments and multi-disciplinary team evaluations for students eligible for special education and related services.

During the self-assessment process, the district identified concerns regarding interviews with parents and referring teachers for students potentially eligible for speech and language services and bilingual evaluations. The district has developed an improvement plan that is sufficient to address this area of need. The district further identified concerns regarding components of a functional assessment for students eligible for special education and related services, written reports and acceptance/rejection of outside reports. The district has developed an improvement plan that does not sufficiently address these areas of need because it lacks procedures, staff training and an administrative oversight component to bring about the required changes. The district will revise the improvement plan to include these elements.

An additional area of need was identified during the on-site visit regarding multidisciplinary evaluations for students eligible for speech/language services.

**Area(s) of Need:**

**Multidisciplinary Evaluations** - During the on-site monitoring, it was determined that a written educational impact statement from the student's teacher is not included in the speech/language report.

- **The district will revise the improvement plan to include procedures to ensure speech/language reports include a written educational impact statement from the student's teacher. The improvement plan must include an administrative oversight component to ensure implementation of these procedures.**

**Section VI: Reevaluation**

**Summary of Findings:**

During self-assessment the district accurately identified themselves compliant in the areas of reevaluation notice and planning meetings/participants.

An area of need was identified during the on-site visit regarding the reevaluation timelines.

**Area of Need:**

**Timeline for Reevaluations** - During the on-site monitoring, it was determined that the district does not conduct reevaluations within three years of the previous classification.

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- **The district will revise the improvement plan to include procedures to ensure that reevaluations are conducted every three years or sooner if conditions warrant. The improvement plan must include an administrative oversight component to ensure implementation of these procedures.**

### **Section VII: Eligibility**

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

During self-assessment the district accurately identified themselves compliant in the areas of eligibility meeting/participants.

During the self-assessment process, the district identified concerns regarding statement of eligibility for cognitively impaired students (mild/moderate), copy of evaluation reports to parents/adult students, discrepancy formula and referrals to the child study team from the speech/language specialist. 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 needs to be revised to include these elements.

An additional area of need was identified during the on-site visit regarding eligibility criteria.

#### **Area of Need:**

**Eligibility Criteria** - During the on-site monitoring, it was determined that eligibility statements for specific learning disabilities do not identify the academic area(s) affected by the learning disability.

- **The district will revise the improvement plan to include procedures to ensure that when documenting the eligibility criteria for specific learning disabilities, the IEP team includes information that identifies the academic area(s) affected by the specific learning disability. The improvement plan must include an administrative oversight component to ensure consistent implementation of the procedures.**

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

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

During self-assessment the district accurately identified themselves compliant in the area of 90-day timelines.

During the self-assessment process, the district identified concerns regarding implementation of IEPs, consideration/required statements, age of majority, measurable goals/objectives aligned with the core curriculum content standards, copies of IEPs to parents/adult students and teacher responsibility for implementation of the IEP. The

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district has developed an improvement plan that does not sufficiently address these areas of need because it lacks procedures, in-service training and an administrative oversight component to bring about the required changes. The plan needs to be revised to include these elements.

Additional areas of need were identified during the on-site visit regarding annual review timelines and meeting participants.

### **Areas of Need:**

**Annual Review Timelines** – During the on-site monitoring, it was determined that the district does not conduct annual reviews in a timely manner.

- **The district will revise the improvement plan to include procedures to ensure that annual reviews are completed at least annually. The improvement plan must include an administrative oversight component to ensure the implementation of the procedures.**

**Meeting Participants** - During the on-site monitoring, it was determined that although teachers sign participation at IEP meetings, they do not attend on a consistent basis.

- **The district will revise the improvement plan to include procedures to ensure all required participants attend meetings. The plan must further ensure the district obtains the signatures of only those individuals who attended the meetings. The improvement plan must also include an administrative oversight component to ensure compliant implementation of these procedures.**

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

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

During self-assessment the district accurately identified themselves compliant in the area of least restrictive environment considerations/required statements in the IEP.

During the self-assessment process, the district identified concerns regarding student placement in the least restrictive environment, continuum of program options, supplementary aids/services, changes in student programs without documenting revisions and nonacademic/extracurricular participation. The district has developed an improvement plan that does not sufficiently address these areas of need because it lacks procedures, in-service training and an administrative oversight component to bring about the required changes. The plan needs to be revised to include these elements.

An additional area of need was identified during the on-site visit regarding the individualized decision-making process.

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**Area of Need:**

**Individualized Decision-Making Process** - During the on-site monitoring, it was determined through record review that LRE statements do not consistently document the individualized considerations which led to the removal from general education classes.

- **The district will revise the improvement plan to include procedures to ensure the district documents the individual considerations that lead to the decision to remove a student from general education classes. The improvement plan must include in-service and an administrative oversight component to ensure consistent, compliant implementation of these procedures.**

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

**Summary of Findings:**

During the self-assessment process, the district identified concerns regarding student/ agency invitations, agency involvement, statements of transition services needs and needed transition services, preferences/interests and IEP considerations/documentation. The district has developed an improvement plan that does not sufficiently address these areas of need because it lacks procedures, in-service training and an administrative oversight component to bring about the required changes. The district will revise the improvement plan 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:**

Transition to Pre-School is not applicable to this high school district.

**Section XI: Discipline**

**Summary of Findings:**

During self-assessment the district accurately identified themselves compliant in the areas of discipline procedures, suspension tracking and interim alternative educational settings.

During the self-assessment process, the district identified concerns regarding procedural safeguards for potentially disabled students. The district has developed an improvement plan that is sufficient to address this area of need. The district further identified concerns regarding FAPE for students suspended or expelled, documentation to case managers, behavioral intervention plans, functional behavioral assessments, manifestation determinations, short-term removals and continuum of program/services. The district has developed an improvement plan that does not sufficiently address these areas of

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need because it lacks procedures, in-service training and an administrative oversight component to bring about the required changes. The plan needs to be revised to include these elements.

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

### **Section XII: Statewide Assessment**

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

During self-assessment the district accurately identified themselves compliant in the areas of student participation, accommodations/modifications and IEP documentation.

During the self-assessment process, the district identified concerns regarding alternate proficiency assessment (APA) and student participation in the Special Review Assessment (SRA) process. The district has developed an improvement plan that does not sufficiently address these areas of need because it lacks procedures, in-service training and an administrative oversight component to bring about the required changes. The plan needs to be revised to include these elements.

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

### **Section XIII: Graduation**

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

During self-assessment the district accurately identified themselves compliant in the area of graduation requirements.

During the self-assessment process, the district identified concerns regarding choice of diploma for out-of-district 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 monitoring visit.

### **Section XIV: Programs and Services**

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

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

During the self-assessment process, the district identified concerns regarding collaborative planning time for regular/special education teachers. 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

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the required changes. The district will revise the improvement plan to include these elements.

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 student record access, access sheets for students eligible for special education/related services and documentation of records in other locations.

During the self-assessment process, the district identified concerns regarding staff knowledge of policy/procedures pertaining to student records. 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 visit regarding retention/destruction of pupil records and access sheets for students eligible for speech and language services.

#### **Areas of Need:**

**Retention/Destruction of Pupil Records** - During the on-site monitoring, it was determined through record review and staff interviews, that upon graduation or permanent departure of a student from the school system, the district notifies parents/adult students in writing, that the pupil record will be provided. Upon request, the district provides parents/adult students with the entire pupil record and does not maintain records required by N.J.A.C. 6:3-6.4(d).

- **The district will revise the improvement plan to include procedures to ensure that upon graduation or permanent departure of a student from the school system, the district maintains mandated and permitted records as required by N.J.A.C. 6:3-6.4.**

**Access Sheets for Students Eligible for Speech and Language Services** - During the on-site monitoring, it was determined through record review, that although access sheets are included in the files of students eligible for special education and related services, they are not included in files for students eligible for speech and language services.

- **The district will revise the improvement plan to include procedures to ensure that access sheets for students eligible for speech/language services are included in student files.**

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## **Summary**

On-site special education monitoring was conducted in the Red Bank Regional High School on April 8, 9, 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 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 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. Parents indicated that there is good communication between themselves and the district and that the students are well served by the district's staff members. It was further noted that the district has a lot to offer students with different learning styles. Many of the concerns raised by the parents during the focus group meeting had already been identified by the district during the self-assessment process.

The Standard General Provisions was identified by the district during self-assessment and verified during the on-site monitoring visit as consistently compliant.

Areas identified as consistently compliant by the district during self-assessment and verified during the on-site monitoring visit included extended school year, provision of related services, approved facilities, appropriate certification of staff, consent in program implementation, reevaluations and release of student records, direct referrals, health summary, vision/hearing screenings, identification meeting/timelines/participants, standardized assessments, multi-disciplinary team evaluations for students eligible for special education and related services, reevaluation notice and planning meetings/participants, eligibility meeting/participants, 90-day timelines, least restrictive environment considerations/ required statements in the IEP, discipline procedures, suspension tracking, interim alternative educational setting lists/45-day return to district, student participation in statewide assessments, accommodations/modifications, IEP documentation regarding student participation, graduation requirements, class size/age range/waivers, group sizes/speech therapy, schedules, home instruction, student record access, access sheets for students eligible for special education/related services and documentation of records in other locations.

During the self-assessment process, the district identified areas of need regarding length of school day/year, contracting substitutes for the provision of related services, IEP changes prior to convening meetings, monitoring of hearing aids worn by students, provision of programs according to IEPs, related services goals/objectives, IEP changes prior to convening meetings, knowledge of transfer procedures by administrators/staff, surrogate parents, components of notice, provision of written notice, notice/meetings in the native language, accommodating parents when scheduling meetings, independent evaluations, 15-day timeline, pre-referral interventions, documentation of effectiveness of interventions, overrepresentation of minority students, concerns regarding interviews with parents and referring teachers for students potentially eligible for speech and

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language services, bilingual evaluations, components of a functional assessment, written reports, acceptance/rejection of outside reports, statement of eligibility, copy of evaluation reports to parents/adult students, discrepancy formula, referrals to the child study team from the speech/language specialist, implementation of IEPs, consideration/required statements, age of majority, goals/objectives aligned with the core curriculum content standards, copies of IEPs to parents/adult students and teacher responsibility for the implementation of the IEP, least restrictive environment, continuum of program options, supplementary aids/services, changes in program, nonacademic/extracurricular participation, student/agency invitation, agency involvement, statement of transition services needs, statement of needed transition services, preferences/interests and IEP considerations/documentation, procedural safeguards for potentially disabled students, FAPE for students suspended or expelled, documentation to case managers, behavioral intervention plans, functional behavioral assessments, manifestation determinations, short-term removals, APA, SRA process, choice of diploma, collaborative planning time for regular/special education teachers and staff knowledge of policy/procedures pertaining to student records.

The on-site visit identified additional areas of need within the various standards regarding written consent, the referral process, Child Find activities, speech-language reports and multidisciplinary evaluations, three-year timeline for re-evaluations, eligibility criteria, annual review timelines/meeting participants, individualized decision-making process, retention/destruction of pupil records and access sheets for students eligible for speech and language services.

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.