

New Jersey Department of Education Special Education Monitoring

District: Roselle Park School District

County: Union

Monitoring Dates: December 6, 2005

Monitoring Team: Barbara J. Tucker

Background Information:

During the 2004–2005 school year, the Roselle Park School District conducted a self-assessment of policies, procedures, programs, services, and student outcomes. This self-assessment component of the monitoring process provided the Roselle Park School District with an opportunity to evaluate strengths and areas of need with regard to:

- The provision of a free, appropriate public education (FAPE) for students with disabilities in the least restrictive environment;
- The protection of procedural safeguards for students and their families;
- The development and implementation of policies and procedures resulting in procedural compliance; and
- The organization and delivery of programs and services resulting in positive student outcomes.

The self-assessment was designed to identify areas of strength, promising practices, areas that need improvement and areas that may be noncompliant with state and federal requirements. The Roselle Park 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.

During the on-site visit, the NJDOE monitoring team reviewed district documents, including district policies and procedures, student count information, master student lists, class lists, schedules of students, teachers, related service personnel and other relevant information. A representative sample of student records was also reviewed. Interviews were conducted with the district's building principals, general education and special education teachers, speech therapist and child study team members. Parents of students with disabilities were interviewed by phone.

Data Summary:

A review of the Roselle Park School District's 2002-2003 data for students with disabilities indicated that the district had a classification rate, excluding speech-only students, of 14.45%, which is only slightly above the state average of 14.3%. In 2003-2004, 14.37% of the students were classified and in 2004-2005, the rate was 14.63%. In 2002, 63.3% of the students eligible for special education were placed in general education for more than 80% of the day. That percentage remained basically unchanged for the next two school years. Overall, during the last three years, the district's placement rate for placing students in general education for more than 80% of the day has been nearly 25% higher than the state average.

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Areas Not Applicable

The statement of needed transition services and identification of post-secondary liaison were areas not reviewed by the NJDOE because the district is not responsible for serving the age range of students for which these services are required.

Sections Demonstrating Compliance with All Standards

The self-assessment process required the district to review implementation of federal and state regulations categorized into 15 sections. Within each section, a number of areas were reviewed. The on-site monitoring process involved verification by the district that the sections and areas identified as compliant by the district in their self-assessment were compliant with regulations. **General Provisions, Statewide Assessments and Graduation** were sections identified by the district during self-assessment and the New Jersey Department of Education during the monitoring process as compliant with all standards.

Areas Demonstrating Compliance

The following areas, within the 15 sections reviewed, were identified by the district's self-assessment committee and by the NJDOE as compliant. These areas were reviewed for students eligible for special education and related services (ESERS) and students eligible for speech and language services (ESLS). Areas compliant for only one group of students are noted.

Section	Areas Demonstrating Compliance
II. Free, Appropriate Public Education (FAPE)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provision of Programs • Oversight of individualized education program (IEP) implementation • Extended school year
III. Procedural Safeguards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implementation without undue delay • Provision of notice of a meeting • Content of a notice of a meeting • Meetings • Provision of written notice • Content of written notice • Interpreters at meeting • Independent evaluations
IV. Location, Referral and Identification (LRI)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Child Find Ages 3-21 • Referral process • Pre-referral interventions • Identification meeting timelines • Identification meeting participants
V. Evaluation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Multi-disciplinary Evaluations • Standardized Assessments • Educational impact statement
VI. Reevaluation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reevaluation when change of eligibility is considered • Planning meeting participants • Reevaluations prior to age 5

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Section	Areas Demonstrating Compliance
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Procedures when parental consent cannot be obtained • Documentation of efforts to obtain parental consent
VII. Eligibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meeting participants • Statement of eligibility (Specific Learning Disability)
VIII. Individualized Education Program (IEP)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implementation dates • Meetings held annually, or more often if necessary, to review and/or revise the IEP • Annual reviews completed by June 30 • Teachers informed of their responsibilities (knowledge and/or access) • 90 day timelines
X. Transition to Preschool	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IEPs for preschool students with disabilities implemented no later than age 3.
X. Transition to Adult Life	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Activities, annual goals and benchmarks relative to the student's desired outcomes
XI. Discipline	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discipline procedures employed equitably for all students • IEP team meeting for first removal beyond 10 days • Procedures for determination of change in placement • Procedures for conducting functional behavioral assessment and development of behavior intervention plan • Short-term removals resulting in a change of placement • Short-term removals that are not a change in placement – school personnel determining the extent of services to be provide • Interim Alternative Educational Settings • Manifestation determinations
XIV. Programs & Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Class size • Age range • Groups sizes for Speech

Areas of Noncompliance-Improvement Plan Review

The following areas were originally identified by the district's self-assessment committee as non-compliant, but were found to be compliant by the New Jersey Department of Education during the on-site monitoring:

Section	Area of Non-Compliance	Compliance Review
II. FAPE	<p>Transfer Procedures- The district does not have procedures to ensure that transfer students receive services without undue delay.</p> <p>Provision of related services- The district did not provide related services to students as stipulated</p>	The district has demonstrated compliance in these areas with an administrative oversight mechanism in place to identify and correct any noncompliance in the future.

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Section	Area of Non-Compliance	Compliance Review
	in student IEPs.	
III. Procedural Safeguards	<p>Consent for individual assessment- The district conducted individual assessments for post secondary outcomes without first obtaining parental consent.</p> <p>Notices in native language- The district did not provide written notices to parents in the parent’s native language, when the parent spoke a language other than English.</p>	<p>The district has demonstrated compliance in these areas with an administrative oversight mechanism in place to identify and correct any noncompliance in the future.</p>
IV. LRI	<p>Direct referrals-The district’s referral process did not allow staff to make direct referrals to the child study team.</p> <p>Vision, Health and Hearing Summaries-The district’s nurses did not conduct vision and hearing screenings or provide all summaries on students referred to the child study team.</p>	<p>The district has demonstrated compliance in these areas with an administrative oversight mechanism in place to identify and correct any noncompliance in the future.</p>
V. Evaluation	<p>Functional Assessment-The assessments of child study team members and speech-language specialists did not contain the required components.</p> <p>Bilingual Evaluations-The district did not evaluate students in the student’s native language when the student spoke a language other than English.</p> <p>Written Reports signed and dated-The district did not have a procedure to ensure that written reports from child study team members and speech - language specialists were signed and dated.</p>	<p>The district has demonstrated compliance in this area with an administrative oversight mechanism in place to identify and correct any noncompliance in the future.</p>

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Section	Area of Non-Compliance	Compliance Review
VI. Reevaluation	<p>Three year timelines-The district's reevaluation planning meeting dates need to be scheduled prior to the date of the three year timeline.</p>	<p>The district has demonstrated compliance in this area with an administrative oversight mechanism in place to identify and correct any noncompliance in the future.</p>
VII. Eligibility	<p>Signature of agreement and/or disagreement- CST members did not document agreement and/or disagreement with the student's proposed eligibility and provide a rationale for any disagreement.</p> <p>Copy of evaluation reports to parents-The district did not provide copies of evaluation reports to parents at least 10 days prior to the eligibility meeting.</p>	<p>The district has demonstrated compliance in these areas with an administrative oversight mechanism in place to identify and correct any noncompliance in the future.</p>
VIII. IEP	<p>IEP to parents prior to implementation-The district did not provide copies of IEPs to parents prior to implementation.</p> <p>Required meeting participants-The district did not have the required meeting participants in attendance at all IEP meetings.</p>	<p>The district has demonstrated compliance in these areas with an administrative oversight mechanism in place to identify and correct any noncompliance in the future.</p>
IX. LRE	<p>Documentation of LRE- The district did not document their discussions or considerations regarding placement in the general education setting.</p> <p>Participation in non-academic/extra curricular activities-The district did not provide opportunities for students in out-of-district placements to participate in the district's non-academic/extra curricular activities.</p> <p>Opportunity to access general education/continuum-The district did not consider placement in an early childhood program with appropriate supplementary aids and services.</p>	<p>The district has demonstrated compliance in these areas with an administrative oversight mechanism in place to identify and correct any noncompliance in the future.</p>

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Section	Area of Non-Compliance	Compliance Review
	<p>Consider general education as first placement option-When conducting an IEP meeting, the district did not consider general education as first placement option for students with disabilities.</p>	
<p>X. Transition to Adult Life</p>	<p>Student/Agency invitation-The district did not provide an invitation to IEP meeting for the student or the agency responsible for providing transition services, when the purpose of the meeting was to discuss transition.</p> <p>Age 14 Statement- The district did not provide written notice to students age 14, when transition was going to be discussed at the IEP meeting.</p>	<p>The district has demonstrated compliance in this area with an administrative oversight mechanism in place to identify and correct any noncompliance in the future.</p>
<p>X. Transition to Preschool</p>	<p>Transition Planning Meeting- The district did not attend the preschool planning meetings to ensure a smooth transition for students transferring from an early intervention program to preschool.</p>	<p>The district has demonstrated compliance in this area with an administrative oversight mechanism in place to identify and correct any noncompliance in the future.</p>
<p>XI. Discipline</p>	<p>Notification to case manager- The district did not provide notice to the case manager when a student with disabilities was removed from program.</p> <p>Suspension tracking system- Case managers are not able to track student suspensions, because they are not informed when a student is removed from program.</p>	<p>The district has demonstrated compliance in these areas with an administrative oversight mechanism in place to identify and correct any noncompliance in the future.</p>
<p>XIV. Programs and Services</p>	<p>Common planning time-The district did not provide staff with time to plan for the instructional needs of students with disabilities.</p>	<p>The district has demonstrated compliance in this area with an administrative oversight mechanism in place to identify and correct any noncompliance in the future.</p>

Additional Area of Need

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The following area was found to be noncompliant by the New Jersey Department of Education during the on-site monitoring:

Section	Area	Activity
Eligibility	Eligibility Criteria for Specific Learning Disability - The district has not adopted a statistical formula and criteria to determine whether a student has a specific learning disability.	The district will revise the improvement plan to include procedures to ensure that a statistical formula and criteria are used to determine whether a student has a specific learning disability.

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Summary

On-site special education monitoring was conducted in the Roselle Park School District on December 6, 2005. The purpose of the monitoring visit was to verify the district's report of findings resulting from their self-assessment and to review the district's improvement plan. The district is acknowledged for the comprehensive review conducted during the self-assessment process. As a result of that review, the district was able to identify nearly all areas of need and develop an improvement plan that will bring about systemic change.

A review of the Roselle Park School District's 2002-2003 data for students with disabilities indicated that the district had a classification rate, excluding speech-only students, of 14.45%, which is only slightly above the state average of 14.3%. In 2003-2004, 14.37% of the students were classified and in 2004-2005, the rate was 14.63%. In 2002, 63.3% of the students eligible for special education were placed in general education for more than 80% of the day. That percentage remained basically unchanged for the next two school years. Overall, during the last three years, the district's placement rate (for placing students in general education for more than 80% of the day) has been nearly 25% higher than the state average.

During interviews conducted with parents by phone, many parents expressed their satisfaction with the district's programs and services and staff. Parents were pleased with the administration and faculty in the district, because they felt that they were valued as members of the IEP team.

General Provisions Statewide Assessments and Graduation are the sections identified as consistently compliant by the district during self-assessment and verified during the on-site monitoring visit.

Areas identified as consistently compliant by the district during self-assessment and verified during the on-site monitoring visit included provision of programs, oversight of individualized education program (IEP) implementation, extended school year, implementation without undue delay, provision of notice of a meeting, content of a notice of a meeting, meetings, provision of written notice, content of written notice, interpreters at meeting, independent evaluations, child find ages 3-21, referral process pre-referral interventions, identification meeting timelines, identification meeting participants, multi-disciplinary evaluations, standardized assessments, educational impact statement, reevaluation when change of eligibility is considered, planning meeting participants, reevaluations prior to age 5, procedures when parental consent cannot be obtained, documentation of efforts to obtain parental consent, eligibility meeting participants, statement of eligibility (Specific Learning Disability), implementation dates, meetings held annually or more often if necessary, to review and/or revise the IEP, annual reviews completed by June 30, teachers informed of their responsibilities (knowledge and/or access), 90 day timelines, IEPs for preschool students with disabilities implemented no later than age 3, activities, annual goals and benchmarks relative to the student's desired outcomes, discipline procedures employed equitably for all students, IEP team meeting for first removal beyond 10 days, procedures for determination of change in placement, procedures for conducting functional behavioral assessment, development of behavior intervention plan, short-term removals resulting in a change of placement, short-term removals that are not a change in placement (school personnel determining the extent of services to be provided), interim alternative educational settings, manifestation determinations, class size, age range, and group sizes for speech.

During the self-assessment process, the district originally identified areas of need regarding transfer procedures, provision of related services, consent, notices in native language, direct referrals, vision, health and hearing screenings, functional assessments,

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bilingual evaluations, written reports signed and dated, three-year timelines, signature of agreement and/or disagreement, copy of evaluation reports to parents, copy of IEP to parents, required IEP meeting participants, IEP statements and components, documentation of least restrictive environment, participation in non-curricular/extracurricular activities, opportunity for all students with disabilities to access all general education programs, opportunity to access general education, beginning at 14 IEP statement of transition service needs, student/agency invitation, transition planning meeting, notification to case manager, suspension tracking and common planning time. However, during the onsite visit, the district was able to demonstrate compliance in these areas with an administrative oversight mechanism in place to identify and correct any noncompliance in the future.

During the on-site visit an additional area of need was identified regarding adoption of a statistical formula and criteria for determining a specific learning discrepancy.

Within forty-five days of receipt of the monitoring report, the Roselle Park School District will revise and resubmit a revision to the improvement plan to the Office of Special Education Programs to address the area that requires revision.