

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

District: Shore Regional High School District

County: Monmouth

Monitoring Dates: January 15, 2002

Monitoring Team: Deborah Masarsky and Barbara Tucker

Background Information:

During the 2000-2001 school year, the Shore 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 Shore Regional 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 Shore 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 November 26, 2001. Information obtained from that meeting was used to direct the focus of the monitoring visit.

During the on-site, the NJDOE team reviewed district documents, including district policies and procedures, student count information, master student lists, class lists, schedules of students, teachers, related service personnel, and other relevant information, including a representative sample of student records. Interviews were conducted with the district's special education administrators, building principals, general education and special education teachers, and child study team members.

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District Strengths:

The district provides the following unique program for special education students:

The **Teacher Monitor** program assigns a special education teacher to each of the 95 in-district special education students. Through this program, student progress is continually monitored. Based on that monitoring, instructional and behavioral strategies are developed for use by the regular education teaching staff. Additionally, the monitor meets regularly with case managers and parents to further discuss student needs and provide consultation services.

Area Demonstrating Compliance with All Standards:

Student Records 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 monitoring visit.

Section I: General Provisions

Summary of Findings:

During self-assessment the district accurately identified themselves compliant in the areas of Policy and Procedures and dissemination of public information. The required Statement of Assurances and procedures have been submitted to the county office.

During the self-assessment process, the district identified a concern regarding both professional and paraprofessional staff development. The district has developed an improvement plan that does not sufficiently address this area of need because it lacks procedures to develop and provide the training as well as a mechanism to determine the effectiveness of the training. The plan needs to be revised to include these elements to bring about the required changes.

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

Section II: F.A.P.E.

Summary of Findings:

During self-assessment the district accurately identified themselves compliant in the areas of provision of related services, documentation of 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 regarding the provision of modified or adaptive physical education, extended school year, goals/objectives for all related services and convening IEP meetings prior to making program changes. The district has developed an improvement plan that does not sufficiently address these areas of need because it lacks an administrative oversight

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component to ensure implementation of the required procedures in a consistent manner. The district will revise the improvement plan to include this component.

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

Section III: Procedural Safeguards

Summary of Findings:

During self-assessment the district accurately identified themselves compliant in the areas of obtaining consent, provision/content of Notices of a Meeting, content of Written Notices, meetings, native language and independent evaluations.

During the self-assessment process, the district identified concerns regarding surrogate parents, implementation of actions for which consent has been obtained, convening of meetings within timelines, required participants at all meetings and provision of Written Notice within timelines. 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 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 IV: Location, Referral, Identification

Summary of Findings:

During self-assessment the district accurately identified themselves compliant in the areas of the referral process, direct referrals and identification meeting timelines/participants.

During the self-assessment process, the district identified concerns regarding health summaries and vision/hearing screenings. The district has developed an improvement plan that is sufficient to address these areas of need. The district further identified concerns regarding Child Find activities and pre-referral interventions. 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 district must revise the improvement plan to include these elements.

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

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Section V: Evaluation

Summary of Findings:

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

During the self-assessment process, the district identified concerns regarding functional assessments, multidisciplinary evaluations for students eligible for speech/language services, evaluation procedures for students eligible for speech/language services and written reports. 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 district will revise the improvement plan to include these elements.

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

Section VI: Reevaluation

Summary of Findings:

During self-assessment the district accurately identified themselves compliant in the area of planning meetings/participants.

During the self-assessment process, the district identified concerns regarding the three-year timeline for reevaluations and requested reevaluations. 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 district will revise the improvement plan to include these elements.

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

Section VII: Eligibility

Summary of Findings:

During self-assessment the district accurately identified themselves compliant in the area of eligibility criteria.

During the self-assessment process, the district identified a concern regarding provision of evaluation reports to parents/adult students. 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 required changes. The district will revise the improvement plan to include these elements. Additionally, the projected timeline to correct this area of need must be revised to ensure completion of activities within a more reasonable timeframe.

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

Area(s) of Need:

Documentation of Eligibility Criteria Statement - During the on-site monitoring it was determined through interviews and record review that although IEP teams discuss the category under which the student would become eligible for special education and related services, the district does not document the eligibility statement.

- **The district will revise the improvement plan to include procedures to ensure that the district documents the eligibility statement and then provides that statement of eligibility subsequent to the conclusion of the meeting. The improvement plan must include an administrative oversight component to ensure the implementation of the procedures.**

Section VIII: IEP

Summary of Findings:

During self-assessment the district accurately identified themselves compliant in the areas of goals/objectives aligned with the Core Curriculum Content Standards and implementation dates on IEPs.

During the self-assessment process, the district identified concerns regarding annual review/90-day timelines, IEPs in effect at the beginning of each school year, provision of IEPs to parents/adult students, considerations/required statements, age of majority, documentation of frequency/amount of instructional time for in-class support services, goals/objectives that address identified student needs and teacher IEP access/responsibilities. 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 district will revise the improvement plan to include these elements. It is recommended that the district use the state IEP format developed by the Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs. Additionally, the projected timeline to correct this area of need must be revised to ensure completion of activities within a more reasonable timeframe. The district further identified a concern regarding the opportunity for parents/adult students to observe proposed educational placements. 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 Present Levels of Educational Performance (PLEPs).

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Area(s) of Need:

PLEPs - During the on-site monitoring it was determined through reviews of IEPs that PLEP statements did not contain all of the required information regarding student performance.

- **The district will revise the improvement plan to include procedures to ensure PLEP statements contain information that is required by code. The improvement plan must also include in-service and an administrative oversight component to ensure the implementation of the procedures.**

Section IX: Least Restrictive Environment

Summary of Findings:

During self-assessment the district accurately identified themselves compliant in the area of a full continuum of program options.

During the self-assessment process, the district identified concerns regarding individual decision-making, considerations/required statements, supplementary aids/services, regular education access and notification to out-of-district students of extracurricular/nonacademic activities offered within the district. 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 district will revise the improvement plan to include these elements. It is recommended that the district use the IEP format developed by the Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs.

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

Section X: Transition to Post-School

Summary of Findings:

During self-assessment the district accurately identified themselves compliant in the area of student/agency invitation to transition meetings.

During the self-assessment process, the district identified concerns regarding obtaining the participation of agencies at transition meetings. The district has developed an improvement plan that is not sufficient to address this area of need because it lacks procedures, in-service and an administrative oversight component. The district must revise the improvement plan to include these elements.

Additional areas of need were identified during the on-site monitoring visit regarding documentation of post-secondary transition services.

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Area(s) of Need:

Post-Secondary Transition - During the on-site monitoring it was determined that although the district provides transition services to students at various ability levels, team members do not consistently complete the required components/headings within the transition section of the IEP. This omission includes documentation of the provision of post-secondary transition services.

- **The district will revise the improvement plan to include procedures to ensure that all components and required statements for post-secondary transition services are included and completed within IEPs. The improvement plan must include in-service and an administrative oversight component to ensure implementation of the procedures. It is recommended that the district use the IEP form developed by the Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs.**

Section XI: Discipline

Summary of Findings:

During self-assessment the district accurately identified themselves compliant in the areas of documentation to the case manager, suspension tracking, functional behavioral assessments (FBAs), manifestation determinations and interim alternative educational settings.

During the self-assessment process, the district identified a concern regarding behavioral intervention plans (BIPs) and procedural safeguards of students identified as potentially disabled. 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 district will revise the improvement plan 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 approved accommodations/modifications, in-district participation in statewide assessments and IEP documentation of statewide assessments.

During the self-assessment process, the district identified concerns regarding alternative assessments/APA, out-of-district student participation in statewide assessments, the special review assessment (SRA) and child study team knowledge of the content of statewide assessments. The district has developed an improvement plan that does not sufficiently address these areas of need because it lacks procedures, in-service and an

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administrative oversight component to bring about the required changes. The district must revise the improvement plan to include these elements. It is recommended that each child study team member receive a copy of "The Directory of Test Specifications" (DTS) for each content area and/or the sample form of the HSPA.

An additional area of need was identified during the on-site monitoring visit regarding exemption/rationale from participation in statewide assessments.

Area(s) of Need:

Statewide Assessment - During the on-site monitoring it was determined that IEPs do not contain a component to document the student's participation in statewide assessments, individual modifications/accommodations, a rationale for exemption from participating/passing statewide assessments and, if exempt, how that student will be assessed.

- **The district will revise the improvement plan to include procedures to ensure that IEPs contain a component to document the student's participation in statewide assessments, the individual modifications and accommodations required by that student, a rationale for exemption from participating/passing statewide assessments, and how that student will be assessed. The improvement plan must include staff training and an administrative oversight component to ensure implementation of the procedures. It is recommended that the district use the IEP format developed by the Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs.**

Section XIII: Graduation

Summary of Findings:

During self-assessment the district did not identify any areas of need. However, during the on-site monitoring visit, areas of need were regarding IEP documentation of graduation requirements, diplomas, out-of-district participation, and Written Notice of Graduation.

Area(s) of Need:

Documentation of Graduation Requirements - During the on-site monitoring it was determined that the graduation requirement component of the district's IEP does not contain a section to address the student's participation and passing the HSPA, a section to document the rationale for exempting a student from any graduation requirement or a section that describes the alternate assessment.

- **The district will revise the improvement plan to include procedures to ensure that IEPs contain all required graduation information. The improvement plan must include in-service and an administrative oversight component to ensure the implementation of the procedures. It is**

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recommended that the district use the IEP format developed by the Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs.

Diplomas - During the on-site monitoring, it was determined that the district does not notify graduating out-of-district students that they have a choice of receiving a diploma from the out-of district school or from their home district school.

- **The district will revise the improvement plan to include procedures to ensure that graduating out-of-district students are notified of the choice to receive a diploma from the out-of district school or from their home district school. The improvement plan must include an administrative oversight component to ensure the implementation of the procedures.**

Notification/Participation to Out-of-District Students - During the on-site monitoring it was determined that the district does not inform out-of-district students of graduation activities within the district.

- **The district will revise the improvement plan to include procedures to ensure that graduating out-of-district students are provided the opportunity to participate in graduation activities within the district. The improvement plan must include an administrative oversight component to ensure the implementation of the procedures.**

Written Notice of Graduation - During the on-site monitoring, it was determined that the district does not provide Written Notice of Graduation to students.

- **The district will revise the improvement plan to include procedures to ensure that parents and adult students are provided with written notice of graduation and that the provision is documented in student files. The improvement plan must include an administrative oversight component to ensure the implementation of the procedures.**

Section XIV: Programs and Services

Summary of Findings:

During self-assessment the district accurately identified themselves compliant in the areas of class/group size, age range and consultation time for special/regular education teachers.

During the self-assessment process, the district identified concerns regarding employment of staff in sufficient numbers to ensure the provision of required programs/services, provision of instruction in the Core Curriculum Content Standards, case management time and provision of home instruction services as per code. 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 district will revise the improvement plan to include these elements.

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

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Summary

On-site special education monitoring was conducted in the Shore Regional High School District on January 15, 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 thorough and 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.

At a focus group meeting held prior to the monitoring visit, the five parents that attended expressed their satisfaction with the district's programs and services. It was further noted that during the self-assessment process the district had already identified some of the concerns raised by the parents at the focus group meeting.

Areas identified as consistently compliant by the district during self-assessment and verified during the on-site monitoring visit included policies/procedures, dissemination of public information, provision of related services, length of school/day/year, transfer students, facilities, certifications, obtaining parental consent, provision/content of Notice of a Meeting, convening of meetings/participants, notices/meetings in native language, independent evaluations, referral procedures, direct referrals, 20-day timeline for convening identification meetings, multidisciplinary evaluations, standardized assessments, bilingual evaluations, acceptance/rejection of outside reports, eligibility criteria, goals/objectives aligned with Core Curriculum Content Standards, implementation dates on IEPs, continuum of programs, student/agency invitations to transition meetings, discipline procedures, statewide assessment participation of students within district, approved statewide assessment accommodation/modifications, class/group size, age range and consultation time for special/regular education teachers, student record access to parents/adult students, access sheets, maintenance/destruction of student records and documentation of other locations of student records.

During the self-assessment process, the district identified areas of need regarding professional development, Extended School Year, surrogate parents, consent, meeting participation, timelines, functional assessment, written reports, notices, requested evaluations, IEP considerations and required statements, IEP access, LRE statement, participation of out-of-district students in extra-curricular/nonacademic activities within the district, participation in the statewide assessment process, alternative assessments, Special Review Assessment (SRA), home instruction and child study team knowledge of the content of statewide assessments.

The on-site visit identified additional areas of need within the various standards regarding eligibility statements, PLEP statements, post-secondary transition services, exemption/rationale form participation in statewide assessment, IEP documentation of exemption from graduation requirements, diplomas, out-of-district participation, written notice of graduation, and notification/participation issues.

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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.