

## New Jersey Department of Education Special Education Monitoring

**District:** Southampton Township School District

**County:** Burlington

**Monitoring Dates:** October 11-12, 2005

**Monitoring Team:** Jane Marano and Kenneth Richards

### ***Background Information:***

During the 2004-2005 school year, the Southampton Township School District conducted a self-assessment of policies, procedures, programs, services and student outcomes. This self-assessment component of the monitoring process provided the Southampton Township 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 Southampton Township School District developed an improvement plan to address identified areas of need.

The Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) conducted an on-site monitoring to verify the self-assessment findings, to assess the appropriateness of the improvement plan, and to determine the progress in implementing the plan.

During the on-site visit, the New Jersey Department of Education (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 special education administrators, building principals, general education and special education teachers, speech-language specialists and child study team members. Parents of students with disabilities were interviewed by phone.

### **Data Summary:**

A review of the district's data for students with disabilities indicates that during the 2004-2005 school year, the district educated 37.7% of students with disabilities (57 students) in the general education setting for more than 80% of the school day. This rate is slightly lower than the state average of 39.2% for that year. This rate has been consistent for the past three years. The majority of students with disabilities, 44.4% or 67 students, are in general education settings between 40 and 80% of the school day. However, the district provides in-class resources programs for all subject areas, team teaching in kindergarten through fifth grade and all special education and basic skill teachers are trained in supplemental reading programs. The rate of students educated

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outside the district was 6% in 2004 and is roughly commensurate with the state average for that year. This rate has decreased slightly over the past three years.

**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 visit involved verification that the sections and areas identified as compliant by the district in their self-assessment were compliant with regulations. These sections were identified by the district during self-assessment and the NJDOE during the monitoring process as compliant: **General Provisions, Procedural Safeguards, Location, Referral and Identification (LRI), Evaluation, Reevaluation, Individualized Education Program (IEP), Least Restrictive Environment (LRE), Transition to Preschool, Discipline, Statewide Assessment (SWA), Graduation and Program and Services.**

Some areas of the sections of Transition to Adult Life and Graduation Requirements were not reviewed as Southampton is not responsible for serving students in the age range to whom these regulations are applicable.

**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.

<b>Section</b>	<b>Areas Demonstrating Compliance</b>
Free, Appropriate Public Education (FAPE)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Oversight of individualized education program (IEP) implementation</li> <li>▪ Extended school year</li> <li>▪ Provision of programs</li> <li>▪ Transfer procedures</li> </ul>
Eligibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Meeting participants</li> <li>▪ Eligibility criteria</li> <li>▪ Signature of agreement and/or disagreement and rationale</li> <li>▪ Statement of eligibility (Specific Learning Disability)</li> </ul>



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***Additional Areas of Need***

The following areas were originally identified by the district’s self-assessment committee as compliant but were found to be noncompliant by the NJDOE during the on-site monitoring.

<b>Section</b>	<b>Area</b>	<b>Activity</b>
Eligibility	Copies of the evaluation report(s) are not provided to parents at least 10 days prior to the eligibility meeting.	The district is directed to revise the improvement plan to include activities to ensure that the child study team or the speech-language specialist, depending on the child’s classification, provide parents with copies of the evaluation report(s) at least 10 days before the eligibility meeting. These activities must include procedures, in-service training and oversight to ensure that parents have the opportunity to review reports prior to the eligibility meeting.
Transition to Adult Life	<p>IEP statement of “transition service needs” is not documented for students with disabilities who will turn age 14 during the timeframe covered by the IEP.</p> <p>Students with disabilities who will turn age 14 during the timeframe covered by the IEP are not invited to the IEP meeting where transition services must be discussed.</p>	<p>The district is directed to revise the improvement plan to include activities to ensure that IEPs for students beginning at age 14 include interests and preferences, courses of study and desired post-school outcomes in the statement of transition services needs. These activities must include procedures, in-service training and oversight to ensure that the transition planning begins at the appropriate time.</p> <p>The district is directed to revise the improvement plan to include activities to ensure that all students with disabilities, who will turn age 14 during the timeframe of the IEP, are invited to attend annual review meetings where transition services are discussed. These activities must include procedures, in-service training and oversight to ensure that the student is afforded the opportunity to provide input into post-secondary planning.</p>

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### ***Summary***

On-site special education monitoring was conducted in the Southampton Township School District on October 11 and 12, 2005. The purpose of the monitoring visit was to verify the district's report of findings resulting from the self-assessment process 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. The district is further acknowledged for the many areas determined by the district and verified by the Office of Special Education Programs as compliant with federal and state statutes and regulations.

A review of the district's data for students with disabilities indicates that during the 2004-2005 school year, the district educated 37.7% of students with disabilities (57 students) in the general education setting for more than 80% of the school day. This rate is slightly lower than the state average of 39.2% for that year. This rate has been consistent for the past three years. The majority of students with disabilities, 44.4% or 67 students, are in general education settings between 40 and 80% of the school day. However, the district provides in-class resources programs for all subject areas, team teaching in kindergarten through fifth grade, and all special education and basic skill teachers are trained in supplemental reading programs. The rate of students educated outside the district was 6% in 2004 and is roughly commensurate with the state average for that year. This rate has decreased slightly over the past three years.

During interviews conducted by phone, parents expressed their satisfaction with the district's programs and services and staff.

Standards identified as consistently compliant by the district during self-assessment and verified during the on-site monitoring visit included General Provisions, Procedural Safeguards, Location, Referral and Identification (LRI), Evaluation, Reevaluation, Individualized Education Program (IEP), Least Restrictive Environment (LRE), Transition to Preschool, Discipline, Statewide Assessment, Graduation and Program and Services.

Areas identified as consistently compliant by the district during self-assessment and verified during the on-site monitoring visit included oversight of IEP implementation, extended school year, provision of programs, transfer procedures, meeting participants, eligibility criteria, signature of agreement and/or disagreement and rationale and statement of eligibility (Specific Learning Disability).

During the self-assessment process, the district identified areas of need regarding provision of related services, provision of goals and objectives for counseling services, and dates and times for frequency and duration of speech services.

The on-site visit identified additional areas of need within the various standards, regarding provision of evaluation report(s) to parents at least 10 days prior to the eligibility meeting, discussion and documentation of "transition service needs" statement in IEP for students with disabilities who will turn age 14 during the timeframe covered by the IEP and invitation to students with disabilities who will turn age 14 during the timeframe covered by the IEP, to IEP meetings which include discussion of transition to adult life.

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Within 45 days of receipt of the monitoring report, the Southampton Township School District will revise and resubmit the improvement plan to the Office of Special Education Programs to address those areas that require revisions.