

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

District: Union Township School District

County: Union

Monitoring Dates: March 19, 2001- March 22, 2001

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Background Information:

During the 1999-2000 school year, the Union Township School District conducted a self-assessment of policies, procedures, programs, services and student outcomes. The self-assessment included the collection of data and information from various sources within the district to determine if the district's practices regarding the provision of special education programs and services meet federal and state requirements. As the first step in the self-assessment process, the parents, staff and members of the community were invited to attend a public focus group meeting.

A steering committee comprised of administrators, educators, the testing coordinator, parents and a Board of Education representative was established to review information. Based on the information collected by the district, a report of findings was developed identifying areas of strength and areas that need improvement. The Union Township School District developed an improvement plan to address the areas of need identified by the district that included activities for compliance and/or improvement and oversight components.

A second public focus group meeting was held in the district on March 8, 2001 prior to the monitoring visit. The New Jersey State Department of Education facilitated this focus group, which included parents and district representatives. At this meeting, some of the concerns identified by parents were lack of placement options, provision of IEPs, teacher training needs, development of behavior intervention plans, limited involvement in the decision-making process, students not invited or barred from attending IEP meetings, lack of transition services and lack of notification to out-of-district students regarding participation in extra-curricular and non-academic activities. Parents expressed positive comments about programs and services for students with disabilities in the middle and high schools and the progress that the district has made in the expansion of programs since a new director and special education supervisor have been hired.

The Office of Special Education Programs conducted an on-site monitoring visit from March 19, 2001 to March 22, 2001 to review the issues identified and to address the appropriateness of the improvement plan as well as the progress made in implementing the plan. During the on-site monitoring visit, the NJDOE team reviewed district documentation including policies and procedures, student count information, master student lists, class lists, schedules of students, teachers, and related service providers and other relevant information, including a representative sample of student records. Interviews were conducted with the district's director of special education, supervisor of special education, building principals, vice principals, assistant superintendent, transition

coordinator, guidance counselor, child study team members, speech and language specialists, special education teachers and regular education teachers. Telephone interviews were conducted with parents of students with disabilities. Visits were made to a number of school buildings and a representative sample of special education classes and in-class support classes were also visited. District compliance with the requirements of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and the New Jersey Administrative Code for Special Education (N.J.A.C. 6A:14) was assessed.

Section I: General Provisions

Summary of Findings:

During the self-assessment process, the district identified the need to provide in-service training for staff regarding the involvement, progress and participation of students with disabilities in the general education curriculum, in classroom activities and in extra-curricular activities. They also identified the need for in-service training for regular educators in the area of strategies and behavioral interventions. The district has developed an improvement plan that is sufficient to address this area of need.

Section II: FAPE

Summary of Findings:

During the self-assessment process the district identified the need to provide all students with disabilities a variety of educational programs and services, convene IEP meetings prior to program changes and provide training to staff regarding transfer procedures. The improvement plan is insufficient to address these areas of need.

Additional areas of need were identified during the on-site monitoring visit regarding extended school year services and counseling schedules.

Areas of Need:

Programs and Services-The district identified the need to provide all students with disabilities, a variety of educational programs and services available to non-disabled students, including nonacademic and extra-curricular programs, services and activities.

- The district is directed to revise the improvement plan to include procedures to ensure the consideration of a full continuum of placement options. The plan must include a mechanism to ensure placement decisions are based on individual needs and not on program and staff availability.

Programs and/or Services Revisions-The district identified the need to convene IEP meetings prior to initiating program changes. During the on-site monitoring visit, it was determined that when there are changes in a student's program and/or services, the district does not consistently convene the IEP team. Instead, the district uses a form (*Minor Modification Individual Education Plan Revision Form*) to document the change(s) being made. These changes are documented in this form after receiving verbal consent from the parent but without convening the full IEP team to discuss the changes and without providing written notice of the proposed changes.

- The district is directed to revise the improvement plan to include procedures to ensure that prior to changing a student's program/services, the district convenes the IEP team to discuss the proposed change(s) and provides the parent with appropriate written notice.

Transfer Procedures-The district identified the need to provide staff development for principals, child study team members, and regular education staff regarding transfer procedures. The district further identified that child study team members need to be informed when classified students move into the district. Additionally, the district identified the need to develop IEPs without delay when IEPs and/or evaluations are not available or are incomplete.

- The district is directed to revise the improvement plan to include procedures to ensure the provision of appropriate programs and services without undue delay when students transfer into the district. The plan must include a mechanism to ensure child study team members are informed, without delay, of any classified student being enrolled in a school to which they are assigned.

Extended School Year-During the on-site monitoring visit, it was determined that extended school year services are not consistently considered or documented in the IEPs of all students with disabilities.

- The district is directed to revise the improvement plan to include procedures to ensure that extended school year services are consistently considered for all classified students and documented in each IEP.

Counseling Schedules-During the on-site monitoring visit, it was determined that although frequency, duration and location of counseling services are documented in students' IEPs, individual service providers do not maintain documentation of the provision of services.

- The district is directed to revise the improvement plan to include the procedure it will follow to ensure the documentation of the provision of related services to individual students.

Section III: Procedural Safeguards

Summary of Findings:

During the self-assessment process, the district identified areas of need regarding training for surrogate parents, consent, notice issues, and native language. Notices regarding Transition are addressed in Section X and Notice of Graduation is addressed in Section XIII of this document. The district's improvement plan does not sufficiently address these areas of need.

Additional areas of need were identified during the on-site monitoring regarding interpreters at meetings and age of majority.

Areas of Need:

Surrogate Parents-The district identified the need to provide training for surrogate parents.

- The district is directed to revise its improvement plan to include procedures to ensure the provision of training for surrogate parents.

Parental Consent-The district identified the need to obtain parental consent prior to conducting an evaluation for special education and related services. The district also identified the need to implement, without undue delay, actions for which parental consent has been obtained. During the on-site monitoring visit, it was determined that the district inconsistently obtained parental consent for evaluations of students identified as potentially eligible speech/language services.

- The district is directed to revise its improvement plan to include procedures to ensure that parental consent is obtained prior to conducting any evaluation. Additionally, the improvement plan must include procedures to ensure that upon receipt of parental consent, the district implements the action for which consent is granted without undue delay.

Notice of a Meeting-The district identified the need to provide notice of a meeting that contains all required components to parents and/or adult students and to hold meetings at mutually agreeable times.

- The district is directed to revise its improvement plan to include procedures to ensure their notices contain all required components. The plan must include a mechanism to ensure meetings are scheduled at a mutually agreeable time. It is recommended that the district use the notices developed by the Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs.

Native Language-The district identified the need to provide written notice and conduct meetings in the native language of the parent, whenever feasible. During the on-site monitoring visit, it was determined that interpreters do not consistently attend meetings for parents and/or students who are non-English speaking.

- The district is directed to revise its improvement plan to include procedures to ensure that written notice is provided and meetings are conducted in the native language of the parent, whenever feasible. The plan must ensure that interpreters are provided at meetings for non-English speaking parents and/or students at no cost to the parents. The improvement plan must include a mechanism to document the attendance of interpreters at meetings.

15/20- Day Timelines-The district identified the need to provide notice of a proposed action no later than 15-days after making a determination, and no less than 15 days prior to implementing the proposed action. The district also identified the need to provide notice within 20-days upon receipt of any written parental request requiring a response in the form of written notice.

- The district is directed to revise its improvement plan to include procedures to ensure that written notice of a proposed action is provided no later than 15 days after making a determination and no less than 15 days prior to implementing the proposed action.
- The district is directed to revise its improvement plan to include procedures to ensure that written notice is provided within 20-days of receiving a written parental request.

Written Notice Enclosures-The district identified the need to provide a copy of N.J.A.C. 6A:14 and the due process hearing rules N.J.A.C. 1:6A when the district determines to conduct or not to conduct an evaluation and provide Written Notice that contains all required components.

- The district is directed to revise its improvement plan to include procedures to ensure a copy of N.J.A.C. 6A:14 and N.J.A.C. 1:6A is provided when the district determines to conduct or not to conduct an evaluation.

Age of Majority- During the on-site monitoring visit, it was determined that the district's IEP does not state that at least three years before the student reaches 18, the parent(s) and the student are informed of their rights regarding the age of majority.

- The district is directed to revise its improvement plan to include procedures to ensure that the notification of transfer of rights at age of majority is provided to both the parent(s) and the student at least three years before the student reaches 18. It is recommended that the district use the IEP form and notice forms developed by the Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs as notification and documentation of the transfer of rights at age of majority.

Section IV: Location, Referral & Identification

Summary of Findings:

During the self-assessment process the district identified areas of need regarding training to regular education staff regarding interventions, documentation of interventions, data review, health form, referral procedures, and Child Find outreach activities. The district has developed an improvement plan that is sufficient to address these areas of need.

Section V: Evaluation

Summary of Findings:

During the self-assessment process, the district identified the need to provide tests in various languages, document a severe discrepancy, sign and date written reports, document the acceptance/rejection of all or parts of reports, include all required components of the functional assessment, meet the 90-day timeline, and obtain parental

consent. The district's improvement plan does not sufficiently address these areas of need.

Areas of Need:

Native Language Assessments-The district identified the need for assessments to be conducted in a student's native language.

- The district is directed to revise its improvement plan to include procedures to ensure that assessments are conducted in the student's native language.

Documentation of Severe Discrepancy/Specific Learning Disability-The district identified the need to document the determination of eligibility for students suspected of having a specific learning disability.

- The district is directed to revise its improvement plan to include procedures to ensure the documentation of the determination of eligibility for students suspected of having a specific learning disability. The statement must include whether there is a discrepancy between achievement and ability.

Written Reports-The district identified the need to sign and date their written reports.

- The district is directed to revise its improvement plan to include procedures to ensure that all written reports are signed and dated.

Acceptance/Rejection of Outside-Reports-The district identified the need to document the acceptance/rejection of reports from other public education agencies, approved clinics or agencies or professionals in private practice.

- The district is directed to revise its improvement plan to include procedures to ensure the documentation of the acceptance of entire or parts of reports and /or assessments from other public education agencies, approved clinics or agencies or professionals in private practice. The improvement plan must also include procedures to ensure the documentation of the rationale for the rejection of the entire or parts of reports and/or assessments.

90-day Timeline-The district identified the need to meet the required 90-day timeline.

- The district is directed to revise its improvement plan to include procedures to ensure that within 90-days of receipt of parental consent for an initial evaluation, the initial evaluation process is completed. The district must ensure it has sufficient staff to comply with this requirement.

Functional Assessments-The district identified the need to include in the evaluation of students eligible for special education and related services all components of the functional assessment. Additionally, during the on-site monitoring it was determined that functional assessments for students eligible for speech/language services did not contain all the required components.

- The district is directed to revise its improvement plan to include procedures to ensure the inclusion of all required components of a functional assessment.

Section VI. Reevaluation

Summary of Findings:

During the self-assessment process the district identified the need to ensure that students are reevaluated every three years or sooner if conditions warrant and include additional data in order to determine the nature and scope of reevaluations of students eligible for special education and related services and speech/language services. Notices are addressed in Section III of this document. The district's improvement plan does not sufficiently address these areas of need.

An additional area of need was identified during the on-site monitoring regarding the reevaluation of students turning age 5.

Areas of Need:

Three Year Timeline-The district identified the need to conduct reevaluations for students' classified for special education and related services within 3 years of the previous classification, or sooner if conditions warrant. During the on-site monitoring visit, it was determined that reevaluations for students classified eligible speech/language services are not conducted within three years of the previous classification or sooner if conditions warrant.

- The district is directed to revise its improvement plan to include procedures to ensure that reevaluations of students eligible for special education and related services and speech/language services are conducted within 3 years of classification or sooner if conditions warrant.

Nature and Scope of Reevaluations-The district identified the need to include additional data as part of its review of data to determine the need for additional data to determine eligibility.

- The district is directed to revise its improvement plan to include procedures to ensure appropriate data is collected for use as part of the data review to be conducted prior to determining the need for additional data during the reevaluation planning meeting.

Age 5-During the on-site monitoring visit, it was determined that the district does not consistently conduct a reevaluation by June 30th of a student's last year in a program for preschoolers with disabilities.

- The district is directed to revise its improvement plan to include procedures to ensure that a reevaluation is conducted by June 30th of a student's last year in a program for preschoolers with disabilities.

Section VII. Eligibility

Summary of Findings:

During the self-assessment process the district identified the need to document eligibility. The district's improvement plan does not sufficiently address this area of need.

An additional area of need was identified during the on-site monitoring visit regarding documentation of the provision of reports to parents.

Area of Need:

Documentation of Eligibility-The district identified the need to document a student's eligibility status when an IEP is not developed at the meeting.

- The district is directed to revise the improvement plan to include procedures to ensure the documentation of the student's eligibility status when an IEP is not developed at the meeting.

Reports to Parents-During the on-site monitoring visit, it was determined that the district inconsistently documents the provision of reports to parents in students' files.

- The district is directed to revise its improvement plan to include procedures to ensure the documentation of the provision of reports to parents in students' files.

Section VIII: Individual Education Program

Summary of Findings:

During the self-assessment process, the district identified areas of need regarding the provision of the IEP to parent(s) prior to implementation, provision of IEPs to teachers, observation of proposed placements, having IEPs in effect before special education and related services are provided, implementation dates in IEPs, review of progress towards goals and objectives, and annual reviews. The district's improvement plan does not sufficiently address these areas of need. Timelines for written notice are addressed in Section II of this document.

Additional areas of need were identified during the on-site monitoring visit regarding participants at IEP meetings, required components of the IEP and changes in programs and/or services.

Areas of Need:

Provision of IEP to Parents-The district identified the need to provide parents with a copy of the IEP prior to implementation and to document in students' files the provision to parents.

- The district is directed to revise the improvement plan to include procedures to ensure that parents are provided with a copy of the IEP prior to implementation and that the provision is documented in students' files.

IEPs to Teachers-The district identified the need to provide teachers with copies of IEPs at the beginning of the school year. During the on-site monitoring, it was determined that IEPs developed after the beginning of the school year, are not provided to classroom teachers in a timely manner.

- The district is directed to revise the improvement plan to include procedures to ensure that teachers have access to the IEPs of students for whom they have educational responsibility.

Observation of the Proposed Placement-The district identified the need to provide parent(s) with the opportunity to observe proposed placements prior to implementation of the IEP.

- The district is directed to revise the improvement plan to include procedures to ensure that parents have the opportunity to observe proposed placements prior to implementation of the IEP.

IEP Implementation-The district identified the need for IEPs to be in effect prior to the provision of special education and/or related services and for IEPs to identify the implementation date.

- The district is directed to revise the improvement plan to include procedures to ensure that IEPs are in effect prior to the provision special education and related services and that the implementation date is specified on the IEP.

Goals and Objectives- During the on-site monitoring visit, it was determined that goals and objectives in IEPs are not measurable and do not consistently align with the Core Curriculum Content Standards.

- The district is directed to revise its improvement plan to include procedures to ensure that IEPs contain measurable goals and objectives that are aligned with the Core Curriculum Content Standards.

Annual Reviews-The district identified the need to review information at annual reviews about the student, including that provided by the parents, current classroom-based assessments and observations, any lack of expected progress in the general curriculum, and the observations of teachers and related service providers. Additionally, the district identified the need to convene IEP meetings annually or more often if necessary and to complete the IEP of an elementary student by June 30th of the student's last year in the elementary program.

- The district is directed to revise the improvement plan to include procedures to ensure the annual review includes a review of all required information to assist the team in determining an appropriate program and services for the student. In addition, procedures must be developed to ensure that meetings are re-convened annually, or more often if necessary, and that the IEP of an elementary student is completed by June 30th of the student's last year in the elementary program.

Meeting Participants-During the on-site monitoring visit, it was determined that regular and special education teachers do not consistently attend IEP meetings.

- The district is directed to revise the improvement plan to include procedures to ensure the participation of both regular education and special education teachers in IEP meetings.

Required IEP Components-During the on-site monitoring visit, it was determined that the district's IEPs do not contain all required components.

- The district is directed to revise the improvement plan to include procedures to ensure that the district's IEPs contain all required components. It is recommended that the district use the IEP form developed by the Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs.

Section IX: Least Restrictive Environment

Summary of Findings:

During the self-assessment process the district identified the need to determine placement based on individual needs. The district's improvement plan does not sufficiently address this area of need.

An additional area of need was identified during the on-site monitoring regarding documentation of least restrictive environment and notification to out-of-district students.

Areas of Need:

Placement Decisions-The district identified the need for placement decisions to be based on the individual needs of students.

- The district is directed to revise the improvement plan to include procedures to ensure that placement decisions for students with disabilities are based on individual needs and not the availability of programs or staff.

Documentation of Least Restrictive Environment-During the on-site monitoring visit, it was determined that the LRE statement does not document the process or considerations that led to the removal from general education.

- The district is directed to revise the improvement plan to include procedures to ensure that the LRE statement includes the necessary information to document the considerations that resulted in the student's removal from general education. It is recommended that the district use the most recent IEP form developed by the Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs.

Notification to Out-of-District Students-During the on-site monitoring visit, it was determined that out-of district students were inconsistently informed of non-academic and extra-curricular activities within the district.

- The district is directed to revise the improvement plan to include procedures to ensure that out-of-district students are consistently informed of non-academic and extra-curricular activities.

Section X: Transition from School to Post-School

Summary of Findings:

During the self-assessment process the district identified areas of need regarding the statement of Transition Service Needs, procedures when an outside agency fails to provide transition services, transition services by outside agencies, consideration of students' preferences and interests, collaboration with outside and community agencies/resources, review and alignment of students' changing goals with transition plans, development and documentation of linkages with agencies, and student invitations. The district has developed an improvement plan that is sufficient to address the areas of need regarding identification of post-school outcome training, agency failure to attend IEP meetings and the identification of post secondary resource liaison.

An additional area of need was identified during the on-site monitoring visit, regarding the Statement of Needed Transition Services.

Area(s) of Need:

Statement of Transition Services Needs-The district identified the need to include the Statement of Transition Service Needs in IEPs.

- The district is directed to revise the improvement plan to include procedures to ensure that for students age 14 or younger, if appropriate, the Statement of Transition Services Needs is included in the IEP and that it identifies the student's interests and preferences, consistently reflects post-school outcomes in the student's course of study and lists courses of study as well as course options in the event identified classes are not available.

Agency Failure to Provide Transition Services-The district identified that it does not have procedures to follow when an outside agency fails to provide agreed transition services for students.

- The district must revise the improvement plan to ensure that it develops procedures for child study teams to follow when an outside agency fails to provide agreed upon transition services.

Monitoring of Transition Services by Outside-Agencies-The district has identified the need to monitor the activities of outside agencies to ensure they provide the services they have agreed to provide.

- The district must revise the improvement plan to include procedures to ensure the district monitors the provision of transition services by outside agencies.

Student Preferences and Interests-The district identified the need to identify other steps to ensure the student's preferences and interests are considered in the planning of any transition services when the student fails to attend an IEP meeting.

- The district is directed to revise the improvement plan to include procedures to ensure the student's preferences and interests are considered in the planning of any transition services when a student fails to attend the IEP meeting.

Collaboration with Community Services/Resources-The district identified the need to establish partnerships with community and outside agencies/resources to facilitate transition activities.

- The district is directed to revise the improvement plan to include procedures to ensure there is an opportunity to collaborate with community and outside agencies/resources.

Review and Alignment of Transition Plans to Students' Goals-The district identified the need to consistently review and align the student's changing goals with the transition plans.

- The district is directed to revise the improvement plan to include procedures that ensure a student's changing goals are consistently reviewed and aligned with the student's transition plans.

Linkages with Agencies- The district has identified the need to establish and strengthen linkages and to document follow-up activities to ensure the consistent provision of transition services.

- The district must revise the improvement plan to include procedures to ensure that linkages with agencies are established. The plan must include documentation of follow-up activities to ensure consistent provision of services.

Invitation to Students and Agencies-The district has identified the need to document the student and agency invitations to attend IEP meetings. Additionally, the district indicated that it must develop procedures to notify the parent that both the student and agencies likely to provide and /or pay for transition services have been invited to the IEP meeting.

- The district is directed to revise the improvement plan to include procedures to ensure that when transition will be discussed at an IEP meeting for students age 14 or younger, both the student and the agency responsible for providing and/or paying for transition services are invited to attend the IEP meeting and that documentation of the letters of invitation is included in the student's file.

Statement of Needed Transition Services-During the on-site monitoring visit, it was determined that the transition section in students' IEPs are not fully addressed or are left blank. In addition, this review indicated there is no consistent relationship between the IEP goals and objectives and the student's desired post-secondary school outcomes.

- The district is directed to revise the improvement plan to include procedures to ensure that beginning at age 16 or younger, if appropriate, the IEP transition section includes a statement of Needed Transition Services. The plan must include a component to ensure the documentation of a relationship between the IEP goals and objectives and the student's desired post-secondary school outcomes.

Section X: Transition from Preschool

Summary of Findings:

During the self-assessment process, the district identified the need to have a transition representative in attendance at the transition planning conference, have transition planning by the child's third birthday and implement the initial IEP no later than age three. The district's improvement plan does not sufficiently address these areas of need.

An additional area of need was identified during the on-site monitoring visit regarding the need to conduct evaluations during the summer months.

Areas of Need:

Participation in the Transition Planning-Conference-The district has identified in the self-assessment document the need to ensure that a child study team member participates in the transition planning conference.

- The district is directed to revise the improvement plan to include procedures to facilitate the district's participation in the transition planning conference arranged by the Department of Health and Senior Services.

Determination of Services/Implementation of IEP by Age Three-The district has identified the need to ensure the provision of services by the child's third birthday.

- The district is directed to revise the improvement plan to include procedures to ensure that preschoolers with disabilities are provided special education and related services by their third birthday.

Evaluations During the Summer Months-During the on-site monitoring visit, it was determined that preschool students are not evaluated during the summer months.

- The district is directed to revise the improvement plan to include procedures to ensure that when necessary, appropriate team members are available to evaluate preschoolers during the summer months.

Section XI: Discipline

Summary Of Findings:

The district identified in the self-assessment document the need to forward written notification of a student's removal to the case manager, conduct Functional Behavioral Assessments (FBA), include the FBA outcomes when developing Behavioral

Intervention Plans (BIPs), include BIPs in students' IEPs, conduct a manifestation determination, provide staff in-service training regarding the area of disciplinary procedures and return students to the original placement after the Interim Alternative Educational Setting (IAES) placement has expired. The district has developed an improvement plan that has addressed these areas of need.

In addition, the district identified the need to provide procedural safeguard rights to students identified as potentially educationally disabled who are suspended.

Area of Need:

Provision of Procedural Safeguards-The district identified the need to provide procedural safeguard rights to students identified as potentially educationally disabled who are suspended.

- The district is directed to revise its improvement plan to include procedures to ensure that students who are identified as potentially disabled are afforded the same procedural safeguards as classified students when a removal from program is considered.

Section XII. Statewide Assessment:

Summary of Findings:

An area of need was identified during the on-site monitoring visit regarding the identification of alternative assessments.

Areas of Need:

Identification of Alternate Assessments-During the on-site monitoring visit, it was determined that the district has not adopted an alternate assessment for those students who cannot participate in statewide and district-wide assessment programs.

- The district is directed to revise the improvement plan to include the adoption of an alternate assessment until such time the department develops one.

Section XIII: Graduation

Summary of Findings:

Areas of need were identified during the on-site monitoring visit regarding the documentation of graduation requirements in students' IEPs and Notice of Graduation.

Areas of Need:

Graduation Requirements in IEPs-During the on-site monitoring visit, it was determined that the district does not document graduation requirements in IEPs.

- The district is directed to revise its improvement plan to include procedures to ensure that beginning at age 14 there are specific graduation requirements documented in IEPs.

Written Notice of Graduation-During the on-site monitoring visit, it was determined that the district does not consistently provide and/or document Written Notice of graduation to parent(s) and students.

- The district is directed to revise the improvement plan to include procedures to ensure the provision of notice prior to graduation and to document this provision.

Section XIV: Programs and Services

Summary of Findings:

The district identified in the self-assessment document areas of need regarding case management responsibilities, consultation time, description of special education programs, and home instruction. 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 monitoring visit regarding instruction in the Core Curriculum Content Standards.

Area of Need:

Core Curriculum Content Standards-During the on-site monitoring visit, it was determined that students in special education programs are not provided instruction in the Core Curriculum Content Standards.

- The district is directed to revise the improvement plan to include procedures to ensure that students in special education programs are provided instruction in the Core Curriculum Content Standards with any necessary modifications in curriculum and instructional strategies unless the IEP specifies instruction of an alternative curriculum due to the nature and severity of the student's disability.

Section XV: Student Records

Summary of Findings:

During the self-assessment process, the district identified the need to develop procedures regarding the maintenance of student records, the provision of student records to parents or adult students upon request, the destruction of student records and to inform staff of the policies and procedures regarding student records. 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 documentation of location of other records.

Area of Need:

Documentation of Location of Other Records-During the on-site monitoring visit, it was determined that students' cumulative files do document the location of other files.

- The district is directed to revise its improvement plan to include procedures to ensure the documentation of the location of other files in the central file.

SUMMARY

An on-site special education monitoring was conducted in the Union Township School District on March 19-22, 2001. The purpose of the monitoring was to verify the district's report of findings resulting from self-assessment and to review the district's improvement plan. As a result of the thorough and comprehensive review conducted by the district during the self-assessment process, the district was able to self-identify a number of areas that require improvement. Furthermore, the district was able to develop an improvement plan that with revisions will be sufficient to correct the areas of need identified during the self-assessment.

At a focus group meeting held prior to the on-site monitoring, parents expressed positive comments about programs and services for students with disabilities in the middle and high schools and the progress that the district has made in the expansion of programs since the employment of the new director and supervisor. Parents also expressed some concerns regarding lack of placement options, provision of IEPs, teacher training needs, development of behavior intervention plans, limited involvement in the decision-making process, students not invited to IEP meetings, lack of transition services and lack of notification to out-of-district students regarding their participation in extracurricular and nonacademic activities. It should be noted that some of these concerns as well as a number of other areas, were also identified by the district during the self-assessment process and the district has already initiated actions to bring about improvement in many of these areas.

The on-site monitoring visit identified additional areas of need regarding documentation, written notice, procedural requirements, referrals, evaluation and reevaluation, related services, transition and IEPs.

Within forty-five (45) days of receipt of this monitoring report, the district will revise and resubmit its improvement plan to the Office of Special Education. In areas requiring the development of procedures, the improvement plan must include an administrative oversight component to ensure consistent implementation. In addition, any improvement plan activity that requires staff development should include a mechanism to determine the effectiveness of the in-service.