

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

District: Wyckoff School District

County: Bergen

Monitoring Dates: February 9, 2004

Monitoring Team: Jenifer Spear and Gladys Miller

Background Information:

During the 2002–2003 school year, the Wyckoff School District conducted a self-assessment of policies, procedures, programs, services, and student outcomes. This self-assessment component of the monitoring process provided the Wyckoff 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 Wyckoff 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.

The New Jersey Department of Education (NJDOE) held a focus group meeting for parents and community members at the Eisenhower Middle School on February 4, 2004. Information obtained from that meeting was used to direct the focus of the monitoring visit.

During the on-site visit, 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, speech therapists and child study team members.

District Strengths:

The district is commended for its intensive pupil assistance program. Every child's academic performance is reviewed four times a year by the school principal and the social worker. If it appears that a student is having difficulty, the child is referred to the Pupil Assistance Committee (PAC). The PAC, which is comprised of all teachers divided into grade level teams, CST members, the principal and parents, meets every week during the school day. One of the interventions recommended is the Academic

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Support Program (ASP). The ASP is facilitated by a certified reading specialist who customizes a reading program for each student.

The district is also commended for providing a full time social worker in every building. The social worker assists with the PAC process, facilitates parent training programs during and after the school day, and is a member of the child study team. Additionally, the use of a building based social worker contributes to a positive school climate by providing interventions for general education teachers in implementing educational and behavioral strategies within the classroom.

The district is further commended for its parent training opportunities. Child study team members, guidance counselors and principals have collaborated and implemented parent training on the following topics this year: Homework without Tears, Fostering Respect, Bullying and Peer Relationships, Transition Process and Learning Styles.

Data Summary:

The district is commended for its successful efforts in placing students with disabilities in the least restrictive environment. Based on a review of district data from the 2001 and 2002 school years, over 70% of classified students are educated with their non-disabled peers more than 80% of the school day. This exceeds the state average of 41.6%. The district is recognized for its efforts to continually increase the number of pre-school students educated with non-disabled peers. The district has developed a district-wide goal to increase the opportunity for disabled pre-schoolers to be placed in the general education setting.

Areas Demonstrating Compliance With All Standards:

General Provisions, Reevaluation and Graduation Requirements were determined to be areas of compliance by the district during self-assessment and by the Office of Special Education Programs during the on-site visit.

Section II: Free, Appropriate Public Education (FAPE)

Summary of Findings:

During self-assessment the district accurately identified themselves compliant in the areas of length of school day and year, provision of related services, goals and objectives for related services, documentation of frequency, duration, and location of services, transfer procedures for students eligible for special education and related services, facilities and certifications.

During the self-assessment process, the district identified concerns in the areas of transfer student procedures for students eligible for speech and language services and extended school year. The district's improvement plan is sufficient to address these areas. The district has implemented activities to bring these areas into compliance.

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

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Section III: Procedural Safeguards

Summary of Findings:

During self-assessment the district accurately identified themselves compliant in the areas of consent, meetings, written notice, native language and independent evaluations.

During the self-assessment process, the district identified concerns in the areas of surrogate parents and content and provision of notices of meetings. The district's improvement plan is sufficient to address these areas. The area of surrogate parents has been brought into compliance as the Wyckoff Board of Education has adopted a surrogate parent policy. The district has implemented activities to bring the area of content and provision of notice of meeting into compliance.

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

Section IV: Location, Referral and Identification

Summary of Findings:

During self-assessment the district accurately identified themselves compliant in the areas of child find, referral process, direct referrals, identification meetings, participants and timelines, health summary and vision and hearing screenings.

During the self-assessment process, the district identified concerns in the area of documentation of pre-referral interventions. The district's improvement plan is sufficient to address this area. The district has implemented activities to bring this area into compliance.

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

Section V: Evaluation

Summary of Findings:

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

During the self-assessment process, the district identified concerns in the area of multi-disciplinary evaluations. The district's improvement plan is sufficient to address this area. The district has implemented activities to bring these areas into compliance.

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

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Section VII: Eligibility

Summary of Findings:

During self-assessment the district accurately identified themselves compliant in the areas of meetings, participants, documentation of eligibility for students eligible for special education and related services, signatures of agreement and disagreement and criteria.

During the self-assessment process, the district identified concerns in the areas of provision of a copy of evaluation reports to parents ten days prior to the eligibility meeting and documentation of eligibility for students eligible for speech and language services. The district's improvement plan is sufficient to address these areas. The district has implemented activities to bring these areas into compliance.

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

Section VIII: Individualized Education Program (IEP)

Summary of Findings:

During self-assessment the district accurately identified themselves compliant in the areas of meetings, participants, ninety day timelines for students age 6-21, implementation dates for students age 6-21, provision of IEP to parents, considerations and required statements for students eligible for special education and related services, age of majority and annual review timelines.

During the self-assessment process, the district identified concerns in the areas of ninety-day timelines for students entering pre-school, implementation dates for students entering pre-school, teacher knowledge and access, considerations and required statements for students eligible for speech and language services, present levels of educational performance, and goals and objectives. The district's improvement plan is sufficient to address these areas. The district has implemented activities to bring these areas into compliance.

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

Section IX: Least Restrictive Environment (LRE)

Summary of Findings:

During self-assessment the district accurately identified themselves compliant in the areas of individualized decision making process, Oberti factors, consideration and documentation of supplementary aids and services, regular education access and continuum of programs.

During the self-assessment process the district identified concerns in the area of nonacademic and extracurricular participation for out-of-district students. The district's

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improvement plan is sufficient to address this area. The district has implemented activities to bring these areas into compliance.

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

Section X: Transition to Pre-school

Summary of Findings:

During self-assessment the district accurately identified themselves compliant in the area of pre-school transition planning conference.

During the self assessment process, the district identified concerns in the area of placement in pre-school by age 3. The district's plan is sufficient to address this area. The district has implemented activities to bring these areas into compliance.

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

Section X: Transition to Post-School

Summary of Findings:

During self-assessment the district accurately identified themselves compliant in the areas of student and agency invitation and agency involvement.

During the self assessment process, the district identified concerns in the area of age 14 transition service needs, preferences and interests. The district's plan is sufficient to address this area. The district has implemented activities to bring these areas into compliance. The area of age 16 needed transition services is not applicable as the Wyckoff School District is a K-8 district.

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

Section XI: Discipline

Summary of Findings:

During self-assessment the district accurately identified themselves compliant in the areas of suspension tracking, behavior intervention plans, functional behavior assessment, manifestation determination and interim alternate education setting.

During the self-assessment process, the district identified concerns in the areas of procedural safeguards, documentation to case manager and documentation of student progress when a series of removals is not considered a change in placement. The district's improvement plan is sufficient to address these areas. The district has implemented activities to bring these areas into compliance.

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

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Section XII: Statewide Assessments

Summary of Findings:

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

During the self-assessment process, the district identified concerns in the areas of alternate assessments and child study team knowledge of statewide assessments. The district's improvement plan is sufficient to address these areas. The district has implemented activities to bring these areas into compliance.

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

Section XIV: Programs and Services

Summary of Findings:

During self-assessment the district accurately identified themselves compliant in the areas of age range, class sizes, group sizes and home instruction.

During the self-assessment process, the district identified concerns in the area of consultation time. The district's improvement plan is sufficient to address this area. The district has implemented activities to bring these areas into compliance.

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

Section XV: Student Records

Summary of Findings:

During self-assessment the district accurately identified themselves compliant in the areas of access sheets, maintenance and destruction of records and documentation of other locations.

During the self-assessment process, the district identified concerns in the areas of parent and adult student access to records and staff knowledge of policies and procedures. The district's improvement plan is sufficient to address these areas.

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

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Summary

On-site special education monitoring was conducted in the Wyckoff School District on February 9, 2004. 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 outstanding accomplishment of identifying all areas of need during the self-assessment process and for developing an improvement plan that will bring about systemic change. The district is further commended for the immediate implementation of activities to bring about correction of many of the areas of need identified during the self-assessment process as well as 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.

The district is commended for its goal to increase the number of pre-school students with disabilities who are educated in general education and integrated settings. Additionally, data indicates the district educates a significant number of school aged students in regular education settings for more than 80% of the school day.

At a focus group meeting held during the on-site monitoring visit, many parents expressed their satisfaction with the district's programs and services. Additionally, parents commented on the accessibility of team members and teachers. However, some parents are displeased that their children must make a choice between taking an elective or academic support class since these classes are scheduled during the same instructional period.

Areas identified as consistently compliant by the district during self-assessment and verified during the on-site monitoring visit included, policies and procedures, staff and parent training, dissemination of IDEA information, length of school day and year, provision of programs and related services, goals and objectives for related services, documentation of frequency, duration, and location of related services, transfer procedures for students eligible for special education and related services, facilities, certifications, consent, meetings, written notice, notices in native language, independent evaluations, child find, referral process, direct referrals, identification meeting, timelines and participants, health summary, vision and hearing screenings, standardized assessments, functional assessments, written reports, acceptance and rejection of reports, bilingual evaluations, reevaluation timelines, reevaluation planning meetings and participants, reevaluations completed by June 30 of students last year in preschool, eligibility meetings and participants, statement of eligibility for students eligible for special education and related services, signatures of agreement and disagreement, eligibility criteria, IEP meeting and participants, ninety day timelines for students age 6-21, implementation dates for students age 6-21, provision of IEP to parents, consideration and required statements for students eligible for special education and related services, age of majority, annual review timelines, individualized decision making process, Oberti factors, consideration of supplementary aids and services, regular education access, continuum of programs, preschool transition conference, student and agency invitation, agency involvement, suspension tracking, behavior improvement plan, functional behavior assessment, manifestation determination, interim alternative educational setting, approved accommodations and modifications for statewide assessments, participation in statewide assessments, IEP documentation, graduation requirements, age range, class size, group sizes, home instruction, access sheets, maintenance and destruction and documentation of other location.

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During the self-assessment process, the district identified areas of need regarding transfer procedures for students eligible for speech and language services, extended school year, surrogate parents, notice of meeting, documentation of pre-referral interventions, multi-disciplinary evaluations, copy of evaluation reports to parents, documentation of eligibility for students eligible for speech and language services, ninety day timelines for pre-school students, implementation dates for pre-school students, teacher access and responsibility, considerations and required statements for students eligible for speech and language services, present levels of educational performance, goals and objectives, nonacademic and extracurricular participation for out of district students, early intervention to pre-school by age three, age 14 transition service needs, preferences and interests, discipline procedural safeguards, documentation to case manager, documentation of progress during a series of short term removals, alternate assessments, CST knowledge of APA, consultation time, parent and adult student access and requests and staff knowledge of policies and procedures.

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