

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

School: Oceanside Charter School

County: Atlantic

Monitoring Dates: February 8 and 9, 2006

Monitoring Team: Patricia Fair and Cheryl Merical

Background Information:

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

The Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) conducted an onsite 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 onsite visit, the New Jersey Department of Education (NJDOE) monitoring team reviewed school documents, including school policies and procedures, student count information, master student lists, class lists, schedules of students, teachers and related service personnel and other relevant information. A representative sample of student records was also reviewed. Interviews were conducted with the school's special education administrators, building principals, general education and special education teachers, and child study team members. Parents of students with disabilities were interviewed by phone.

Data Summary:

A review of the school's data for students with disabilities indicated that during the 2004-2005 school year, the school classification rate was 9.24% which was lower than the state rate for that year of 16.57%. During the same year, 10.3% (3 of 29 students) of students with disabilities were educated in the general education setting for more than 80% of the school day. Although this rate was significantly below the state average of 41.9% for the 2004-2005 school year, data for the 2005-2006 school year indicates that this rate has increased to 35.1% (13 of 37 students) which demonstrates a positive trend.

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Sections Demonstrating Compliance with All Standards

The self-assessment process required the school to review implementation of federal and state regulations categorized into 15 sections. Within each section, a number of areas were reviewed. The onsite monitoring visit involved verification that the sections and areas identified as compliant by the school in their self-assessment were compliant with regulations. These sections were identified by the charter school during self-assessment and the NJDOE during the monitoring process as compliant with regulations:

- General Provisions
- Discipline
- Reevaluation
- Statewide Assessments
- Least Restrictive Environment (LRE)
- Graduation
- Transition to Preschool
- Programs & Services
- Transition to Adult Life

Areas Demonstrating Compliance

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

Section	Areas Demonstrating Compliance
Free, Appropriate Public Education (FAPE)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Oversight of individualized education program (IEP) implementation ▪ Extended school year ▪ Provision of programs ▪ Transfer procedures
Procedural Safeguards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Consent ▪ Implementation without undue delay ▪ Provision of notice of a meeting ▪ Content of notice of a meeting (ESERS) ▪ Meetings ▪ Provision of written notice ▪ Notices in native language ▪ Interpreters at meetings ▪ Independent evaluations
Location, Referral and Identification (LRI)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Child Find Ages 3-21 ▪ Referral process ▪ Pre-referral interventions ▪ Direct referrals ▪ Identification meeting timelines (ESERS) ▪ Identification meeting participants
Evaluation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Multi-disciplinary evaluations ▪ Standardized assessments ▪ Bilingual evaluations ▪ Written reports prepared by evaluators

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Section	Areas Demonstrating Compliance
Eligibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Meeting participants ▪ Eligibility criteria ▪ Signature of agreement and/or disagreement and rationale ▪ Statement of eligibility (Specific Learning Disability)
Individualized Education Program (IEP)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Meeting participants ▪ IEP required considerations and components ▪ Implementation dates ▪ Meetings held annually, or more often if necessary, to review and/or revise the IEP ▪ Annual reviews completed by June 30 ▪ Teachers informed of their responsibilities (knowledge of and/or access to IEPs) ▪ 90-day timelines

Areas of Noncompliance – Improvement Plan Review

The following areas were identified by the school's self-assessment committee as noncompliant. The table below provides the status of the NJDOE compliance review.

Section	Area	Compliance Review
FAPE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Provision of related services – the school reported that related services do not always begin by the IEP implementation date because at times, the agency providing services through a contractual arrangement does not have a sufficient number of providers available. 	Improvement plan is sufficient
LRI	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Health summary and vision and hearing screening – These are not consistently completed prior to identification meetings. 	The school is directed to implement improvement activities to ensure that a health summary and results of vision and hearing screenings are forwarded to the child study team prior to the identification meeting. The improvement activities must include an administrative oversight component to ensure correction and ongoing compliance.

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Additional Areas of Need

The following areas were originally identified by the school's self-assessment committee as compliant, but were found to be noncompliant by the NJDOE during the onsite monitoring visit.

Section	Area	Improvement Plan
Procedural Safeguards	<p>Content of notice of a meeting (ESLS) – Notice of a meeting for students eligible for speech and language services is missing the statement informing parents that they have the right to invite others with expertise to a meeting.</p> <p>Content of written notice – Written notices do not consistently document a description of factors used in making the decision, options considered and rejected, why rejected, and a description of other relevant factors.</p>	<p>The school is directed to implement improvement activities to ensure that notice of a meeting includes all the required components. The school is advised to use the notices developed by the NJDOE available on the web at www.state.nj.us/education. The school must implement an administrative oversight mechanism to ensure correction and ongoing compliance.</p> <p>The school is directed to implement improvement activities to ensure that written notice includes all required components. These improvement activities will ensure that parents are fully informed of the decisions made at the meeting and the factors considered in making the decisions. The school is advised to use the notices developed by the NJDOE available on the web at www.state.nj.us/education. The school must implement an administrative oversight mechanism to ensure correction and ongoing compliance.</p>
LRI	<p>Identification meeting timelines (ESLS) – 20-day timelines could not be verified because the date the referral was received could not be determined.</p>	<p>The school is directed to implement improvement activities to ensure that when a referral is received for a student with a speech problem, documentation of the date of receipt of referral is maintained and identification meetings are conducted within 20 days of the date of receipt. The school must implement an administrative oversight mechanism to ensure correction and ongoing compliance.</p>
Evaluation	<p>Functional assessments - Evaluation reports do not include all parts of a functional assessment.</p>	<p>The school is directed to implement improvement activities to ensure that all parts of functional assessments are conducted and included in initial evaluation reports. These activities will ensure that reports contain sufficient information upon which eligibility determinations can be made. The school must implement an administrative oversight</p>

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Section	Area	Improvement Plan
	Educational impact statement (ESLS) – Speech-language evaluations do not include an educational impact statement from the classroom teacher.	<p>mechanism to ensure correction and ongoing compliance.</p> <p>The school is directed to implement improvement activities to ensure that speech and language evaluations include a summary of the written information obtained from the classroom teacher documenting the educational impact created by the student’s speech problem. The school must implement an administrative oversight mechanism to ensure correction and ongoing compliance.</p>
Eligibility	Copy of evaluation reports to parents –The school does not document that evaluation reports are sent to parents and/or adult students 10 days prior to the eligibility meeting.	The school is directed to implement improvement activities to ensure that copies of evaluation reports are sent to parents 10 days prior to eligibility meetings. The school must implement an administrative oversight mechanism to ensure correction and ongoing compliance.
IEP	IEP provided to parent prior to implementation – The school does not document that parents are provided a copy of the IEP when the parent is not in attendance at the annual review meeting.	The school is directed to implement improvement activities to ensure that there is documentation that parents and/or adult students are provided a copy of the IEP prior to its implementation, whether or not the parents attend the annual review meeting. These activities will ensure that parents have a description of the programs and services their children will receive prior to the start of the program. The school must implement an administrative oversight mechanism to ensure correction and ongoing compliance.

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Summary

Onsite special education monitoring was conducted in the Oceanside Charter School on February 8 and 9, 2006. The purpose of the monitoring visit was to verify the school's report of findings resulting from their self-assessment and to review the school's improvement plan. The school is acknowledged for the comprehensive review conducted during the self-assessment process. The school is further acknowledged for the many areas determined by the school and verified by the OSEP as compliant with federal and state statutes and regulations.

A review of the school's data for students with disabilities indicated that during the 2004-2005 school year, the school classification rate was 9.24% which was lower than the state rate for that year of 16.57%. During the same year, 10.3% (3 of 29 students) of students with disabilities were educated in the general education setting for more than 80% of the school day. Although this rate was significantly below the state average of 41.9% for the same school year, data for the 2005-2006 school year indicate that this rate has increased to 35.1% (13 of 37 students) which demonstrates a positive trend.

During interviews conducted with parents by phone, many parents expressed their satisfaction with the school's programs and services. All parents interviewed reported that communication between the child study team and teachers is excellent. Parents felt they were well informed and part of the decision making process regarding their children's placements and progress.

Sections identified as consistently compliant by the school during self-assessment and verified during the onsite monitoring visit included:

- General Provisions
- Reevaluation
- Least Restrictive Environment (LRE)
- Transition to Preschool
- Transition to Adult Life
- Discipline
- Statewide Assessments
- Graduation
- Programs & Services

Areas identified as consistently compliant by the school during self-assessment and verified during the onsite monitoring visit included:

- Oversight of individualized education program (IEP) implementation
- Extended school year
- Provision of programs
- Transfer procedures
- Consent
- Implementation without undue delay
- Provision of notice of a meeting
- Content of notice of a meeting (ESERS)
- Meetings
- Provision of written notice
- Notices in native language
- Interpreters at meetings
- Independent evaluations
- Child Find Ages 3-21
- Referral process
- Pre-referral interventions
- Direct Referrals
- Identification meeting timelines (ESERS)
- Identification meeting participants
- Multi-disciplinary evaluations
- Standardized Assessments

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- Bilingual evaluations
- Written reports prepared by evaluators
- Meeting participants (eligibility and IEP)
- Eligibility criteria
- Signature of agreement and/or disagreement and rationale
- Statement of eligibility (Specific Learning Disability)
- IEP required considerations and components
- Implementation dates
- Meetings held annually, or more often if necessary, to review and/or revise the IEP
- Annual reviews completed by June 30
- Teachers informed of their responsibilities (knowledge of and/or access to IEPs)
- 90-day timelines

During the self-assessment process, the school identified areas of need regarding:

- Provision of related services
- Health summary
- Vision and hearing screenings

The onsite visit identified additional areas of need, within the various sections, regarding:

- Content of notice of a meeting (ESLS)
- Content of written notice
- Identification meeting timelines (ESLS)
- Educational impact statement (ESLS)
- Functional assessments
- Copy of evaluation reports to parents
- IEP provided to parent prior to implementation

The improvement plan submitted to OSEP has been reviewed and approved. The school is expected to implement the activities described in the monitoring report to achieve compliance in all of the areas of need identified during self-assessment, and areas of need identified during the onsite visit, within six months of the date of this report. Verification of compliance will be conducted by the County Office of Education.