

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

Charter School: Princeton Charter School **County:** Mercer

Monitoring Dates: December 1, 2005

Monitoring Team: Kenneth Richards and Cheryl Merial

Background Information:

During the 2004-2005 school year, the Princeton Charter School conducted a self-assessment of policies, procedures, programs, services and student outcomes. This self-assessment component of the monitoring process provided the Princeton 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 Princeton Charter School 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 charter school documents, including charter school policies and procedures, student count information, master student lists, class lists, schedules of teachers and related service personnel and other relevant information. A representative sample of student records was also reviewed. Interviews were conducted with the charter school administrators, the special education administrator, building principals, general education teachers, a special education teacher and child study team members. Parents of students with disabilities were interviewed by telephone.

Data Summary:

During the 2004-2005 school year, 280 students attended the Princeton Charter School with 11 students classified as eligible for special education and related services. The charter school's classification rate for that year was 3.93% as compared to the state classification rate of 14.61%. The charter school educated 100% of students with disabilities in the general education setting for more than 80% of the school day as compared to the state rate of 41.9 %.

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Sections Demonstrating Compliance with All Standards

The self-assessment process required the charter school 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 charter school in their self-assessment were compliant with regulations. These sections were identified by the school during the self-assessment and the NJDOE during the monitoring process as compliant: General Provisions, Reevaluation and Discipline.

Areas Not Applicable:

Transition to Preschool, the statement of “needed transition services”, identification of post-secondary liaison, activities, annual goals and benchmarks related to the student’s desired outcomes, out-of-district participation in graduation exercises and written notice of graduation were areas not reviewed by the NJDOE because the district does not serve a population of students for which the NJDOE would require these services.

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.

Section	Areas Demonstrating Compliance
Free, Appropriate Public Education (FAPE)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Oversight of Individualized Education Program (IEP) implementation ▪ Provision of programs ▪ Provision of related services ▪ Transfer procedures
Procedural Safeguards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Consent ▪ Implementation without undue delay ▪ Provision of notice of meeting (ESERS) ▪ Meetings ▪ Provision of written notice ▪ Notice in native language ▪ Interpreters at meetings ▪ Independent evaluations
Location, Referral and Identification (LRI)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Referral process ▪ Pre-referral interventions ▪ Direct referrals ▪ Health summary ▪ Vision and hearing screenings ▪ Identification meeting timelines (ESLS)

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Section	Areas Demonstrating Compliance
Evaluation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Multi-disciplinary evaluations ▪ Educational impact statement (ESLS) ▪ Standardized Assessments ▪ Bilingual evaluations ▪ Written reports prepared by evaluators
Eligibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Eligibility meeting participants (ESERS) ▪ 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"> ▪ IEP required considerations and components (ESERS) ▪ Teachers informed of their responsibilities (knowledge of and/or access to IEPs) ▪ IEP provided to parent prior to implementation ▪ Meetings held annually, or more often if necessary, to review and/or revise the IEP (ESLS) ▪ 90-day timelines ▪ Implementation dates
Least Restrictive Environment (LRE)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Documentation of LRE decisions ▪ Notification of and participation in nonacademic and extra-curricular activities for students educated outside the district
Statewide Assessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Participation documented in the IEP (ESERS) ▪ Approved accommodations and modifications documented in the IEP
Programs and Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Age range ▪ Class size

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Areas of Noncompliance – Improvement Plan Review

The following areas were identified by the charter school’s self-assessment committee as noncompliant. The charter school must revise the improvement plan for any area where there is an ‘X’ in the ‘Needs Revision’ column.

Section	Area	Plan Is Sufficient	Plan Needs Revision	Implemented and the charter school has demonstrated compliance
IEP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Meeting participants (ESERS) – due to scheduling, the special education teacher does not consistently attend IEP meetings. ▪ Meetings held annually, or more often if necessary, to review and/or revise the IEP (ESERS) – due to the lack of a sufficient database and availability of staff, IEPs for students are not reviewed on an annual basis. 	X		
Least Restrictive Environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Continuum, placement decisions based on student’s individual needs and opportunity for all students with disabilities to access all general education programs – the charter school indicated that existing program options must be reviewed to determine if there is a need to develop resource program options. The charter school identified potential barriers as financial restraints and a lack of space for the resource program. 	X		
Programs and Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Common planning time – common planning time is not provided due to scheduling conflicts and a lack of knowledge of regulations. 	X		

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Additional Areas of Need

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

Section	Area	Activity
Free and Appropriate Public Education	Extended School Year (ESY) – The need for ESY services is not consistently discussed and considered for each student at the annual review meeting.	The charter school is directed to revise the improvement plan to include activities to ensure that the ESY program is considered and discussed for each student at the annual review meeting. These activities must include procedures, in-service training and oversight to ensure that students who need an ESY program receive it as determined by the IEP team.
Procedural Safeguards	<p>Content of notice of a meeting – Notice of meeting does not consistently inform the parent of their right to invite others with expertise and inform them that transition service plans will be developed for students who are age 14 and older.</p> <p>Content of written notice (ESLS) – Due process hearing rules are not consistently provided to the parent when a determination is made to either evaluate or not evaluate a student who may be eligible for speech-language services.</p> <p>Content of written notice (ESERS) – Although the district's notice forms include the required elements, record review</p>	<p>The charter school is directed to revise the improvement plan to include activities to ensure that the notice of meeting includes all required components. It is recommended that the charter school adopt the notice of meeting developed by the OSEP. These activities must include procedures, in-service training and oversight to ensure that parents are provided the appropriate information prior to meetings.</p> <p>The charter school is directed to revise the improvement plan to include activities to ensure that the due process hearing rules are provided to a parent of a student (ESLS) when a determination is made to either evaluate or not evaluate a student. These activities must include procedures, in-service training and oversight to ensure consistent implementation.</p> <p>The charter school is directed to revise the improvement plan to include activities to ensure that all required components of written notice are documented. These activities must include procedures, in-service training and oversight. It is</p>

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	<p>indicated that those elements are not consistently completed, with a number of the items left blank.</p> <p>Notice of meeting (ESLS) – Notice of meeting was not consistently provided.</p>	<p>recommended that the charter school adopt the written notices developed by the OSEP.</p> <p>The charter school is directed to revise the improvement plan to include activities to ensure that the notice of meeting is provided to the parent prior to a meeting. These activities must include procedures, in-service training and oversight to ensure the parent is informed of the purpose of the meeting, staff attending the meeting and the right to reschedule if the meeting time is not convenient.</p>
Location, Referral and Identification	<p>Identification meeting participants – All required participants do not attend identification meetings conducted for students referred to the child study team or speech-language specialist.</p> <p>Identification meeting timelines (ESERS)– Identification meetings are not consistently conducted for students referred to the child study team within 20-days of receipt of a referral. In addition, identification meetings are not conducted by the child study team when the parent does not attend, even after multiple attempts were made to involve parents.</p>	<p>The charter school is directed to revise the improvement plan to include activities to ensure that all required participants attend identification meetings conducted for students (ESERS and ESLS). These activities must include procedures, in-service training and oversight to ensure that all required decision makers have the opportunity for input.</p> <p>The charter school is directed to revise the improvement plan to include activities to ensure that the identification meetings for students referred to the child study team are conducted within 20-days of receipt of the referral. These activities must include procedures, in-service training and oversight to ensure that there is no delay in the identification of students requiring a child study team evaluation.</p>
Evaluation	Functional Assessments (ESLS) – Evaluations do not consistently include a teacher interview, parent interview and a structured observation	The charter school is directed to revise the improvement plan to include activities to ensure that the functional assessments conducted for students (ESLS) contain all required components. These activities must include procedures, in-service training and oversight to ensure that a

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	<p>in other than a testing session.</p> <p>Functional Assessments (ESERS) – Evaluations do not consistently include a classroom observation, review of interventions, developmental history and other informal measures.</p>	<p>variety of assessments are included in evaluations. The charter school is encouraged to use the speech and language report template developed by the NJDOE available on the website at www.state.nj.us/education.</p> <p>The charter school is directed to revise the improvement plan to include activities to ensure that the functional assessments conducted for students (ESERS) contain all required components. These activities must include procedures, in-service training and oversight to ensure that a variety of assessments is included in the evaluation.</p>
Eligibility	<p>Meeting participants (ESLS) – General education teachers do not consistently attend eligibility meetings.</p> <p>Copies of evaluation reports to parents – Lack of documentation prohibited verification of the provision of reports to parents.</p>	<p>The charter school is directed to revise the improvement plan to include activities to ensure that general education teachers attend eligibility meetings conducted for ESLS students. These activities must include procedures, in-service training and oversight to ensure that all required participants have the opportunity to participate in eligibility decisions.</p> <p>The charter school is directed to revise the improvement plan to include activities to ensure that copies of evaluation reports are provided to parents at least 10 days prior to a meeting and that the provision of reports is documented in student records. These activities must include procedures, in-service training and oversight to ensure parents have the opportunity to review reports prior to participating in eligibility decisions.</p>
IEP	<p>Meeting participants (ESLS) – General education teachers do not consistently attend IEP meetings.</p> <p>Student and agency invitation to IEP meetings - Students</p>	<p>The charter school is directed to revise the improvement plan to include activities to ensure that general education teachers attend IEP meetings conducted for students receiving speech and language services. These activities must include procedures, in-service training and oversight to ensure that all required participants have the opportunity to provide input at the meeting.</p> <p>The charter school is directed to revise the improvement plan to include activities to ensure that those students who turn age 14 during the</p>

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	<p>who are age 13 and turn age 14 during the timeframe of the IEP are not consistently invited to IEP meetings when transition services are discussed.</p> <p>IEP required considerations and components (ESLS) - IEPs developed for students receiving speech and language services do not contain all required components.</p>	<p>timeframe of the IEP are invited to attend IEP meetings (ESERS). These activities must include procedures, in-service training and oversight to ensure that the students have the opportunity to participate in the development of their transition services.</p> <p>The charter school is directed to revise the improvement plan to include activities to ensure that IEPs developed for students receiving speech and language services contain all required components. It is recommended that the charter school adopt the ESLS IEP developed by the OSEP. These activities must include procedures, in-service training and oversight to ensure that the IEPs contain all required components.</p>
Transition to Adult Life	Beginning at age 14, IEP statement of "transition service needs" - A statement of transition service needs is not consistently documented in IEPs for students who turn age 14 during the year covered by the IEP.	The charter school is directed to revise the improvement plan to include activities to ensure that a statement of transition service needs is developed and documented in the IEP for students (ESERS) who turn age 14 during the IEP year. These activities must include procedures, in-service training and oversight to ensure that beginning at age 14, transition service needs are identified for every student.
Statewide Assessment	Participation documented in IEPs (ESLS) - IEPs do not contain documentation of participation in statewide assessment.	The charter school is directed to revise the improvement plan to include activities to ensure that IEPs developed for students receiving speech and language services document participation in statewide assessment. These activities must include procedures, in-service training and oversight to ensure that the IEPs include the accommodations a student needs to access state assessments.
Graduation	IEP requirements - High School graduation requirements are not documented in IEPs of students turning age 14 during the timeframe of the IEP.	The charter school is directed to revise the improvement plan to include activities to ensure that the IEP documents high school graduation requirements for all students beginning at age 14. These activities must include procedures, in-service training and oversight to ensure that transition planning begins early.
Programs and Services	Group size - IEPs do not document if speech therapy will be provided	The charter school is directed to revise the improvement plan to include activities to ensure that the IEP documents group size for the provision

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	on an individual or group basis. If in a group, the IEP does not document the size of the group if less than 5 students.	of speech therapy if the group size will be less than 5. These activities must include procedures, in-service training and oversight to ensure that students receive services based on individual needs.

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Summary

On-site special education monitoring was conducted in the Princeton Charter School on December 1, 2005. The purpose of the monitoring visit was to verify the charter school's report of findings resulting from their self-assessment and to review the charter school's improvement plan.

During interviews conducted with parents by phone, parents expressed their satisfaction with the charter school's programs, services and staff. Parents indicated that students receive the services provided in the Individualized Education Program (IEP) and that the services provided challenge the students. Parents also indicated that case managers are accessible and that the charter school makes efforts to accommodate the parent to ensure parental participation. Parents indicated that all required teachers do not always attend meetings. One parent expressed the opinion that general education teachers may require additional training to address the needs of students who may require a more diversified program than what is currently provided at the charter school. Parents indicated that reporting student progress is an area of need.

During the 2004-2005 school year, 280 students attended the Princeton Charter School with 11 students classified as eligible for special education and related services. The charter school's classification rate for that year was 3.93% as compared to the state classification rate of 14.61%. The charter school educated 100% of students with disabilities in the general education setting for more than 80% of the school day as compared to the state rate of 41.9 %.

Standards identified as consistently compliant by the charter school during self-assessment and verified during the on-site monitoring visit included General Provisions, Reevaluation and Discipline.

Areas identified as consistently compliant by the charter school during self-assessment and verified during the on-site monitoring visit included oversight of IEP implementation, provision of programs, provision of related services, transfer procedures, consent, implementation without undue delay, provision of notice of meeting for students eligible for special education and related services, meetings, provision of written notice, notice in native language, interpreters at meetings, independent evaluations, referral process, pre-referral interventions, direct referrals, health summary, vision and hearing screenings, identification meeting timelines, multi-disciplinary evaluations, standardized assessments, educational impact statement, bilingual evaluations, written reports prepared by evaluators, eligibility criteria, eligibility meeting participants, signature of agreement and/or disagreement and rationale, statement of eligibility (specific learning disability), IEP required components and considerations, provision of IEP to parents, teacher knowledge, 90-day timelines, implementation dates, documentation of least restrictive environment (LRE) decisions, notification of and participation in non-academic and extra-curricular activities for students educated outside of the district, participation in statewide assessment documented in IEPs, accommodations and modifications for statewide assessments, class size and age range.

During the self-assessment process, the charter school identified areas of need regarding IEP meeting participants, annual reviews, continuum, individual decision making, opportunity for all students with disabilities to access all general education programs and common planning time.

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The on-site visit identified additional areas of need within the various standards, regarding extended school year, content of notice of meeting, content of written notice, provision of notice of a meeting, identification meeting participants, identification meeting timelines, functional assessments, eligibility meeting participants, copies of evaluation reports to parents, IEP meeting participants, student and agency invitations to IEP meetings, IEP components and required considerations beginning at age 14, IEP statement of transition service needs, IEP documentation of participation in statewide assessment, IEP requirements for graduation and group size for speech and language services.

Within 45 days of receipt of the monitoring report, the Princeton Charter School will revise and resubmit the improvement plan to the OSEP to address those areas that require revisions.