

State of New Jersey

CHRIS CHRISTIE

Governor

KIM GUADAGNO Lt. Governor DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION PO Box 500 Trenton, NJ 08625-0500

Bret Schundler Commissioner

April 21, 2010

Dr. Bessie LaFra Young, Superintendent Camden City School District 201 North Front St. Camden, NJ 08102-1935

Subject: Special Education Monitoring Report – Camden City School District

Dear Dr. LaFra Young:

On October 19, 20 and 21, 2009, the New Jersey Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs (NJOSEP), conducted an onsite monitoring visit in the Camden City School District to determine compliance with federal and state special education requirements. The members of the monitoring team were Ken Richards, Patricia Fair, Caryl Carthew, Jane Marano and Peggy McDonald. The following report reflects the results of the onsite monitoring visit as well as activities to verify correction of noncompliance conducted from October 19, 2009 to March 24, 2010.

NJOSEP initiated a new five year self-assessment/monitoring cycle during the 2006-2007 school year. The monitoring system is data driven and aligned with the federally required State Performance Plan (SPP) indicators, including the federal monitoring priorities established by the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act of 2004 (IDEA 2004). Specifically, the NJOSEP monitoring process is focused on improving educational results and functional outcomes for students with disabilities and ensuring compliance with those special education requirements related to positive student outcomes.

The special education self-assessment and monitoring process focused on requirements related to the following areas:

- Transition to Adult Life
- State Assessment
- Discipline Procedures
- Placement in the Least Restrictive Environment
- Parent Involvement
- Disproportionate Representation of Specific Racial-Ethnic Groups in Special Education
- Evaluation and Reevaluation
- Individualized Education Program
- Programs and Services

The Camden City School District was selected for the self-assessment process for the 2007-2008 school year due to a high rate of students with disabilities educated in separate public and/or private settings. The determination was based on the Annual Data Reports submitted to NJOSEP in December 2006 and December 2007. Placement data reported by the district in October 2008 and October 2009 indicated that the district met the state SPP target for the rate of students educated in separate public and/or private settings for two consecutive years. The district is advised to continue to make placement decisions in accordance with the New Jersey Administrative Code 6A:14-3.7 and 4.2.

The NJDOE Self-Assessment/Monitoring Process

The first step in the monitoring process was completion of a self-assessment which required the district to review student outcome data and policies, procedures and practices related to federal monitoring priorities. The district was provided with a comparison of district student outcome data to relevant targets established in New Jersey's SPP. Based on the data review, the district developed an improvement plan for areas identified for "Continuous Improvement" and Areas of Noncompliance with federal and state regulations related to the priority areas. The self-assessment and improvement plan were submitted to NJOSEP in September 2008.

Following review of the self-assessment and the improvement plan, an onsite monitoring visit was conducted. A review of specific federal and state requirements related to the education of students with disabilities was completed during the visit. The monitoring team reviewed district documents, including district policies and procedures, a sample of student records, master student lists, class lists, schedules of students, teachers and related services personnel and other relevant information. Interviews were conducted with the district's special education administrators, general education and special education teachers, speech-language specialists and child study team members. Parents of students with disabilities were interviewed by phone.

Monitoring Results

The enclosed Table of Findings details the onsite monitoring results with regard to the following:

Status of improvement plan activities

For each area in need of continuous improvement identified by the district, the status of improvement activities designed to improve student outcomes is provided. If not identified as completed, the district must demonstrate implementation of improvement plan activities in accordance with the timelines delineated in the improvement plan. NJOSEP will continue to monitor implementation of the continuous improvement activities through additional onsite visits and desk audit.

Findings of noncompliance identified by the district during the self-assessment

For any finding of noncompliance identified by the district during self-assessment, the status of correction is provided. Corrective action activities with timelines for correction have been directed by NJOSEP for those areas that have not been corrected. The Table of Findings reflects verification of correction that has occurred since October 2009. The remaining findings of noncompliance identified in the district's self-assessment must be corrected immediately. Failure to correct these findings within one year of identification (refer to my letter of March 25, 2009) will be considered in the district's next determination.

Findings of noncompliance identified during the onsite monitoring visit

For any finding of noncompliance identified by the district during the onsite monitoring visit, the status of correction is provided. One finding of noncompliance identified as a result of the onsite visit remains uncorrected. These findings must be corrected within one year of the date of this report. Corrective action should include, as necessary: development and/or revision of policies and procedures, staff training, implementation of the identified IDEA and N.J.A.C. requirements, and implementation of an oversight mechanism to ensure ongoing compliance. The monitoring team leader, Mr. Kenneth Richards, will contact Dr. Ogbonna to discuss procedures for verification of correction of the findings of noncompliance listed in the Table of Findings.

The results of the special education monitoring must be reviewed at the next meeting of the district's Board of Education. A copy of the minutes from the Board of Education meeting documenting the review by the Board must be submitted to the following address:

Kenneth Richards
New Jersey Department of Education
Office of Special Education Programs – Southern Monitoring Office
Finlaw Building 4th Floor
199 East Broadway
Salem, NJ 08079

Questions regarding the enclosed monitoring report should be directed to Dr. Peggy McDonald, manager of the Bureau of Program Accountability, at 609-292-7605.

NJOSEP appreciates the cooperation of district staff members during the self-assessment/monitoring process.

Sincerely.

Roberta Wohle, Director

Office of Special Education Programs

RW/PM/DM Enclosure

C:

Division of Field Services

Barbara Gantwerk

Peggy McDonald

Kenneth Richards

Peggy Nicolosi

Catherine Thomas

Jonathan Ogbonna

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Area(s) in Need of Continuous Improvement	가는 마음 마음 사용하는 이 사용에 가장하는 것이 되었습니다. 사용하는 사용하는 사용하는 것이 되었습니다. 그는 사용하는 것이 되었습니다.
Area	Status of Improvement Plan
The district has developed an improvement plan to ncrease transition services available to students ages 14-21. The plan includes the hiring of a transition coordinator and parent and student training. The district also planned to expand opportunities for career development through structured learning experiences.	The district is in the process of implementing its improvement plan within established timelines. The district provides opportunities for structured learning experiences through Goodwill Industries.
Areas of Noncompliance Identified during Self-Asse	essment
Area	Status of Compliance/Corrective Action
1) Individualized Education Program (IEP) requirements for students ages 16 and above [N.J.A.C. 6A:14-3.7(e)12; 20 U.S.C. 1414(d)(1)(A)(i)(VIII); and 34 CFR §300.320(b) and (c)]	Noncompliance identified during the onsite monitoring was verified as corrected during desk audit conducted on January 12, 2010.
Areas of Noncompliance Identified during the Onsi	e Monitoring Visit
Area	Status of Compliance/Corrective Action
2) Invitation to students, and agencies providing or paying for transition services, to IEP meetings [N.J.A.C. 6A:14-2.3(k)2x and 3.7(e)13, 3.7(h); 20 U.S.C. 1414 (d)(1)(A)(i)(1)(VIII); and 34 CFR §300.322.b(2)].	Review of records and interviews with staff indicated that students with disabilities at the middle school level, who will turn 14 during the implementation period of the IEP, are no invited to IEP meetings when transition activities will be considered. The noncompliance was due to inconsistent implementation of district procedures.

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Section II: STATEWIDE ASSESSMENT—Noncompliance was not identified during the self-assessment or the onsite monitoring process.

Area(s) in Need of Continuous Improvement Area	Status of Improvement Plan
The district developed an improvement plan to	
·	The district is in the process of implementing its improvement plan within established
ncrease the participation of students with disabilities	timelines.
n statewide assessments and improve performance.	
The plan includes professional development and the	
establishment of building-based assessment	
committees. The role of the committees would be to	
inalyze assessment data to inform instruction. The	
plan also includes collaboration with the Human	
Resources Director to develop effective strategies for	
attracting highly qualified teachers to the district.	
Section III: DISCIPLINE	
Area(s) in Need of Continuous Improvement	
Area	Status of Improvement Plan
The district developed an improvement plan to reduce	The district is in the process of implementing its improvement plan within established
emovals from school, which resulted from	timelines.
disciplinary infractions, through the expansion and	
mplementation of positive behavioral supports. The	
olan includes collaboration among all school staff.	
Areas of Noncompliance Identified during Self-Asse	 essment
Area	Status of Compliance/Corrective Action
1b) The case manager and parent shall be notified in	Noncompliance identified during the self-assessment process was verified as corrected
writing of suspension/expulsion of a student with a	during a desk audit conducted on March 23, 2010.
disability at time of removal, in accordance with	
N.J.A.C. 6A:14-2.8(a); 20 U.S.C. 1415(k)(1)(A)(H);	
and 34 CFR §300.530(h).	

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3) If a student with a disability is removed from his/her placement for more than 10 cumulative or consecutive days, services shall be provided, in accordance with N.J.A.C. 6A:14-2.8(e); 20 U.S.C. 1415(k) (1)(D)i; and 34 CFR §300.530(d)1.

Noncompliance identified during the self-assessment process was verified as **corrected** during a desk audit conducted on March 23, 2010.

7) When it is determined that the conduct is a manifestation of the student's disability, the IEP team shall conduct a functional behavioral assessment, implement a behavioral intervention plan and ensure that the student is returned to his/her placement (unless parents agree to a change of placement) in accordance with N.J.A.C. 6A:14-Appendix A; 20 USC§1415(k)(1)(F); and 34 CFR §300.530(f).

Noncompliance identified during the self-assessment process was verified as **corrected** during a desk audit conducted on March 23, 2010.

9) When it has been determined that student's conduct is not a manifestation of the student's disability, the IEP team shall determine the extent to which services are necessary in accordance with N.J.A.C. 6A:14-2.8(e)2; 20USC§1415(k)(1)(c); and 34 CFR §300.530(c).

Noncompliance identified during the self-assessment process was verified as **corrected** during a desk audit conducted on March 23, 2010.

Section IV: LEAST RESTRICTIVE ENVIRONMENT

The Camden City School District was selected for the self-assessment process for the 2007-2008 school year due to a high rate of students with disabilities educated in separate public and/or private settings. The determination was based on the Annual Data Reports submitted to NJOSEP in December 2006 and December 2007. Placement data reported by the district in October 2008 indicated that the district met the state SPP target for the rate of students educated in separate public and/or private settings. The district is advised to continue to make placement decisions in accordance with the New Jersey Administrative Code 6A:14-3.7 and 4.2.

Area(s) in Need of Continuous Improvement		
Area	Status of Improvement Plan	
The district developed an improvement plan to enhance access to the general education classes for students with disabilities. The plan includes staff development in the areas of differentiated instruction, implementing accommodations and modifications, IEP decision making classroom management.	The district is in the process of implementing its improvement plan within established timelines. The district participated in directed technical assistance provided by the Learning Resource Center consultant and the monitoring team leader regarding placement in the least restrictive environment.	

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expansion of preschool services. The plan also included training for staff on transitioning students with the most significant needs to less restrictive settings.

Areas of Noncompliance Identified during Self-Assessment

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	1) All students with disabilities, including preschoolers
	and students in receiving schools, shall have access
	to the general education curriculum and
	supplementary aids and services in accordance with
١	N.J.A.C. 6A:14-4.2; 20 U.S.C. 1414(d)(1)(A)(i)(IV);
l	and 34 CFR §300.320(a)(4).

Area

Status of Compliance/Corrective Action

Noncompliance identified during the onsite monitoring was verified as corrected on March 23, 2010. This area will be reviewed again as part of verification of correction of noncompliance for Area # 2.

4) For students in a separate setting, IEPs shall include activities to transition students to a less restrictive environment in accordance with N.J.A.C. 6A:14-4.2(a)4.

Noncompliance identified during the self-assessment process was verified as **corrected** during a review of records conducted on March 23, 2010.

Areas of Noncompliance Identified during the Onsite Monitoring Visit

2) IEPs shall include an explanation of the extent to
which students are educated with nondisabled peers,
including participation in nonacademic and
extracurricular activities in accordance with N.J.A.C.
6A:144-3.7(e) and 34 CFR~300.107.

Area:

Review of records and interviews with staff indicated that IEPs, of students removed from general education greater than 20% of the school day, did not consistently document the supplemental aides and services considered and the reasons they were rejected, a comparison of the benefits of general education and special education and the potentially beneficial and or harmful effects of a placement (general education) on the student and other students in the class. Noncompliance was due to inconsistent implementation of district procedures.

Status of Compliance/Corrective Action

Corrective Action: The district is required to conduct training with child study team members regarding procedures for placement decision making and the explanation of the extent to which students are educated with nondisabled peers, including participation in nonacademic and extracurricular activities.

The district is required to conduct a meeting of the IEP team for each student whose IEP was identified as noncompliant by the NJOSEP monitors and ensure that each IEP is revised to include the required components. Names of students whose IEPs were found to be noncompliant by the monitors will be provided to the Director of Special Education by NJOSEP.

The district must review the IEPs of all students with disabilities removed from general education settings for greater than 20% of the school day. For any IEP where an explanation of the extent to which the student will be educated with nondisabled peers is not addressed, a meeting of the IEP team must be convened to review and revise the IEP.

TABLE OF . . IDINGS

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The Director of Special Services is required to conduct oversight activities to ensure correction and ongoing compliance.

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in a meeting, in accordance with N.J.A.C. 6A:14-2.3(a)6; 20 U.S.C. 1414(d)(1)(c)(i)-(iii); and 34 CFR

§300.321(e).

Results of Parent Interview: Input from the district parent advisory group indicated that parents are concerned that staff shortages impede the provision of services identified in the IEP. Additionally, there was concern that the district does not make information available to parents to assist them in making meaningful decisions regarding their children. There was also concern that notices of meetings and written notices following meetings are not consistently provided to parents, consistent with the findings of the monitoring team.

meetings are not consistently provided to parents, consistent with the findings of the monitoring team.		
Areas of Noncompliance Identified during the Onsite Monitoring Visit		
Area	Status of Compliance/Corrective Action	
1) Parents shall be given written notice of a meeting containing all the required components, in accordance with N.J.A.C. 6A:14-2.3(k)3 and 5; 20 U.S.C. 1414(b)(1); and 34 CFR §300.304(a).	Review of records indicated that notices of meetings did not include required components and were not consistently provided to parents. Additionally, when meetings were conducted for more than one purpose, notice of the meeting did not consistently inform the parent of all intended purposes of the meeting. These findings were due to a lack of implementation of district procedures.	
2) Written notice, which includes required components, shall be provided to parents following meetings, in accordance with N.J.A.C. 6A:14-2.3(f) and 2.3(g)1-7; 20 U.S.C. 1414(b)(1)(c)(4)(A); and 34 CFR §300.304(a)(4) and §300.305(a).	Review of records indicated that written notice following meetings did not include required components and were not consistently provided to parents due to a lack of implementation of district procedures. District staff did not consistently use current district forms for provision of written notice.	
3) Eligibility meetings shall include required participants, in accordance with N.J.A.C. 6A:14-2.3(k)1(i-vii); 20 U.S.C. 1414(d)(1)(B); and 34 CFR §300.321(a).	Review of records indicated that all required participants did not consistently attend eligibility meetings due to a lack of implementation of district procedures.	
Parental consent shall be obtained whenever a member of the IEP team is excused from participating	Review of records indicated that written parental consent was not consistently obtained prior to implementing the initial IEP and prior to conducting evaluations due to a lack of	

Section VI: DISPROPORTIONATE REPRESENTATION - Noncompliance was not identified during the self-assessment or the onsite monitoring process.

implementation of district procedures.

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	Camden City School District		
Section VIII: EVALUATIONS AND REEVALUATION			
Areas of Noncompliance Identified during Self-Asse	ssment		T == 2
Area	Status of Compliance/Corrective Action	Corrective Action Requirements	Documentation Required∤and Timeline
3) The staff of the general education program shall maintain written documentation regarding type, frequency, duration and effectiveness of each intervention used, in accordance with N.J.A.C. 6A:14-3.3(c).	Review of records indicated that district has not implemented its improvement plan activities for this area within established timelines. District staff did not maintain written documentation of type, frequency, duration and effectiveness of each intervention implemented in the general education classroom due to a lack of implementation of district procedures.	The district is required to conduct training for district staff regarding procedures for documenting the type, frequency, duration and effectiveness of interventions. The Director of Special Services and supervisors are directed to conduct oversight activities to ensure correction and ongoing compliance.	Copies of training agenda and signin sheets are to be provided by October 1, 2010 Onsite verification will be conducted beginning in November 2010
Areas of Noncompliance Identified during the Onsit	e Monitoring Visit		
Area	Status	of Compliance/Corrective Action	
4) Within 20 calendar days of receipt of the written request for an evaluation, the district shall convene a meeting with required participants, in accordance with N.J.A.C. 6A:14-3.3(e).	with all required participants wit implementation of district proce		erral, due to a lack of
5) A vision and audiometric screening shall be conducted for every student referred to the child study team for evaluation. The school nurse shall review and summarize available health and medical information and transmit the summary to the child study team, in accordance with N.J.A.C. 6A:14-3.4(j).	Review of records indicated that results of vision and hearing screenings were not consistently provided to the child study team prior to the identification meeting, due to a lack of implementation of district procedures.		
8) Evaluations shall be conducted by a multi- disciplinary team, in accordance with N.J.A.C. 6A:14- 2.5(b)6 and 3.6(b).	services, an educational impac	at for students referred for speech and t statement was not documented as p a lack of implementation of district pro	part of a multi-

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IDEA 2004 and New Jersey Administrative Code Requirements		
Camden City School District		
9) Each evaluation of a student shall include functional assessment, in accordance with N.J.A.C. 6A:14-3.4(f)4(i-vi); 20 U.S.C. 1414(b)(4) and (5); and 34 CFR §300.306(c)(i).	Review of records indicated that functional assessments did not consistently contain all required components, due to a lack of implementation of district procedures.	
10) Within three years of the previous classification, a multi-disciplinary reevaluation shall be completed, in accordance with N.J.A.C. 6A:14-3.8(a) and 20 U.S.C. 1414(a)(2)(B)(ii).	Review of records indicated that reevaluations are not consistently conducted within three years, or sooner if warranted, of the prior eligibility date. Additionally, eligibility is not consistently determined within 60 days of parental consent to conduct an assessment as part of a reevaluation, due to a lack of implementation of district procedures.	
11) Reevaluation planning meetings shall include required participants, in accordance with N.J.A.C. 6A:14-2.3(k)2(i-x); 20 U.S.C. 1414(c)(1)(A)(i); and 34 CFR §300.305(a).	Review of records indicated that all required participants did not consistently attend reevaluation planning meetings, due to a lack of implementation of district procedures.	
14) Each child study team member shall certify in writing whether his or her report is, in accordance with the conclusion of eligibility of the student, in accordance with N.J.A.C. 6A:14-3.4(h)5.	Review of records indicated that each child study team member who conducted an evaluation did not consistently certify in writing whether his or her report reflected the conclusion of eligibility, due to a lack of implementation of district procedures.	
15) A copy of the evaluation report(s) and documentation and information that will be used for the determination of eligibility shall be given to the parent or adult student not less than 10 calendar days prior to the eligibility meeting, in accordance with N.J.A.C. 6A:14-3.5(a); 20 U.S.C. 1414(b)(4); and 34 CFR §300.306(a).	Review of records indicated that evaluation reports were not consistently provided to parents not less than ten calendar days prior to the eligibility meeting, due to a lack of implementation of district procedures.	
16) To facilitate the transition from early intervention to preschool, a child study team member of the district shall participate in the preschool transition planning conference arranged by the Department of Health and Senior Services, in accordance with N.J.A.C. 6A:14-3.3(e)1(i-iv); 20 U.S.C. 1414(d)(1)(D); and 34 CFR §300.321(f).	Review of records indicated that a child study team member did not consistently participate in preschool transition planning conferences, due to a lack of implementation of district procedures.	

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Section VIII: IEP

Areas of Noncompliance Identified during Self-Assessment		
Area	Status of Compliance/Corrective Action	
5) The student's IEP shall be accessible to each general education teacher, special education teacher, related services provider and other service providers who are responsible for its implementation. The district shall inform each teacher and provider of his/her responsibilities related to implementing the student's IEP and the specific accommodations, modifications and supports to be provided for the student in, accordance with N.J.A.C. 6A:14-3.7(a)2-3 and 34 CFR §300.323(d).	Noncompliance identified during the onsite monitoring was verified as corrected during onsite monitoring conducted on October 21, 2009.	
Areas of Noncompliance Identified during the Onsit Area	e Monitoring Visit Status of Compliance/Corrective Action	
1) IEP meetings shall be held with an appropriately configured IEP team, in accordance with N.J.A.C. 6A:14-2.3(k)2(i-x)1; 20 U.S.C. 1414(d)(1)(B); and 34 CFR §300.321(a).	Review of records indicated that all required participants do not consistently attend IEP meetings. Additionally, the district did not consistently document multiple attempts to obtain parent participation when the parent did not attend the IEP meeting, due to a lack of implementation of district procedures.	
2) IEPs shall include required considerations and statements, in accordance with N.J.A.C. 6A:14-3.7(c)1-11, (e) 1-17, and (f); 20 U.S.C. 1414(d)(3)(A)(B); and 34 CFR §300.324(a)(1)(2).	Record review indicated that IEPs did not consistently include the consideration of extended school year and goals and objectives, when required, due to a lack of implementation of district procedures.	
3) IEP meetings shall be conducted annually, or more often if necessary, to review and/or revise the IEP and determine placement, in accordance with N.J.A.C. 6A:14-3.7(i); 20 U.S.C. 1414(d); and 34 CFR §300.324(b)(1).	Review of records indicated that meetings were not consistently conducted annually to review and revise the IEP, due to a lack of implementation of district procedures.	
6) IEPs shall be implemented as written, in accordance with 20 U.S.C. § 1412 (a)(16)(D).	Review of records, interviews with staff members and Information obtained during classroom visits indicated that IEPs are not consistently implemented as written due to lack of implementation of district procedures. Names of students whose IEPs were noncompliant and the specific IEP considerations and/or components that were not included in their IEPs will be provided to the district by the NJOSEP monitor.	

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Corrective Action: The district is required to conduct training with child study team members regarding development of IEPs.

The district is required to conduct IEP review meetings for each student whose IEP was identified as noncompliant by the NJOSEP monitors and ensure that each IEP is revised to include the required components. Names of students whose IEPs were found to be noncompliant by the NJOSEP monitors will be provided to the Director of Special Education.

The district must review the IEPs of all students with disabilities to ensure that IEPs include all required components. For any IEP where required components are not included, a meeting of the IEP team must be convened to review and revise the IEP.

The district must conduct a meeting of the IEP team to review the program for each student whose IEP was not implemented as written. Names of students whose IEPs were not implemented as written will be provided by the NJOSEP monitor. At the IEP meeting, the IEP team must determine the need, if any, for compensatory services.

The district must review the IEPs of all students with disabilities and their programs to ensure that IEPs are implemented as written. For any student whose IEP is not implemented as written, a meeting of the IEP team must be convened to determine the need, if any, for compensatory services.

The Director of Special Services is required to conduct oversight activities to ensure correction and ongoing compliance.

Section IX: PROGRAMS AND SERVICES - Noncompliance was not identified during the self-assessment process.

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Areas of Noncompliance Identified during the Onsite	Monitoring Visit
Area	Status of Compliance/Corrective Action
1) The instructional group sizes for preschool, elementary, and secondary special class programs shall not exceed the limits specified in N.J.A.C. 6A:14-4.7(e-h).	Information obtained during classroom visits indicated that classes do not consistently conform to group size guidelines, due to a lack of implementation of district procedures.

All documentation required to demonstrate completion of corrective action activities must be submitted to the following address in accordance with the timelines listed in the above Table of Findings.

Kenneth Richards Monitor
New Jersey Department of Education
Office of Special Education Programs – Southern Monitoring Office
Finlaw Building 4th Floor
199 East Broadway
Salem, NJ 08079