



State of New Jersey

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

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CHRIS CHRISTIE
Governor

KIM GUADAGNO
Lt. Governor

CHRISTOPHER D. CERF
Acting Commissioner

May 11, 2011

Mr. Vincent Tarantino, Interim Superintendent
Greenwich Township School District
415 Swedesboro Road
Gibbstown, NJ 08027

Dear Mr. Tarantino:

Subject: Special Education Monitoring Report – Greenwich Township School District

This correspondence has been sent to inform you of the results of the New Jersey Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs' onsite monitoring regarding the Greenwich Township School District's implementation of federal and state special education requirements. The New Jersey Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs (NJOSPEP), conducted onsite monitoring visits, verification visits and desk audits in the Greenwich Township School District to determine compliance with federal and state special education requirements. The members of the monitoring team were Caryl Carthew and Patricia Fair.

The special education 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 NJOSPEP 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***
- ***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 Greenwich Township School District was chosen for the self-assessment/monitoring process through random selection.

Monitoring Results

The enclosed Table of Findings details the findings of noncompliance resulting from the onsite monitoring. All 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, Ms. Caryl Carthew, will contact Mr. Robert Harris to discuss procedures for verification of correction of the findings of noncompliance listed in the Table of Findings. For any finding of noncompliance related to the development or implementation of IEPs or the delivery of programs and services, **corrective action activities have been directed by NJOSEP.**

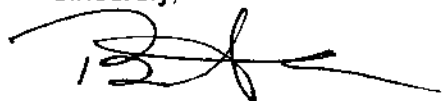
The results of the special education monitoring must be reviewed at the next meeting of the district's board of education. A copy of the minutes from the board of education meeting documenting the review by the board must be submitted to the following address:

Ms. Caryl Carthew, Monitor
New Jersey Department of Education
Office of Special Education Programs
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.

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

Sincerely,



Barbara Gantwerk, Assistant Commissioner
Division of Student Services

BG/PM/cc
Enclosure

c: Gregg Edwards
Andrew Smarick
Peggy McDonald
Caryl Carthew
Robert Bumpus
County Supervisor of Child Study
Rob Harris

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Noncompliance was not identified with requirements in the following sections of the self-assessment:

Section I: TRANSITION TO ADULT LIFE

Section II: STATEWIDE ASSESSMENT

Section V: DISPROPORTIONATE REPRESENTATION

Section VIII: PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

Section III: LEAST RESTRICTIVE ENVIRONMENT

Findings of Noncompliance

Federal/State Requirement	Finding
2) IEPs shall include an explanation of the extent, if any, to which child will not participate with nondisabled children. [20 U.S.C. §1412(a)(5) and 1414(d)(1)(A)(i)(V); 34 CFR §300.115 and §300.320(a)(5) and N.J.A.C. 6A:14-3.7(e)6]	Review of records indicated that IEPs did not include an explanation of the extent, if any, to which a child will not participate with nondisabled children, including a statement of the supplementary aids and services considered and the reasons they were rejected. Noncompliance was due to lack of implementation of district procedures.
4) IEPs shall include a comparison of the benefits provided in the regular class and the benefits provided in the special education class, in accordance with N.J.A.C. 6A:14-4.2(a)8(ii).	Review of records indicated that IEPs did not include a comparison of the benefits provided in the regular class and the benefits provided in the special education class due to lack of implementation of district procedures.
5) IEPs shall include the potentially beneficial or harmful effects which a placement (general education) may have on the student with disabilities or the other students in the class. [20 U.S.C. § 1412(a)(5); 34 CFR §300.116(d)]	Review of records indicated that IEPs did not include a statement of the potentially beneficial or harmful effects which a placement in general education may have on the student with disabilities or the other students in the class due to lack of implementation of district procedures.
6) 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.	Review of records indicated that IEPs for student in separate settings did not include activities to transition them to a less restrictive environment due to lack of implementation of district procedures.
7) Placement decisions shall be based on the individual needs of students with disabilities, as indicated in IEPs, resulting in a continuum of alternative placements to meet unique needs of students as close to home as possible, in accordance with N.J.A.C. 6A:14-4.2(a)3,5,6 and 4.3(b); 20 U.S.C. §1412(a)(5); and 34 CFR §300.115.	Review of records indicated that although students were placed in a variety of education settings, the IEPs included rationales that were identical, regardless of placement due to lack of implementation of district procedures.

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Corrective Action for Areas 2, 4, 5, 6 and 7 above: The district is required to conduct training with child study team members regarding procedures for individualized decision-making regarding educational placements and documentation of placement decisions in IEPs.

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 the rationale for removal is not documented and/or does not include the activities to transition students in separate settings to a less restrictive environment, a meeting of the IEP team must be convened to review and revise the IEP.

Section IV: PARENT INVOLVEMENT

Findings of Noncompliance

Federal/State Requirement	Finding
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)3,5; 20 U.S.C. §1414(b)(1); and 34 CFR §300.304(a).	Review of records indicated that notice of a meeting did not include the required components, including a statement of the parent's right to invite others with expertise regarding their child to an IEP meeting, the purposes of the meeting and the meeting participants. In addition, documentation was not available to verify that notice of a meeting was consistently provided to parents. Findings were due to 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); 34 CFR §300.304(a)(4); and 34 CFR §300.305(a).	Review of records indicated that documentation was not available to verify that written notice was consistently provided to parents due to lack of implementation of district procedures.
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 general education teachers did not consistently attend eligibility meetings due to lack of implementation of district procedures.
6) Each district shall ensure that a Special Education Parent Advisory group is in place in the district, in accordance with N.J.A.C. 6A:14-1.2(h).	Interviews with school personnel indicated that a Special Education Parent Advisory Group was not established due to a lack of district procedures.

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Section VI: EVALUATIONS AND REEVALUATION

Findings of Noncompliance

Federal/State Requirement	Findings
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).	Review of records indicated that identification meetings were not consistently convened within required timelines with all required participants, including the general education teacher and the full child study team due to lack of implementation of district procedures.
7) The district shall obtain consent from the parent or adult student, at required times, in accordance with N.J.A.C. 6A:14-2.3(a); 20 U.S.C. §1414(a)(1)(D); and 34 CFR §300.300(a).	Review of records indicated that documentation was not available to verify that written consent of the parent for assessment was obtained prior to conducting the assessments due to 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).	Review of records indicated that initial evaluations for students potentially eligible for speech-language services were not multi-disciplinary. Evaluations did not include a statement of the educational impact of the disability from the general education teacher due to a lack of district procedures.
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 initial evaluations for students potentially eligible for speech-language services did not consistently include all required components of a functional assessment: an observation of the student in other than a testing setting; an interview with the child's teacher and parent; and a summary of the educational impact statement due to 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 reevaluation planning meetings did not consistently include the participation of a general education teacher due to lack of implementation of district procedures.
14) Each child study team member shall certify in writing whether his or her report reflects his or her conclusion of eligibility of the student, in accordance with N.J.A.C. 6A:14-3.4(h)5.	Review of records indicated that all child study team members who participated in initial evaluations did not consistently certify their agreement with the conclusion of eligibility due to lack of implementation of district procedures.
15) A copy of the evaluation report(s) and documentation and information that will be used for a 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 10 days prior to the eligibility conference due to lack of implementation of district procedures.

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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 the preschool transition planning conference due to lack of implementation of district procedures.

Section VII: IEP

Findings of Noncompliance

Federal/State Requirement	Finding
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).	<p>Review of records indicated that IEP meetings for students eligible for speech-language services did not consistently include the participation of a general education teacher due to lack of implementation of district procedures.</p> <p>Review of records indicated that IEP meetings for students eligible for special education and related services did not consistently include the participation of both a general education and special education teacher due to lack of implementation of district procedures.</p> <p>Review of records indicated that the district did not maintain documentation of multiple attempts to obtain parent participation when the parent failed to attend the IEP meeting due to lack of implementation of district procedures.</p>
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).	<p>Review of records indicated that IEPs for students eligible for speech-language services did not consistently include documentation of the consideration of the need for extended school year services due to lack of implementation of district procedures.</p>
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).	<p>Review of records indicated that IEPs for students eligible for special education and related services were not consistently reviewed on an annual basis due to lack of implementation of district procedures.</p>

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Corrective Action for Area 2 above: The district is required to conduct training with speech-language specialists regarding procedures for documenting the consideration of extended school year in IEPs.

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 eligible for speech-language services. For any IEP that does not include the required component, a meeting of the IEP team must be convened to review and revise the IEP.

All documentation required to demonstrate completion of corrective action activities must be submitted to the following address:

Ms. Caryl Carthew, Monitor
New Jersey Department of Education
Office of Special Education Programs
Finlaw Building, 4th Floor
199 East Broadway
Salem, NJ 08079