



State of New Jersey

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

PO Box 500

TRENTON, NJ 08625-0500

CHRIS CHRISTIE
Governor

KIM GUADAGNO
Lt. Governor

CHRISTOPHER D. CERF
Acting Commissioner

April 18, 2011

Dr. Terry Van Zoeren, Chief School Administrator
Hopewell Township School District
122 Sewall Road
Bridgeton, New Jersey 08302-3803

Dear Dr. Van Zoeren:

Subject: Special Education Monitoring Report – Hopewell 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 Hopewell 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 Hopewell 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 Hopewell Township School District was selected for the self-assessment/monitoring process through random selection.

Monitoring Results

The enclosed Table of Findings details the findings resulting from the onsite monitoring 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, Caryl Carthew, will contact Mr. Jaime Cifuentes 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
New Jersey Department of Education
Office of Special Education Programs
Finlaw Building, 4th Floor
199 East Broadway
Salem, New Jersey 08079

Questions regarding the enclosed monitoring report should be directed to Dr. Peggy McDonald 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
Richard Stepura
County Supervisor of Child Study
Jaime Cifuentes

TABLE OF FINDINGS
Special Education Monitoring Results
IDEA 2004 and New Jersey Administrative Code Requirements
Hopewell Township School District

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

Areas of Noncompliance

Area	Status of Compliance
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 a lack of implementation of district procedures.
5) IEPs shall included 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 the potentially beneficial or harmful effects which a placement (general education) may have on the student with disabilities or other students in the class due to a 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 students in separate settings did not include activities to transition the students to a less restrictive environment due to a 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 IEPs did not include individualized rationales for removal from general education and a statement of the supplementary aids and services considered and the reasons they were rejected due to a lack of implementation of district procedures.

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

TABLE OF FINDINGS
Special Education Monitoring Results
IDEA 2004 and New Jersey Administrative Code Requirements
Hopewell Township School District

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 above elements are not correctly addressed, a meeting of the IEP team must be convened to review and revise the IEP.

Section IV: PARENT INVOLVEMENT

Areas of Noncompliance

Area	Status of Compliance
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).	<p>Review of records indicated that the district did not document the provision of notice of a meeting for students eligible for speech-language services due to a lack of implementation of district procedures.</p> <p>Review of records indicated the notice of a reevaluation planning meeting for students eligible for special education and related services did not consistently identify all the purposes of the meeting when the district proposed no additional assessments and the meeting included a determination of eligibility and review and/or revision to the IEP due to a lack of implementation of district procedures.</p>
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).	<p>Review of records indicated that written notice for students eligible for speech-language services did not consistently include a description of the factors considered and other relevant factors due to a lack of implementation of district procedures.</p> <p>Review of records indicated that written notice for students eligible for special education and related services did not consistently include a determination of eligibility when required due to a lack of implementation of district procedures.</p>

TABLE OF FINDINGS
Special Education Monitoring Results
IDEA 2004 and New Jersey Administrative Code Requirements
Hopewell Township School District

Section VI: EVALUATIONS AND REEVALUATION

Areas of Noncompliance

Area	Status of Compliance
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 the district staff did not maintain written documentation of the frequency and duration of each intervention implemented in the general education classroom due to a lack of implementation of district procedures.
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 with the participation of a general education teacher and the full child study team due to a lack of implementation of district procedures.
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 the health summary was 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).	Review of records indicated that initial evaluations for students potentially eligible for speech-language services did not include the educational impact statement 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 preschool students potentially eligible for special education and related services did not consistently include an observation in other than a testing setting 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 reevaluation planning meetings for students eligible for special education and related services did not consistently include the participation of a special education teacher or service provider due to a 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 the certification of agreement or disagreement with the conclusion of eligibility was not consistently signed by all child study team members who participated in the evaluation due to a lack of implementation of district procedures.

TABLE OF FINDINGS
Special Education Monitoring Results
IDEA 2004 and New Jersey Administrative Code Requirements
Hopewell Township School District

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 copies of evaluation reports for students eligible for special education and related services was provided, but not at least 10 days prior to the eligibility meeting due to a lack of implementation of district procedures. Review of records indicated that the district did not maintain documentation that evaluation reports for students eligible for speech-language services were provided to parents 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 the district did not consistently ensure that a child study team member attended the transition planning conference for preschool students transitioning from Early Intervention due to a lack of implementation of district procedures.

Section VII: IEP

Areas of Noncompliance

Area	Status of Compliance
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 the district did not document multiple attempts to secure parent participation at IEP meetings when the parent was unable to attend 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).	Review of records indicated that IEPs for students requiring occupational therapy did not consistently include goals and objectives due to a lack of implementation of district procedures. In addition, review of records indicated that IEPs for students requiring occupational therapy and/or other related services did not consistently identify the frequency, location and duration of services due to a lack of implementation of district procedures.

Corrective Action: The district is required to conduct training with child study team members regarding procedures for documenting goals and objectives for occupational therapy and frequency, location and duration for all related services.

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.

TABLE OF FINDINGS
Special Education Monitoring Results
IDEA 2004 and New Jersey Administrative Code Requirements
Hopewell Township School District

The district must review the IEPs of all students with disabilities requiring related services. For any IEP for students with disabilities requiring occupational therapy that do not include goals and objectives, a meeting of the IEP team must be convened to review and revise the IEP. In addition, for any IEP for students with disabilities requiring related services that does not identify the frequency, location or duration of services, 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
New Jersey Department of Education
Office of Special Education Programs
Finlaw Building, 4th Floor
199 East Broadway
Salem, New Jersey 08079