



State of New Jersey

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

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Governor

KIM GUADAGNO
Lt. Governor

ROCHELLE R. HENDRICKS
Acting Commissioner

November 23, 2010

Ms. Donna Levick, Administrator
Stow Creek Township School District
11 Gum Tree Corner Road
Bridgeton, NJ 08302

Dear Ms. Levick:

Subject: Special Education Monitoring Report – Stow Creek 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 Stow Creek Township School District's implementation of federal and state special education requirements. Between December 10, 2009 and June 17, 2010, the New Jersey Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs (NJOSEP), conducted onsite monitoring visits, desk audits and verification visits to determine the district's status of compliance with federal and state special education requirements. The members of the monitoring team were Kenneth Richards 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 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 Stow Creek Township School District was selected for the self-assessment process through random selection.

Monitoring Results

The enclosed Table of Findings details the results of the monitoring process. Prior to the release of this report, the Stow Creek School District submitted documentation demonstrating correction for all areas of noncompliance identified during self-assessment.


Findings of noncompliance identified during onsite monitoring: For any finding of noncompliance identified during onsite monitoring, the status of correction is provided. **Findings of noncompliance identified as a result of 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, Kenneth Richards, will contact Ms. Melinda Galasso 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 address below.

Kenneth Richards
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, 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/KR

Enclosure

c: Andrew Smarick
Peggy McDonald
Kenneth Richards
Richard Stepura
Melinda Galasso

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

Section I: TRANSITION TO ADULT LIFE – Noncompliance was not identified during the monitoring process.

Areas of Noncompliance Identified during Self-Assessment

Area	Status of Compliance
3) IEP requirements for students ages 14 and above, in accordance with N.J.A.C. 6A:14-3.7(e)11.	Noncompliance identified during the self-assessment process was verified as corrected during a desk audit conducted on March 18, 2010.

Section II: STATEWIDE ASSESSMENT - Noncompliance was not identified during the monitoring process.

Section III: DISCIPLINE - Noncompliance was not identified during the monitoring process.

Section IV: LEAST RESTRICTIVE ENVIRONMENT - Noncompliance was not identified during the monitoring process.

Section V: PARENT INVOLVEMENT

Areas of Noncompliance Identified during Self-Assessment

Area	Status of Compliance
4) Parental consent shall be obtained whenever a member of the IEP team is excused from participating 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) through (iii); and 34 CFR §300.321(e).	Noncompliance identified during the self-assessment process was verified as corrected during an onsite monitoring visit conducted on December 11, 2009.
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).	Noncompliance identified during the self-assessment process was verified as corrected during an onsite monitoring visit conducted on December 11, 2009.

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Areas of Noncompliance Identified during the Onsite Monitoring Visit

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 and 5; 20 U.S.C. 1414(b)(1); and 34 CFR §300.304(a).	Review of records indicated that notices of meetings for students eligible for special education and related services did not include required components and did not identify all purposes of the meeting when the meeting was conducted for more than one purpose. Notice of meetings for students eligible for speech and language services were not consistently provided to the parent prior to the meeting, and did not include all required components. Noncompliance was due to inconsistent 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 and staff interviews indicated that written notice for students eligible for speech and language services did not include all required components and was not consistently provided to the parent within 15 days of the meeting. Noncompliance was due to inconsistent 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 and staff interviews indicated that for students eligible for speech and language services, eligibility meetings were not consistently conducted with all required participants. Noncompliance was due to inconsistent implementation of district procedures.

Section VI: DISPROPORTIONATE REPRESENTATION - Noncompliance was not identified during the monitoring process.

Section VII: EVALUATIONS AND REEVALUATION

Areas of Noncompliance Identified during Self-Assessment

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).	Noncompliance identified during the self-assessment process was verified as corrected during a desk audit conducted on March 18, 2010.

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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).	Noncompliance identified during the self-assessment process was verified as corrected during a desk audit conducted on March 18, 2010.
Areas of Noncompliance Identified during the Onsite Monitoring Visit	
Area	Status of Compliance
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 and staff interviews indicated that for students eligible for speech and language services, reevaluations were not consistently conducted within three years or sooner, if warranted. Noncompliance due was 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 and staff interviews indicated that for students eligible for speech and language services, reevaluation planning meetings were not consistently conducted with all required participants. Noncompliance was due to a lack of implementation of district procedures.
12) By June 30 of a student's last year in a program for preschoolers with disabilities, a reevaluation shall be conducted, in accordance with N.J.A.C. 6A:14-3.8(g); 20 U.S.C. 1414(c); and 34 CFR §300.305(b)(2)(e).	Review of records and staff interviews indicated that for students eligible for speech and language services, eligibility was not consistently documented in student records. Noncompliance due to a lack of implementation of district procedures.
Section VIII: IEP - Noncompliance were not identified during self-assessment.	
Areas of Noncompliance Identified during Onsite Monitoring	
Area	Status of Compliance
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 developed for students eligible for speech and language services did not consistently document all required components including the Present Level of Academic Achievement and Functional Performance and consideration of extended school year. Noncompliance was due to a lack of implementation of district procedures.

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Noncompliance identified during an onsite monitoring visit for students eligible for special education and related services was verified as corrected during an onsite verification visit conducted on June 17, 2010.

Corrective Action: The district is required to conduct training with child study team members and speech-language specialists regarding procedures to ensure that all required considerations and statements are documented in the IEP.

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 all required considerations and statements. Names of students whose IEP were found to be noncompliant by the monitors will be provided to the Director of Special Education by NJOSEP.

AT the next annual review for each student with an IEP, the district must ensure that the IEP includes all required considerations and statements.

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

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