



## State of New Jersey

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION  
PO Box 500  
TRENTON, NJ 08625-0500

JON S. CORZINE  
*Governor*

LUCILLE E. DAVY  
*Commissioner*

November 9, 2009

Dr. Eugene Westlake, Superintendent  
Tenafly School District  
500 Tenafly Road  
Tenafly, NJ 07670-1727

Subject: Special Education Monitoring - Tenafly School District

Dear Dr. Westlake:

On October 27 and 28, 2008 and November 10, 2008 the New Jersey Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs (NJOSPEP), conducted an onsite monitoring visit in the Tenafly School District to determine compliance with federal and state special education requirements. The members of the monitoring team were Nicole Buten and Robert Schweitzer.

NJOSPEP 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 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***
- ***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***

[www.nj.gov/education](http://www.nj.gov/education)

The Tenafly School District was selected for the self-assessment process for the 2006-2007 school year due to disproportionate representation of specific racial/ethnic groups with respect to eligibility determinations for special education based on the Annual Data Reports submitted to NJOSEP in December 2003, December 2004 and December 2005. The Tenafly School District continued to demonstrate a pattern of disproportionate representation of Hispanic students determined eligible for special education as indicated in the Annual Data Reports submitted to NJOSEP in December 2006 and October 2007. It was determined through the monitoring process, however, that the disproportionality was not due to inappropriate identification during the 2006-2007 and 2007-2008 school years. The district is directed to continue implementation of its improvement plan activities in order to eliminate the disproportionate representation.

A review of data submitted in the Annual Data Report in October 2008 indicated that the district continues to demonstrate a pattern of disproportionate representation of Hispanic students determined eligible for special education. As a result, a targeted review will be conducted by December 2010 to determine if there is any noncompliance associated with eligibility determinations made during 2008. A monitor from NJOSEP will contact the Director of Special Services to discuss the procedures for the targeted review.

### **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 identified areas 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 January 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, other relevant information, and schedules of students, teachers and related service personnel. 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.

#### **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. **Prior to the release of this report, the Tenafly School District**

**submitted documentation demonstrating correction for all areas of noncompliance identified during self-assessment.**

**Findings of noncompliance identified during onsite monitoring**

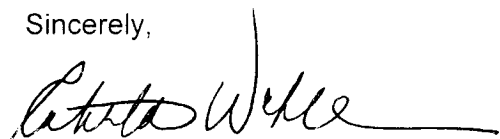
No areas of noncompliance were identified during the onsite monitoring.

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:

Mrs. Nicole Buten  
New Jersey Department of Education  
Office of Special Education Programs  
PO Box 500  
Trenton, NJ 08625-0500

Questions regarding the attached 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

Enclosure  
RW/PM/NB

c: Division of Field Services  
Barbara Gantwerk  
Peggy McDonald  
Nicole Buten  
Aaron Graham  
Bergen County Supervisor of Child Study  
Lorraine Schlarman

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

**Section I: TRANSITION TO ADULT LIFE – Noncompliance was not identified during self-assessment or the onsite monitoring visit.**

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

**Section III: DISCIPLINE- Noncompliance was not identified during self-assessment or onsite monitoring visit.**

**Section IV: LEAST RESTRICTIVE ENVIRONMENT- Noncompliance was not identified during self-assessment or the onsite monitoring visit.**

**Section V: PARENT INVOLVEMENT- Noncompliance was not identified during self-assessment or the onsite monitoring visit.**

Of the parents who were interviewed, all indicated that they were satisfied with the district's programs and services. Parents stated that they were involved in the planning of their children's educational programs.

**Section VI: DISPROPORTIONATE REPRESENTATION - The Tenafly School District was selected for the self-assessment process for the 2006-2007 school year due to disproportionate representation of specific racial/ethnic groups with respect to eligibility determinations for special education based on the Annual Data Reports submitted to NJOSEP in December 2003, December 2004 and December 2005. The Tenafly School District continued to demonstrate a pattern of disproportionate representation of Hispanic students determined eligible for special education as indicated in the Annual Reports submitted to NJOSEP in December 2006 and October 2007. It was determined through the monitoring process, however, that the disproportionality was not due to inappropriate identification during the 2006-2007 and 2007-2008 school years. The district is directed to continue implementation of its improvement plan activities in order to eliminate the disproportionate representation.**

A review of data submitted in the Annual Data Report in October 2008 indicated that the district continues to demonstrate a pattern of disproportionate representation of Hispanic students determined eligible for special education. As a result, a targeted review will be conducted by December 2010 to determine if there is any noncompliance associated with eligibility determinations made during 2008. A monitor from NJOSEP will contact the Director of Special Services to discuss the procedures for the targeted review.

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**Area(s) in Need of Continuous Improvement**

Areas	Status of Improvement Plan
The district developed an improvement plan to address disproportionate representation within the special education population by expanding the range of interventions available to students in general education and implementing a data collection system to measure the effectiveness of interventions implemented as a result of the Intervention and Referral Services (I&RS) process.	The district is in the process of implementing its continuous improvement plan in accordance with the established timelines. Administrators developed a district-wide system for collecting I & RS data regarding intervention type, frequency, duration and effectiveness. Additionally, the district has developed a procedure for analyzing the I&RS data collected to track the effectiveness of interventions by race/ethnicity and gender. Professional development opportunities have been provided to staff regarding the factors influencing student learning and achievement as they relate to race, culture, ethnicity and language.

**Areas of Noncompliance Identified during Self-Assessment**

Area	Status of Compliance/Corrective Action	Corrective Action Requirements	Documentation Required and Timeline
3) Written notice to the parent shall be provided and required parent conferences shall be conducted in the language used for communication by the parent and student unless it is clearly not feasible to do so, in accordance with N.J.A.C. 6A:14-2.4(a)1;34 CFR §300.503(c); and 34CFR §300.504(a)(1) and (d).	Noncompliance identified by the district in its self-assessment was verified as corrected during the onsite monitoring visit.	<b>CORRECTED</b>	<b>CORRECTED</b>

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12) When an initial evaluation is completed, a copy of the evaluation report(s) and documentation and information that will be used for determination of eligibility shall be provided to the parent not less than 10 calendar days prior to the meeting to determine eligibility, in accordance with N.J.A.C. 6A:14-3.5 (a and b); 20 U.S.C. 1414(b)(4); and 34 CFR §300.306(a).	Noncompliance identified by the district in its self-assessment was verified as corrected during the onsite monitoring visit.	<b>CORRECTED</b>	<b>CORRECTED</b>
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**Section VII: Evaluation and Reevaluation**

**Areas of Noncompliance Identified during Self-Assessment**

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).	Noncompliance identified by the district in its self-assessment was verified as corrected during the on-site monitoring visit.	<b>CORRECTED</b>	<b>CORRECTED</b>
15) A copy of the evaluation report(s) and documentation 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).	Noncompliance identified by the district in its self-assessment was verified as corrected during the on-site monitoring visit.	<b>CORRECTED</b>	<b>CORRECTED</b>

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**Section VIII: IEP- Noncompliance was not identified during self-assessment or the onsite monitoring visit.**

**Section IX: PROGRAMS AND SERVICES- Noncompliance was not identified during self-assessment or the onsite monitoring visit.**

All documentation regarding the status of continuous improvement plans must be submitted to the following address in accordance with the established timelines in the district's self-assessment document.

Nicole A. Buten  
New Jersey Department of Education  
Office of Special Education Programs  
PO Box 500  
Trenton, NJ 08625-0500