



**State of New Jersey**  
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION  
PO Box 500  
TRENTON, NJ 08625-0500

COPY

CHRIS CHRISTIE  
Governor

KIM GUADAGNO  
Lt. Governor

BRET SCHUNDLER  
Acting Commissioner

March 11, 2010

Dr. Frances C. Stromsland, Superintendent  
Watchung Hills Regional School District  
108 Stirling Road  
Warren, New Jersey 07059

Subject: Special Education Monitoring Report – Watchung Hills Regional School District

Dear Dr. Stromsland:

On June 16 & 17, 2009, the New Jersey Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs (NJOSPEP), conducted an onsite monitoring visit in the Watchung Hills Regional School District to determine compliance with federal and state special education requirements. The members of the monitoring team were Deborah Masarsky, Tracy Bugg and Diane Mari.

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***

**The Watchung Hills Regional School District was selected for the self-assessment process for the 2007-2008 school year through random selection.**

### 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 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 improvement plan 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. **Prior to the release of this report, the Watchung Hills Regional School District submitted documentation demonstrating correction of all areas of noncompliance identified during self-assessment.**

#### **Findings of noncompliance identified during the on-site monitoring visit**

For any finding of noncompliance identified by the district during the onsite monitoring visit, the status of correction is provided. **Prior to the release of this report, the Watchung Hills Regional School District submitted documentation demonstrating correction of all areas of noncompliance identified during the onsite visit.**

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:

Deborah Masarsky  
Special Education Monitor  
New Jersey Department of Education  
Office of Special Education Programs  
PO Box 500  
Trenton, NJ 08625-0500

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  
Deborah Masarsky  
Trudy Doyle  
Diane Mari  
Beth Scheiderman

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

**Section I: TRANSITION TO ADULT LIFE**

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

Area	Status of Improvement Plan
The district has developed an improvement plan to train staff in developing post-school transition plans and to involve students in planning for post-school life.	The district is in the process of implementing its improvement plan in accordance with the established timelines.

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

Area	Status of Compliance/Corrective Action
1) Individualized Education Programs (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 by the district in its self-assessment was verified as corrected during the onsite monitoring visit.
2) Invitation of 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)].	Noncompliance identified by the district in its self-assessment was verified as corrected during the onsite monitoring visit.
3) IEP requirements for students ages 14 and above in accordance with N.J.A.C. 6A:14-3.7(e)11.	Noncompliance identified by the district in its self-assessment was verified as corrected during the onsite monitoring visit.

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

**Section III: DISCIPLINE – Noncompliance was not identified during the self-assessment or on-site monitoring visit.**

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

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

**Section V: PARENT INVOLVEMENT**

**Results of Parent Interviews**

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

**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).	Noncompliance identified during the onsite monitoring visit was verified as corrected during a desk audit conducted on February 16, 2010.
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).	Noncompliance identified during the onsite monitoring visit was verified as corrected during a desk audit conducted on February 16, 2010.
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).	Noncompliance identified during the onsite monitoring visit was verified as corrected during a desk audit conducted on February 16, 2010.
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)-(iii); and 34 CFR §300.321(e).	Noncompliance identified during the onsite monitoring visit was verified as corrected during a desk audit conducted on February 16, 2010.

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

**Section VI: DISPROPORTIONATE REPRESENTATION – Noncompliance was not identified during the self-assessment or on-site monitoring visit.**

**Section VII: EVALUATION AND REEVALUATION**

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

Area	Status of Compliance/Corrective Action
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 onsite monitoring visit was verified as corrected during a desk audit conducted on February 16, 2010.
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 onsite monitoring visit was verified as corrected during a desk audit conducted on February 16, 2010.

**Areas of Noncompliance Identified during the Onsite Monitoring Visit**

Area	Status of Compliance/Corrective Action
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).	Noncompliance identified during the onsite monitoring visit was verified as corrected during a desk audit conducted on February 16, 2010.

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

**Section VIII: IEP**

**Areas of Noncompliance Identified during the Onsite Monitoring Visit**

<b>Area</b>	<b>Status of Compliance/Corrective Action</b>
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).	Noncompliance identified during the onsite monitoring visit was verified as corrected during a desk audit conducted on February 16, 2010.

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