



State of New Jersey

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

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Governor

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Acting Commissioner

August 12, 2011

Dr. Elaine Giugliano, Superintendent
Wood-Ridge School District
89 Hackensack Street
Wood-Ridge, NJ 07075

Dear Dr. Giugliano:

Subject: Special Education Monitoring Report – Wood-Ridge School District

This correspondence has been sent to inform you of the results of the New Jersey Department of Education, Office of Special Education's onsite monitoring regarding the Wood-Ridge School District's implementation of federal and state special education requirements. The New Jersey Department of Education, Office of Special Education (NJOSE), conducted onsite monitoring visits and desk audits of the Wood-Ridge School District to determine compliance with federal and state special education requirements. The members of the monitoring team were Samuel Jordan and Linda Chavez.

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 NJOSE 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 Wood-Ridge School District was chosen for the self-assessment/monitoring process through random selection.**

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***

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Monitoring Results

The enclosed Table of Findings details the findings of noncompliance resulting from the monitoring. Of the 46 requirements in the district's self-assessment that were reviewed by NJOSE, the district demonstrated noncompliance with fifteen requirements. One area of noncompliance was corrected prior to the release of this report. The remaining 14 findings of noncompliance 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. Ms. Charlene Staley-Evans, NJOSE monitor, will contact Mr. Robert Recchione to discuss procedures for verification of correction of the findings of noncompliance listed in the Table of Findings. For all findings of noncompliance related to the development of IEPs and the delivery of programs and services, the NJOSE has directed specific corrective action activities.

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, as well as all documentation required to demonstrate completion of corrective action activities must be submitted to the following address:

Ms. Charlene Staley-Evans
New Jersey Department of Education
Passaic County Office of Education
501 River Street
Paterson, NJ 07524

The district is expected to provide and sustain administrative oversight, as well as provide ongoing training and technical assistance as needed to ensure identification and correction of any noncompliance with IDEA 2004 and positive educational outcomes for students with disabilities. Please contact me at (609) 292-7605 if you have questions regarding special education monitoring. The NJOSE appreciates the cooperation of district staff members during the self-assessment/monitoring and verification process

Sincerely,



Peggy McDonald, Interim Director
Office of Special Education Programs

PM/dm
Enclosure

c: Barbara Gantwerk
Ms. Charlene Staley-Evans
Robert Gilmartin
Steven Pasternak
Robert Recchione

TABLE OF FINDINGS
Special Education Monitoring Results
IDEA 2004 and New Jersey Administrative Code Requirements
Wood-Ridge School District

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

Section II: STATEWIDE ASSESSMENT

Section III: LEAST RESTRICTIVE ENVIRONMENT

Section V: DISPROPORTIONATE REPRESENTATION

Section VIII: PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

Section I: TRANSITION TO ADULT LIFE

Citation

Status of Compliance

1) Individualized Education Program (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 during the 2009 targeted review was verified as corrected during the onsite monitoring visit.

Section IV: PARENT INVOLVEMENT

Citation

Findings of Noncompliance

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).

A review of records and interviews with staff members indicated that the district did not consistently provide parents with written notice of a meeting containing all the required components due to a lack 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).

A review of records and interviews with staff members indicated that the district did not consistently provide parents with written notices including all required components due to a lack of district procedures.

Section VI: EVALUATIONS AND REEVALUATION

Citation

Findings of Noncompliance

2) Interventions in the general education setting shall be provided to students exhibiting academic difficulties and shall be utilized, as appropriate, prior to referring a student for an evaluation, in accordance with N.J.A.C. 6A:14-3.3(b); 20 U.S.C. §1413(f)(2); and 34 CFR §300.226(b).

A review of records and interviews with staff members indicated that the district did not consistently provide interventions in the general education setting prior to referring a student for an evaluation due to a lack of district procedures.

TABLE OF FINDINGS
Special Education Monitoring Results
IDEA 2004 and New Jersey Administrative Code Requirements
Wood-Ridge School District

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:14-3.3l.	A review of records and interviews with staff members indicated that the district did not consistently maintain written documentation regarding the type, frequency, duration and effectiveness of interventions used in the general education program due to a lack 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).	A review of records indicated that the district did not consistently convene identification meetings with the required participants within 20 days of referral for evaluation 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).	A review of records and interviews with staff members indicated that the district did not ensure that a vision and audiometric screening was conducted for every student referred to the child study team for evaluation 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).	A review of records indicated that the district did not consistently obtain consent to evaluate students referred for speech and language services due to a lack of implementation 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).	A review of records indicated that all sections of the functional assessment were not conducted as part of the initial evaluation of students referred for special education and related services, and for students referred for speech and language services, due to lack of implementation of district procedures.
10) Within three years of the previous classification, a 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).	A review of records and interviews with staff members indicated that reevaluations were not consistently conducted within three years of the prior eligibility date 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(1)(A)(i); and 34 CFR §300.305(a).	A review of records indicated that reevaluation planning meetings did not consistently include required participants 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).	A review of records and interviews with staff members indicated that copies of evaluation reports for students evaluated for special education and related services, as well as for students evaluated for speech and language services, were not provided to parents and/or adult students at least 10 calendar days prior to the eligibility determination meeting due to lack of implementation of district procedures.

TABLE OF FINDINGS
Special Education Monitoring Results
IDEA 2004 and New Jersey Administrative Code Requirements
Wood-Ridge School District

Section VII: IEP

Citation	Findings of Noncompliance
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).	A review of records and interviews with staff members indicated that IEP meetings did not consistently include required participants due to 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(i)1-11, (e) 1-17, and (f); 20 U.S.C. §1414(d)(3)(A)(B); and 34 CFR §300.324(a)(1)(2).	A review of records and interviews with staff members indicated that for students eligible for special education and related services and for students eligible for speech and language services, IEPs did not include required considerations and statements due to a lack of district procedures.
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).	A review of records and interviews with staff members indicated that IEP meetings were not consistently conducted annually or more often if necessary due to lack of implementation of district procedures.

Corrective Action for Citations 2 and 3 noted above:

The district is required to convene an IEP team that includes all required participants, to review and/or revise the IEP for each student whose IEP was found to be noncompliant by the monitors. Names of students whose IEPs were found to be noncompliant will be provided to the director of Special Education by NJOSE.

Additionally, the district must review the IEPs of all students eligible for special education and related services and those eligible for speech and language services. For any IEP where consideration and required statements were not included and/or addressed, a meeting of the IEP team must be convened to review and revise the IEP.