

**New Jersey Department of Education  
Special Education Receiving School Monitoring**

**Receiving School:** Rock Brook School

**County:** Somerset

**Monitoring Dates:** November 15 and 16, 2004

**Monitoring Team:** Paul Bilik and Denise Wilkens

**Background Information:**

During the 2003–2004 school year, the Rock Brook School conducted a self-assessment of policies, procedures, programs, services, and student outcomes. This self-assessment component of the monitoring process provided the Rock Brook School with an opportunity to evaluate its strengths and areas of need with regard to:

- The provision of a free, appropriate public education (FAPE) for students with disabilities in the least restrictive environment;
- The development and implementation of policies and procedures resulting in procedural compliance; and
- The organization and delivery of programs and services to meet the needs of the students with disabilities.

The self-assessment was designed to identify areas of strength, promising practices, areas that need improvement and areas that may be noncompliant with state and federal requirements. The Rock Brook School developed an improvement plan to address identified areas of need.

The New Jersey Department of Education (NJDOE) conducted an on-site monitoring to verify the self-assessment findings, to assess the appropriateness of the improvement plan, and to determine the progress in implementing the plan.

During the monitoring process, the monitoring team reviewed receiving school documents such as policies and procedures, student records from sending districts, lesson plans, services as indicated in IEPs, staff evaluations, student count information, master student lists, class lists, schedules of students/teachers/related service personnel, and other relevant information. Interviews were conducted with the receiving school's special education administrators, building principals, special education teachers, parents and related service personnel.

**School Strengths:**

The Rock Brook School is commended for the interdisciplinary approach to individualized classroom instruction. In each classroom, students receive individual and group speech language services within the context of the core curriculum content standards. In addition, the Rock Brook School provides adaptive physical education for all students that is coordinated with the occupational and physical therapy staff. This serves to enhance related services goals.

The Rock Brook School has also developed a coordinated program of activities with the local public school (Montgomery Twp., Orchard Hill Elementary School). This affords Rock Brook School students the opportunity to participate with their non-disabled peers.

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### **Areas Demonstrating Compliance With All Standards:**

**Staff Requirements** and **Facility Requirements** were determined to be areas of compliance by the Rock Brook School during self-assessment and by the NJDOE during the on-site visit.

#### **Section I: General Provisions**

##### **Summary of Findings:**

During self-assessment, the Rock Brook School accurately identified themselves compliant in the areas regarding annual reports, amendments and programs provided in nonsectarian settings.

During the self-assessment process, the Rock Brook School identified concerns in the areas regarding policies and procedures and staff development. The receiving school's improvement plan is sufficient to address these areas of need. During the on-site visit, a review of records and staff interviews indicated that the receiving school has appropriately implemented specific activities to bring about correction in these areas.

No additional areas of need were identified during the on-site visit.

#### **Section II: Free, Appropriate Public Education (FAPE)**

##### **Summary of Findings:**

During self-assessment, the Rock Brook School accurately identified themselves compliant in the areas regarding maintenance of hearing aids, services at no cost to parents, extended school year programs and services provided in accordance with IEPs, program open to observation by LEA and DOE, provision of services as per IEP, and provision of occupational therapy (OT), physical therapy (PT), speech and counseling services as per IEP.

During the self-assessment process, the Rock Brook School identified concerns in the areas regarding length of school day and year and physical education. The receiving school's improvement plan is sufficient to address these areas of need. During the on-site visit, a review of records and staff interviews indicated that the receiving school has appropriately implemented specific activities to bring about correction in these areas.

No additional areas of need were identified during the on-site visit.

#### **Section V: Individualized Education Plan/Annual Review**

##### **Summary of Findings:**

During self-assessment, the Rock Brook School accurately identified themselves compliant in the areas regarding IEP meeting conducted at least annually, IEP conducted with required receiving school participants, IEP conducted with students age 14 and older, as appropriate, signatures of participants present on IEPs, current IEP prior to service delivery, IEP accessibility to teachers and providers, informing teachers and providers of IEP responsibilities, timely implementation of IEPs, observation of

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proposed placement, statewide testing, implementation of IEP components and informing parents of progress toward goals and objectives.

During the self-assessment process, the Rock Brook School identified concerns in the areas regarding communication to sending district regarding missing IEP components. **The receiving school's improvement plan is insufficient to address this area of need because it lacks procedures to ensure that IEPs from the sending district contain goals and objectives that are the result of review and discussion by an appropriately configured IEP team. Rock Brook's current procedures require staff members to develop all goals and objectives and present them to the sending district (on Rock Brook School letterhead) as the final goals and objectives rather than proposing them for discussion at an appropriately configured IEP team meeting. The plan must be revised to include procedures, staff training and an administrative oversight component to ensure that goals and objectives are developed for review and discussion at an IEP meeting.**

No additional areas of need were identified during the on-site visit.

### **Section VI: Discipline**

#### **Summary of Finding:**

During self-assessment, the Rock Brook School accurately identified themselves compliant in the areas regarding procedures for time out rooms, restraints and aversives, removal of student pending mediation and due process, changes to program/placement pending mediation and due process, notification to sending districts regarding suspensions, removal of student to interim alternative educational setting and procedures for termination of student placement.

During the self-assessment process, the Rock Brook School identified concerns in the areas regarding standard disciplinary procedures. The receiving school's improvement plan is sufficient to address this area of need. During the on-site visit, a review of records and staff interviews indicated that the receiving school has appropriately implemented specific activities to bring about correction in this area.

No additional areas of need were identified during the on-site visit.

### **Section VII: Programs and Services**

#### **Summary of Findings:**

During self-assessment, the Rock Brook School accurately identified themselves compliant in the areas regarding class size and age range, exceptions for class size and age range, special class program descriptions maintained at county office, certifications for specialized populations, special classes serving students with similar educational needs, teachers trained and instructing in CCCSs, collaboration for home instruction, dispensing medication, policies and procedures relating to school functions and services and medical exams for sport teams.

During the self-assessment process, the Rock Brook School identified concerns in the area regarding nursing services. The receiving school's improvement plan is sufficient to address this area of need. During the on-site visit, a review of records and staff

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interviews indicated that the receiving school has appropriately implemented specific activities to bring about correction in this area.

No additional areas of need were identified during the on-site visit.

**Section VIII: Student Records**

**Summary of Findings:**

During self-assessment, the Rock Brook School accurately identified themselves compliant in the areas regarding conformance to pupil record code, return of records upon termination of student placement, access sheets, location of other records specified in central file, daily attendance available to LEAs, written communication to LEAs regarding five days of tardiness/absences, written notice of placement to county office and maintenance of student health records.

During the self-assessment process, the Rock Brook School identified concerns in the areas regarding access to student records. The receiving school's improvement plan is sufficient to address this area of need. During the on-site visit, a review of records and staff interviews indicated that the receiving school has appropriately implemented specific activities to bring about correction in this area.

No additional areas of need were identified during the on-site visit.

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## Summary

On-site special education monitoring was conducted in the Rock Brook School on November 15 and 16, 2004. The purpose of the monitoring visit was to verify the Rock Brook School's report of findings resulting from their self-assessment and to review the receiving school's improvement plan.

The Rock Brook School is commended for the exceptionally comprehensive review conducted during the self-assessment process. As a result of this review the receiving school was able to identify all areas of need and develop an appropriate improvement plan that with some revisions will bring about systemic change. The receiving school is further commended for the prompt implementation of corrective action to address the areas of need identified during the self-assessment process. As a result, all of those identified areas were corrected prior to the on-site visit. Additionally, the receiving school is commended for the many areas that were determined by the receiving school and verified by the Department of Education as compliant with federal and state statutes and regulations.

**Staff Requirements** and **Facility Requirements** were determined to be areas of compliance by the Rock Brook School during self-assessment and by the NJDOE during the on-site visit.

Additional areas identified as consistently compliant by the Rock Brook School during self-assessment and verified during the on-site monitoring visit included annual reports, amendments, programs provided in nonsectarian settings, hearing aids, services at no cost to parents, extended school year programs and services provided in accordance with IEPs, observation of programs, provision of services and related services per IEP, IEP meeting conducted at least annually, IEP conducted with students age 14 and older, as appropriate, signatures of participants present on IEPs, current IEP prior to service delivery, IEP accessibility to teachers and providers, informing teachers and providers of IEP responsibilities, timely implementation of IEPs, observation of proposed placement, statewide testing, implementation of IEP components, informing parents of progress toward goals and objectives, removal of student pending mediation and due process, changes to program/placement pending mediation and due process, notification to sending districts regarding suspensions, removal of student to interim alternative educational setting, procedures for termination of student, class size and age range, exceptions for class size and age range, special class program descriptions maintained at county office, certifications for specialized populations, special classes serving students with similar educational needs, teachers trained and instructing in CCCSs, collaboration for home instruction, dispensing medication, policies and procedures relating to school functions and services, and medical exams for sport teams, conformance to pupil record code, return of records, access sheets, location of records, daily attendance, tardiness/absence, written notice of attendance, and student health records.

During the self-assessment process, the Rock Brook School identified areas of need regarding policies and procedures, staff development, length of day and year, provision of physical education, communication to sending districts regarding missing IEP components, standard disciplinary procedures, nursing services and access to records.

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Within forty-five days of receipt of the monitoring report, the Rock Brook School will revise and resubmit the improvement plan to the county office of education and to the Office of Special Education Programs to address the one area that requires revisions.