

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

**Receiving School:** Burlington County Special Services School District  
(Burlington County SSSD)

**County:** Burlington

**Monitoring Dates:** October 24-25, November 28-30, 2005

**Monitoring Team:** Catherine Thomas, Deborah Magee, Judyth Vazquez, Carmen Fanucci, Dolores Walther, Barbara Groff, Elaine Lerner

**Background Information:**

During the 2004–2005 school year, Burlington County SSSD, conducted a self-assessment of policies, procedures, programs, services, and student outcomes. This self-assessment component of the monitoring process provided Burlington County SSSD 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. Burlington County SSSD 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 Individualized Education Programs (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:**

Burlington County SSSD is commended for providing staff with training on the latest research-based instructional techniques. The district is also commended for its on-going recruitment and coordination of community resources to support the educational goals of the district.

Educational programs tailored to the needs of students with severe disabilities include trans-disciplinary instruction to maximize IEP goal acquisition; comprehensive instruction in daily living skills; a regularly scheduled class devoted to multi-sensory development; a

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daily after-school program; a weekly parent support/training group; regular home visitation by teachers and therapists for training and support and a respite program. The district provides parents with training and agency referrals for transition services, to prepare students for post-school life.

Burlington County SSSD provides a number of special services to support the needs of students with behavioral disabilities. The behavior management program, known as Citizenship Awareness Behavior Improvement (CABI) provides students with mechanisms for gaining control over their behavior and exposure to the challenges and solutions involved in successful independent living. Topics addressed include financial management, resume development, health management, appropriate employee deportment, family responsibilities, voting, community involvement, recreation, driver license acquisition, military registration, etc. Additionally, students may elect from a variety of vocational training opportunities including automobile detailing, horticulture, floral culture, child day care, graphic arts, food service, computer repair, masonry and cosmetology.

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

**General Provisions, Staff Requirements, Facility Requirements, Discipline and Student Records** were determined to be areas of compliance by the Burlington County SSSD during self-assessment and by the NJDOE during the on-site visit.

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

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

During self-assessment, the Burlington County SSSD accurately identified themselves compliant in the areas of length of school day and year, provision of physical education, services at no cost to parents, provision of extended school year programs, observation of programs and provision of related services.

During the self-assessment process, the Burlington County SSSD identified concerns in the area of maintenance of hearing aids. The district's improvement plan is sufficient to address this area of need. During the on-site visit, a review of records 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 V: Individualized Education Program/Annual Review**

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

During self-assessment, the Burlington County SSSD accurately identified themselves compliant in the areas of IEP meetings conducted at least annually, IEP meetings conducted with students age 14 and older, as appropriate, signatures present on IEPs, current IEP prior to service delivery, IEP accessibility to teachers and providers, informing teachers and providers of IEP responsibilities, no delay in implementation, observation of proposed placement, statewide testing and progress reports.

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During the self-assessment process, the Burlington County SSSD identified concerns in the areas of IEP meetings conducted with appropriate participants, communication with sending districts regarding missing IEP components and implementation of IEP components. The district's improvement plan is sufficient to address these areas of need. During the on-site visit, a review of records 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 VII: Programs and Services**

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

During self-assessment, the Burlington County SSSD accurately identified themselves compliant in the areas of class size and age range, exceptions for class size and age range, descriptions of special class programs, special class programs implementing core curriculum content standards, dispensing medication/nursing services and medical exams for sports teams.

During the self-assessment process, the Burlington County SSSD identified concerns in the area of home instruction. The district's improvement plan is sufficient to address this area of need. During the on-site visit, a review of records determined that the school has appropriately implemented specific activities for 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 Burlington County SSSD on October 24-26, November 28-30, 2005. The purpose of the monitoring visit was to verify the Burlington County SSSD's report of findings resulting from their self-assessment and to review the receiving school's improvement plan.

The receiving 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 improvement plan that is sufficient to 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 identified areas were corrected prior to the on-site visit. Additionally, the receiving school is further commended for the many areas determined by the receiving school and verified by the Department of Education as compliant with federal and state statutes and regulations.

**General Provisions, Staff Requirements, Facility Requirements, Discipline and Student Records** were determined to be areas of compliance by the Burlington County SSSD during self-assessment and by the NJDOE during the on-site visit.

Additional areas identified as consistently compliant by the Burlington County SSSD during self-assessment and verified during the on-site monitoring visit included length of school day and year, provision of physical education, services at no cost to parents, provision of extended school year programs and services, observation of programs, provision of related services, IEP meetings conducted at least annually, IEP meetings conducted with students age 14 and older, as appropriate, signatures present on IEPs, current IEP prior to service delivery, IEP accessibility to teachers and providers, informing teachers and providers of IEP responsibilities, no delay in implementation, observation of proposed placement, statewide testing, progress reports, class size and age range, exceptions for class size and age range, descriptions of special class programs, special class programs implementing core curriculum content standards, dispensing medication/nursing services and medical exams for sports teams.

During the self-assessment process, the Burlington County SSSD identified concerns in the areas of maintenance of hearing aids, IEP meeting conducted with appropriate participants, communication with sending districts regarding missing IEP components, implementation of IEP components relating to related services and home instruction.

Burlington County SSSD is not required to submit revisions to their improvement plan since all areas of noncompliance have been identified and corrected by the district.