

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

Receiving School: Milton School

County: Essex

Monitoring Dates: November 16, 2004

Monitoring Team: Janet Wright and Gregory Margolis

Background Information:

During the 2003– 2004 school year, the Milton School conducted a self-assessment of policies, procedures, programs, services, and student outcomes. This self-assessment component of the monitoring process provided the Milton 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 Milton 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 Milton 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 Milton School's special education administrators, building principals, special education teachers, parents and related service personnel.

School Strengths:

The Milton School is commended for its comprehensive and extensive counseling/psychological services. These services are provided both through students' IEP requirements and infused throughout the overall program.

The Milton School provides students with transition services including job readiness skills. The school employs two staff members, trained in the provision of transition services, who collaborate with sending districts to provide these services.

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Areas Demonstrating Compliance With All Standards:

FAPE, Discipline and **Student Records** were determined to be areas of compliance by the Milton School during self-assessment and by the NJDOE during the on-site visit.

Section I: General Provisions

Summary of Findings:

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

During the self-assessment process, the Milton School identified concerns in the area regarding follow up activities on staff training. **The receiving school's improvement plan is insufficient to address this area because it lacks procedures, in-service, a mechanism to determine the effectiveness of the in-service and an administrative oversight component to bring about the required changes. The plan needs to be revised to include these elements.**

An additional area of need was identified during the on-site visit regarding the components of a staff development plan.

Area of Need:

Staff Development – During the on-site visit, staff interviews and a review of records indicated that although the Milton School staff members are provided with financial assistance to participate in outside professional development, the school has not instituted a plan to provide in-house trainings either through turn-key training or by special presenters to staff and parents.

- **The Milton School will revise its improvement plan to include procedures to ensure that consistent and appropriate joint training opportunities are provided to staff and parents. The school's plan should not rely on staff members pursuing professional development exclusively on an independent basis. The plan must include a mechanism to determine the effectiveness of the training and an administrative oversight component to ensure the consistent, compliant implementation of the procedures.**

Section III: Staff Requirements

Summary of Findings:

During self-assessment, the Milton School accurately identified themselves compliant in the areas regarding private school dual employment and criminal history verification.

During the self-assessment process, the Milton School identified concerns in the areas regarding certified and licensed staff. The receiving school's improvement plan is sufficient to address this area of need.

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An additional area of need was identified during the on-site visit regarding having an approved professional development plan.

Area of Need:

Approved Professional Development Plan – During the on-site visit, through record reviews and staff interviews it was determined that the school does not have an approved professional development plan for the current year.

- **The Milton School will revise its improvement plan to include procedures to ensure that the school has a professional development plan approved through the county professional development board. The plan must include administrative oversight component to ensure consistent implementation of the procedures.**

Section IV: Facility Requirements

Summary of Findings:

During self-assessment, the Milton School accurately identified themselves compliant in the areas regarding programs provided in approved facilities, certificates of occupancy and inspections and fire drills.

An area of need was identified during the on-site visit regarding the nurse's facility.

Area of Need:

Nurse's Facility – On-site inspection of the nursing area indicated that the nurse's facility does not have a private rest area. In addition, the nurse's desk and treatment area is located in the front of the main school office.

- **The Milton School will revise its improvement plan to ensure that the nurse's facility complies with N.J.A.C. 6A:26-6.2.**

Section V: Individualized Education Plan/Annual Review

Summary of Findings:

During self-assessment, the Milton School accurately identified themselves compliant in the areas regarding IEP meeting conducted at least annually, IEP conducted with required Milton School participants, IEP conducted with students age 14 and older, as appropriate, IEP accessibility to teachers and providers, informing teachers and providers of IEP responsibilities, timely implementation of IEPs, observation of proposed placement, support and assistance for statewide assessment, implementation of IEP components and informing parents of progress toward goals and objectives.

During the self-assessment process, the Milton School identified concerns in the areas regarding administration of statewide testing. The school's improvement plan is sufficient to address this area of need.

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Additional areas of need were identified during the on-site visit in the areas regarding IEP goals and objectives and communication to sending district regarding missing IEPs and IEP components.

Areas of Need:

IEP Goals and Objectives - During the on-site visit, through staff interviews, it was determined that, although it is not the receiving school's responsibility to do so, Milton School staff provides IEP annual goals and objectives to the IEP team. While the goals and objectives are aligned with the Core Curriculum Content Standards, they are not individualized and they lack criteria for being observable and measurable.

- **The Milton School will revise their improvement plan to either offer IEP teams' goals and objectives that are individualized, observable and measurable or communicate with the sending district to ensure that the IEP team revises the goals and objectives provided by the Milton School to make certain that they are individualized, observable and measurable.**

Communication to the Sending Districts - During the on-site visit a review of records and staff interviews indicated that although a mechanism exists for obtaining missing IEPs and IEP components, there is no consistent follow-up to ensure that all required documents are received. Missing IEP components include behavior intervention plans and IEP signature pages.

- **The Milton School will revise its improvement plan to include procedures to ensure that the receiving school consistently communicates to the sending district when they are missing IEPs or IEP components. The plan must include an administrative oversight component to ensure the consistent, compliant implementation of the procedures.**

Section VII: Programs and Services

Summary of Findings:

During self-assessment, the Milton 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, special classes serving students with similar educational needs, collaboration for home instruction, policies and procedures relating to school functions and services and medical exams for sport teams.

During the self-assessment process, the Milton School identified concerns in the areas regarding teachers trained and instructing in CCCSs, dispensing medication and nursing services. **The receiving school's improvement plan is insufficient to address these areas of need because they lack procedures, in-service, a mechanism to determine the effectiveness of the in-service and an administrative oversight component to bring about the required changes. The plans need to be revised to include these components.**

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 Milton School on November 16, 2004. The purpose of the monitoring visit was to verify the Milton School's report of findings resulting from their self-assessment and to review the Milton School's improvement plan.

The receiving school is commended for the comprehensive review conducted during the self-assessment process. As a result of that review the receiving school was able to identify areas of need and develop an improvement plan that with some revision will bring about systemic change. 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.

FAPE, Discipline and Student Records were determined to be areas of compliance by the Milton School during self-assessment and by the NJDOE during the on-site visit.

Additional areas of compliance identified by the Milton School during self-assessment and verified during the on-site monitoring visit included policies and procedures, annual reports, amendments, programs provided in nonsectarian settings, private school dual employment, criminal history verification, programs provided in approved facilities, certificates of occupancy and inspections, fire drills, IEP meeting conducted at least annually, IEP conducted with required participants, IEP conducted with students age 14 and older, as appropriate, IEP accessibility to teachers and providers, informing teachers and providers* of IEP responsibilities, timely implementation of IEPs, observation of proposed placement, statewide testing relating to support and assistance, implementation of IEP components, informing parents of progress toward goals and objectives, class size and age ranges, special programs descriptions maintained at the county office, special classes serving students with similar educational needs, collaboration for home instruction, policies and procedures relating to school functions and services and medical exams for sports teams.

During the self-assessment process, the Milton School identified areas of need regarding staff development, certified and licensed staff, statewide testing relating to administration, teachers trained and instructing in CCCS and dispensing medication and nursing services.

The on-site visit identified additional areas of need within the various standards regarding staff development, having an approved professional development plan, nurse's facility, IEP goals and objectives, communication to the sending district regarding missing IEPs and missing IEP components.

Within forty-five days of receipt of the monitoring report, the Milton School will revise and resubmit the improvement plan to the county office of education and to the Office of Special Education Programs to address those areas that require revisions.