

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

Receiving School: Deron Schools (Deron I and Deron II)

Counties: Union and Essex

Monitoring Dates: December 5, 12, 13, 14, 15, 2005

Monitoring Team: Heather Mills-Pevonis, Mark Lanzi, Denise Wilkens

Background Information:

During the 2004 – 2005 school year, the Deron Schools (Deron I and Deron II) conducted a self-assessment of policies, procedures, programs, services, and student outcomes. This self-assessment component of the monitoring process provided the Deron Schools 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 Deron Schools 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 Deron Schools' special education administrators, building principals, special education teachers, parents and related service personnel.

School Strengths:

The Deron Schools are commended for the variety of educational programs provided that focus on student achievement in academics, behavior and self help skills. The Deron Schools provide school-wide behavior management programs that specifically focus on student strengths through positive reinforcement protocols. The Workshop program offers students the opportunity to experience a functional business atmosphere. The program provides an orientation to the workplace and exposes students to a variety of work related experiences. Students work both independently and in groups to produce, market and sell the products they have created. Activities that promote daily living skills are introduced through the home economic program and community-based field trips.

New Jersey Department of Education Special Education Receiving School Monitoring

In addition to Deron Schools' academic programs they also provide a varsity and junior varsity intramural sports program where team members and cheerleaders travel to other schools to compete in basketball, softball and kickball. There are field trips, and a variety of clubs including art, music, crafts, cooking, cheerleading, newspaper reporting and a student counsel. Activities to promote community involvement and good citizenship encourage students to become responsible members of society. For example, Deron I has partnered with the local Veteran's Post (VFW) to develop an intergenerational partnership between their students and the Veteran's. This relationship focuses on bridging the intergenerational divide through a pen-pal program and Veteran's visiting the school at least annually to meet with the students. This ongoing relationship benefits both the students who learn about their elders and the veterans who learn that a disability doesn't limit these children's dreams or ambitions.

Areas Demonstrating Compliance With All Standards:

Free Appropriate Public Education, Staff Requirements, Facility Requirements, Programs and Services and **Student Records** were determined to be areas of compliance by Deron Schools during self-assessment and by the NJDOE during the on-site visit.

Section I: General Provisions

Summary of Findings:

During self-assessment, Deron Schools 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, Deron Schools identified concerns in the areas regarding staff development and parent participation. **The receiving school's improvement plan is insufficient to address these areas of need because they lack in-service training and a mechanism to determine the effectiveness of the training to ensure the compliant implementation of the procedures. The plan needs to be revised to include these components.**

No additional areas of need were identified during the onsite visit.

Section V: Individualized Education Program/Annual Review

Summary of Findings:

During self-assessment, Deron Schools accurately identified themselves compliant in the areas regarding IEP meeting conducted at least annually, IEP accessibility to teachers and providers, informing teachers and providers of IEP responsibilities, timely implementation of IEPs, signatures of participants present on IEPs, IEP meeting conducted with required receiving school participants, IEP conducted with students, as appropriate, observation of proposed placement and statewide testing.

During the self-assessment process, Deron Schools identified concerns in the areas regarding current IEP prior to service delivery, communication to sending districts regarding missing IEP components, implementation of IEP components and informing parents of progress toward goals and objectives. The receiving school's improvement plan is sufficient to address the areas of current IEP prior to service delivery and communication to sending district regarding missing IEP components. During the on-site visit, a review of records and staff interviews

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

indicated that the receiving school has appropriately implemented specific activities to bring about correction in these areas. **The receiving school's improvement plan is insufficient to address the areas regarding implementation of IEP components and informing parents of progress toward goals and objectives because they lack procedures and a mechanism to measure student outcomes relating to goals and objectives. The plan must also include in-service training for all instructional staff and an administrative oversight component to ensure the consistent implementation of the procedures.**

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

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

Summary

On-site special education monitoring was conducted at Deron Schools (Deron I and Deron II) on December 5, 12-14, 2005. The purpose of the monitoring visit was to verify the Deron Schools report of findings resulting from their self-assessment and to review the improvement plan.

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

Areas demonstrating compliance with all standards are **FAPE, Staff Requirements, Facility Requirements, Programs and Services** and **Student Records**.

Areas identified as consistently compliant by the Deron Schools during self-assessment and verified during the on-site monitoring visit included policies and procedures, annual reports, amendments, programs provided in nonsectarian settings, IEP meeting conducted at least annually, IEP conducted with required receiving school participants, IEP conducted with students, as appropriate, signatures of participants present on IEPs, current IEP prior to service delivery, communication to sending district regarding missing IEP components, 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 and informing parents of progress toward goals and objectives.

During the self-assessment process, the Deron Schools identified areas of need regarding staff and parent development, IEP conducted with appropriate participants, current IEP, communication to sending districts regarding missing components, implementation of IEP components and progress reports.

Within forty-five days of receipt of the monitoring report, the Deron Schools 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.