

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

**Receiving School:** N.J. Regional Day School at Newark

**County:** Essex

**Monitoring Dates:** January 4 and 6, 2006

**Monitoring Team:** Mark Lanzi, Gregory Margolis, Ann Marie Bruder

**Background Information:**

During the 2004–2005 school year, the N.J. Regional Day School at Newark conducted a self-assessment of policies, procedures, programs, services, and student outcomes. This self-assessment component of the monitoring process provided the N.J. Regional Day School at Newark 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 N.J. Regional Day School at Newark 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 N.J. Regional Day School at Newark's special education administrators, building principals, special education teachers, parents and related service personnel.

**School Strengths:**

The N.J. Regional Day School at Newark developed a comprehensive science program that is integrated across subject areas. This program enables students to better interpret the world around them, while giving them functional and meaningful ways to apply basic concepts in their everyday lives. The science program incorporates horticulture, technology and nature studies. The garden, greenhouse and grounds at the school are a unique resource for students in an urban environment. Students

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investigate plants, animals, weather and the earth, observing life cycles and changes over time. These sensory-rich experiences nurture curiosity and enable students to make connections between themselves and the world they live in. In addition to the programs offered at the school, many of the older students participate in shared-time vocational training programs at their resident county's vocational school.

Through participation on the Transition Team that includes the school social worker, assistant principal, and other appropriate individuals, students and parents receive assistance with transition planning. These efforts include helping families file for eligibility from local and state agencies such as the Division of Developmental Disabilities, weekly parent meetings/trainings, Parents as Partners Program and providing transportation to enable parents to attend meetings. The N.J. Regional Day School at Newark's transition program is outcome oriented and promotes movement from school to post school activities, including post secondary education, vocational training, integrated employment, independent living and community participation. Each student fourteen and older has a school-based job that is meaningful and purposeful and includes daily assistance from a school-based job coach. Students are also given the opportunity to engage in community-based employment and/or participate in a shared time work program with the local Occupational Center.

The N. J. Regional Day School at Newark also provides students with inclusion opportunities in neighboring elementary, middle and high schools. The school has also developed a variety of extracurricular activities including a swim team, chorus, therapeutic horseback riding, horticulture therapy and a comprehensive after-school program that includes activities for promoting physical well-being.

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

**General Provisions, FAPE, Staff Requirements, Discipline, Programs/Services and Student Records** were determined to be areas of compliance by the N.J. Regional Day School at Newark during self-assessment and by the NJDOE during the on-site visit.

### **Section IV: Facility Requirements**

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

During self-assessment, the N.J. Regional Day School at Newark accurately identified themselves compliant in the areas regarding programs provided in approved facilities and fire drills.

During the self-assessment process, the N.J. Regional Day School at Newark identified concerns in the areas regarding certificates of occupancy and inspections. 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.

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

**Summary of Findings:**

During self-assessment, the N.J. Regional Day School at Newark accurately identified themselves compliant in the areas regarding IEP meeting conducted at least annually, IEP meeting conducted with required receiving school participants, IEP meeting conducted with students, as appropriate, signatures of participants present on IEPs, current IEP prior to service delivery, communication to sending districts 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.

Areas of need were identified during the on-site visit regarding evaluation for related services without referral and IEP goals and objectives.

**Area of Need:**

**Evaluation for Related Services** – During the on-site visit, through record reviews and staff interviews, it was determined that the school’s speech language specialists, without the involvement of the IEP team, routinely perform reevaluations and make recommendations for the provision of related services.

- **The N.J. Regional Day School at Newark must revise its improvement plan to include procedures to ensure that when the school believes that a student requires a reevaluation to initiate, terminate or modify speech/language services, a referral must be made to the child study team of the sending district. The plan must include staff training and an administrative oversight component to ensure consistent implementation of the procedures.**

**IEP Goals and Objectives** - During the on-site visit, through staff interviews and record reviews, it was determined that N.J. Regional Day School at Newark staff provides IEP annual goals and objectives to the IEP team that are aligned with the Core Curriculum Content Standards. However, these goals and objectives are not individualized, observable or measurable.

- **The N.J. Regional Day School at Newark must revise its improvement plan to provide for collaboration and communication with local school districts that results in individualized, observable and measurable goals and objectives being used to develop IEPs. The plan must include an administrative oversight component to ensure consistent implementation of the procedures.**

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**Summary**

On-site special education monitoring was conducted in the N.J. Regional Day School at Newark on January 4 and 6, 2006. The purpose of the monitoring visit was to verify the N.J. Regional Day School at Newark's report of findings resulting from their self-assessment and to review the N.J. Regional Day School at Newark'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 all but two 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 NJDOE as compliant with federal and state statutes and regulations.

**General Provisions, FAPE, Staff Requirements, Discipline, Programs and Services and Student Records** were determined to be areas of compliance by the N.J. Regional Day School at Newark during self-assessment and by the NJDOE during the on-site visit.

Areas identified as consistently compliant by the N.J. Regional Day School at Newark during self-assessment and verified during the on-site monitoring visit included programs provided in approved facilities, fire drills, IEP meeting conducted at least annually, IEP meeting conducted with required receiving school participants, IEP meeting 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 N.J. Regional Day School at Newark identified areas of need regarding certificates of occupancy and inspections.

The on-site visit identified additional areas of need within the various standards regarding evaluation for related services and IEP goals and objectives.

Within forty-five days of receipt of the monitoring report, the N.J. Regional Day School at Newark 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.