

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

Receiving School: Ocean Academy

County: Ocean

Monitoring Dates: October 4 and 5, 2004

Monitoring Team: Carmen Fanucci, Karen Frumen, Debbie Magee, Barbara Groff,
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Background Information:

During the 2003–2004 school year, the Ocean Academy conducted a self-assessment of policies, procedures, programs, services, and student outcomes. This self-assessment component of the monitoring process provided the Ocean Academy 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 Ocean Academy 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, 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 Ocean Academy has a strong counseling program which has resulted in improved student behavior and a reduction in classroom disruptions, suspensions and other disciplinary action.

The Ocean Academy is commended for its "Fitness for Life" physical education program which is a multifaceted program to incorporate skills that students can carry with them into adulthood. The program includes the Presidential Fitness Program, strength and conditioning program, cardiovascular and cardio respiratory endurance, as well as such "later life" sports as bowling and team sports.

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Areas Demonstrating Compliance With All Standards:

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

Section I: General Provisions

Summary of Findings:

During self-assessment, the Ocean Academy 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 Ocean Academy identified concerns in the areas regarding staff development. 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 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 Ocean Academy accurately identified themselves compliant in the areas regarding length of school day and year, provision of physical education, services at no cost to parents, 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 Ocean Academy identified concerns in the areas regarding maintenance of hearing aids, extended school year programs and services provided in accordance with IEPs. The 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 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 Ocean Academy accurately identified themselves compliant in the areas regarding IEP conducted with students age 14 and older, as appropriate, signatures of participants present on IEPs, IEP accessibility to teachers and providers, informing teachers and providers of IEP responsibilities, timely implementation of IEPs, statewide testing, implementation of IEP components and informing parents of progress toward goals and objectives.

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During the self-assessment process, the Ocean Academy identified concerns in the areas regarding IEP meeting conducted at least annually, IEP conducted with required receiving school participants, current IEP prior to service delivery, communication to sending district regarding missing IEP components and observation of proposed placement. 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 VI: Discipline

Summary of Finding:

During self-assessment, the Ocean Academy accurately identified themselves compliant in the areas regarding standard disciplinary procedures, 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 and removal of student to interim alternative educational setting.

During the self-assessment process, the Ocean Academy identified concerns regarding procedures for termination of students. 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 Ocean Academy 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 and nursing services.

During the self-assessment process, the Ocean Academy identified concerns in the area regarding policies and procedures relating to school functions and services. The 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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Section VIII: Student Records

Summary of Findings:

During self-assessment, the Ocean Academy accurately identified themselves compliant in the areas regarding conformance to pupil record code, return of records upon termination, access to records is limited to authorized persons, location of other records specified in central file, written notice of placement to county office and maintenance of student health records.

During the self-assessment process, the Ocean Academy identified concerns in the areas regarding access sheets and daily attendance available to LEAs, written communication to LEAs regarding five days of tardiness/absences. The 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 these areas.

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 Ocean Academy on October 4 and 5, 2004. The purpose of the monitoring visit was to verify the Ocean Academy'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 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.

Areas identified as consistently compliant by the Ocean Academy during self-assessment and verified during the on-site monitoring visit included **Staff Requirements** and **Facility Requirements**.

Additional areas of compliance include policies and procedures, annual reports, amendments, programs provided in nonsectarian settings length of school day and year, provision of physical education, services at no cost to parents, program open to observation by LEA and DOE, provision of services as per IEP, provision of occupational therapy (OT), physical therapy (PT), speech and counseling services as per IEP, IEP conducted with students age 14 and older, as appropriate, signatures of participants present on IEPs, IEP accessibility to teachers and providers, informing teachers and providers of IEP responsibilities, timely implementation of IEPs, statewide testing, implementation of IEP components, informing parents of progress toward goals and objectives standard disciplinary procedures, 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 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, nursing services conformance to pupil record code, return of records upon termination, access to records is limited to authorized persons, location of other records specified in central file, written notice of placement to county office and maintenance of student health records.

During the self-assessment process, the Ocean Academy identified areas of need regarding staff development, hearing aids, extended school year, IEP conducted annually, IEP conducted with appropriate participants, current IEP prior to service delivery, communication to sending districts regarding IEP components, observation of proposed placement, termination of student placement, policies and procedures relating to school functions and services, access sheets and written notice of attendance.

The Ocean Academy is not required to submit revisions to their improvement plan since all areas of noncompliance have been identified and corrected by the school.