



State of New Jersey
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
PO Box 500
TRENTON, NJ 08625-0500

CHRIS CHRISTIE
Governor

KIM GUADAGNO
Lt. Governor

DAVID C. HESPE
Commissioner

September 23, 2015

Dr. Margaret Hayes, Superintendent
Scotch Plains-Fanwood School District
2280 Evergreen Avenue
Scotch Plains, NJ 07076

Dear Dr. Hayes:

The New Jersey Department of Education has completed a review of funds received and disbursed from one or more federal programs by the **Scotch Plains-Fanwood Board of Education**. The funding sources reviewed include titled programs for the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). The review covered the period July 1, 2013 through April 22, 2015. The resulting report is enclosed. Please provide a copy of the report to each board member. All issued Consolidated Monitoring Reports will be posted on the department's website at <http://www.state.nj.us/education/finance/jobs/monitor/consolidated>.

Utilizing the process outlined in the attached "Procedures for LEA/Agency Response, Corrective Action Plan and Appeal Process," the Scotch Plains-Fanwood Board of Education is required, pursuant to N.J.A.C. 6A:23A-5.6, to publicly review and discuss the findings in this report at a public board meeting no later than 30 days after receipt of the report. Within 30 days of the public meeting, the board must adopt a resolution certifying that the findings were discussed in a public meeting and approving a corrective action plan which addresses the issues raised in the undisputed findings and/or an appeal of any **monetary** findings in dispute (emphasis added). A copy of the resolution and the approved corrective action plan and/or appeal must be sent to this office within 10 days of adoption by the board. Direct your response to my attention.

Also, pursuant to N.J.A.C. 6A:23A-5.6(c), you must post the findings of the report and the board's corrective action plan on your district's website.

By copy of this report, your auditor is requested to comment on all areas of noncompliance and recommendations in the next certified audit submitted to the New Jersey Department of Education. If you have any questions, please contact Kathryn Holbrook at (609) 292-0198.

Sincerely,

Robert J. Cicchino, Director
Office of Fiscal Accountability and Compliance

RJC/KH/dk: Scotch Plains-Fanwood BOE Cover Letter /consolidated monitoring
Enclosures

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SCOTCH PLAINS-FANWOOD PUBLIC SCHOOLS
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New Jersey K-12 Education

**CONSOLIDATED MONITORING REPORT
SEPTEMBER 2015**

District: Scotch Plains-Fanwood Public Schools
County: Union
Dates On-Site: April 22, 2015
Case #: CM-041-14

FUNDING SOURCES

Program	Funding Award
Title I, Part A	\$ 110,541
Title II, Part A	72,612
IDEA Basic	1,295,481
IDEA Preschool	53,566
Total Funds	<u>\$ 1,532,200</u>

**SCOTCH PLAINS-FANWOOD PUBLIC SCHOOLS
CONSOLIDATED MONITORING REPORT
SEPTEMBER 2015**

BACKGROUND

The Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) and the Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA) and other federal laws require local education agencies (LEAs) to provide programs and services to their districts based on the requirements specified in each of the authorizing statutes (ESEA, IDEA, Race to the Top and Carl D. Perkins). The laws further require that state education agencies such as the New Jersey Department of Education (NJDOE) monitor the implementation of federal programs by sub recipients and determine whether the funds are being used by the district for their intended purpose and achieving the overall objectives of the funding initiatives.

INTRODUCTION

The NJDOE visited the Scotch Plains-Fanwood Public Schools to monitor the district's use of federal funds and the related program plans, where applicable, to determine whether the district's programs are meeting the intended purposes and objectives, as specified in the current year applications and authorizing statutes, and to determine whether the funds were spent in accordance with the program requirements, federal and state laws, and applicable regulations. The on-site visit included staff interviews and documentation reviews related to the requirements of the following programs: Title I, Part A (Title I); Title II, Part A (Title II); and IDEA Basic and Preschool for the period July 1, 2013 through April 22, 2015.

The scope of work performed included the review of documentation including grant applications, program plans and needs assessments, grant awards, annual audits, board minutes, payroll records, accounting records, purchase orders, and current district policies and procedures. The monitoring team members reviewed the supporting documentation for a sample of expenditures and conducted internal control reviews, as well as conducted interviews with program administrators and other district personnel as required. Additionally, the IDEA grant review included a review of student records, classroom visitations and interviews with instructional staff to verify implementation of Individualized Education Programs (IEP), a review of student class and related service schedules, and interviews of child study team members and speech-language specialists.

EXPENDITURES REVIEWED

The grants that were reviewed included Title I, Title II, and IDEA Basic and Preschool for the period July 1, 2013 through April 22, 2015. A sampling of purchase orders was taken from the entire population and later identified as to the grant that was charged.

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GENERAL DISTRICT OVERVIEW OF USES OF TITLE I, TITLE II AND IDEA FUNDS

Title I

The district operates targeted assistance programs in its four Title I funded schools: School One Elementary School, Howard B. Brunner Elementary School, Park Middle School, and Evergreen Elementary School. The district identified Closing the Achievement Gap, Early Childhood Education, English Language Arts (ELA), and Mathematics for all students, racial/ethnic minorities and parents as priority problems.

Title II

The district used the Title II allocation for teacher professional development related to Brain research, ELA and reading strategies.

IDEA (Special Education)

The district used a majority of the FY 2014-2015 IDEA Basic funds to reduce district tuition costs for students receiving special educational services in approved private schools for students with disabilities. Funds were also used for the provision of related services for students with disabilities.

DETAILED FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Title I

Finding 1: The notification letters sent to the parents/guardians of identified Title I students did not include clearly defined entrance and exit criteria. The parents/guardians of identified Title I students must be informed of the multiple educationally related and developmentally appropriate criteria used to identify their child/children for Title I services.

Citation: ESEA §1115(b)(B): *Targeted Assistance Schools (Eligible Children from Eligible Population)*.

Required Action: The district's Title I schools must revise their parental notification letters to include clearly defined entrance and exit criteria. The district must provide a copy of each school's revised parent notification letter to the NJDOE for review.

Finding 2: The district was unable to provide evidence of the date the Title I written parental involvement policy was distributed. Per the legislative requirement, parents/guardians have a right to be involved in the development of the written parental involvement policy and how they can further engage in the academic performance and achievement of their children.

Citation: ESEA §1118(b): *Parental Involvement (School Parental Involvement Policy)*.

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Required Action: For the 2015-2016 school year, the district must ensure that it distributes the written parental involvement policy to all parents/guardians of identified Title I students in all four of its funded Title I schools. The district must submit evidence of distribution to the NJDOE for review.

Finding 3: The district was unable to provide documentation that its Title I schools formally convened the annual Title I parent meeting. In a Title I targeted assistance program, all parents/guardians of identified Title I students are entitled to be informed about the school's Title I program, legislative requirements, and how they can become actively engaged in helping their child/children succeed academically.

Citation: ESEA §1118(c)(1): *Parental Involvement (Policy Involvement)*.

Required Action: For the 2015-2016 school year, each of the district's Title I schools must convene the annual Title I parent meeting for the parents/guardians of participating students. The district must submit documentation of each school's meeting (e.g., invitational letter/flyer, agenda, meeting minutes, sign in sheets) to the NJDOE for review.

Finding 4: The district provided documented evidence that its Title I schools distributed the Parents' Right-to-Know Letter on November 4, 2014. The legislation stipulates that parents must be informed of the professional qualifications of the student's classroom teachers at the beginning of the school year.

Citation: ESEA §1111(h)(6)(A)(i-iv): *State Plans (Reports – Parents Right-to-Know)*.

Required Action: For the 2015-2016 school year, the district must ensure that each of its Title I schools distributes the Parents' Right-to-Know letters at the beginning of the school year (no later than mid-October). The district must submit evidence of distribution to the NJDOE for review.

Title II

A review of the expenditures charged to the Title II grant yielded no findings.

IDEA (Special Education)

A review of the fiscal and program components of the IDEA grant yielded no findings.

Administrative

Finding 5: On several occasions, the district failed to issue a purchase order prior to services being rendered (confirming orders). District policy and state regulations require that a properly executed purchase order be issued prior to services being rendered.

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Citation: 34 CFR §80.20: Standards for financial management systems. N.J.S.A. 18A:18A 2(v): Public School Contracts Law.

Required Action: The district must implement a process to ensure that purchase orders are issued prior to receiving goods and services from vendors.

Finding 6: The district did not obtain board approvals for the submission of FY 2014-2015 federal award applications. The NJDOE requires each district to go before its board of education to obtain approval for submission of the application, as well as, the acceptance of the grant funds, upon the subsequent approval of the application.

Citation: ESEA §9306(a): *Other General Assurances*. 34 CFR §76.770: A state shall have procedures to ensure compliance.

Required Action: The district must obtain the necessary board resolutions to ensure conformity with applicable federal and state requirements.

The NJDOE thanks you for your time and cooperation during the monitoring visit and looks forward to a successful resolution of all findings and implementation of all recommendations contained in this report.

If you have any questions, please contact Kathryn Holbrook via phone at (609) 292-0198 or via email at kathryn.holbrook@doe.state.nj.us.