



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

CHRIS CHRISTIE  
Governor

KIM GUADAGNO  
Lt. Governor

CHRISTOPHER D. CERF  
Commissioner

April 2, 2013

Mr. Robert Sheedy, Superintendent  
South Amboy School District  
240 John Street  
South Amboy, NJ 08879-1794

Dear Mr. Sheedy:

The New Jersey Department of Education has completed a review of funds received and disbursed from one or more federal programs by the **South Amboy 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, 2011 through December 4, 2012. 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 South Amboy 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 Lori Ramella at (609) 984--0937.

Sincerely,

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

RJC/LR/dk:South Amboy BOE Cover Letter/consolidated monitoring  
Enclosures

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**SOUTH AMBOY SCHOOL DISTRICT  
240 JOHN STREET  
SOUTH AMBOY, NJ 08879  
PHONE: (732) 525-2100**



*New Jersey K-12 Education*

**CONSOLIDATED MONITORING REPORT  
APRIL 2013**

**District:** South Amboy School District  
**County:** Middlesex  
**Dates On-Site:** December 5 and 6, 2012  
**Case #:** CM-032-12

**FUNDING SOURCES**

Program	Funding Award
Title I	\$263,404
IDEA Basic	387,561
IDEA Preschool	8249
Title IIA	63,165
Title III	26,905
Title III Immigrant	13,841
Total Funds	<hr/> <u>\$763,125</u>

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**BACKGROUND**

The Elementary & 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 South Amboy School District 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; Title IIA; Title III, Title III Immigrant; and IDEA Basic and Preschool for the period July 1, 2011 through December 4, 2012.

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, 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, interviews of child study team members and speech-language specialists and an interview of the program administrator regarding the IDEA grant, as well as current district policies and procedures. The monitoring team members also conducted interviews with district personnel, reviewed the supporting documentation for a sample of expenditures and conducted internal control reviews.

**EXPENDITURES REVIEWED**

The grants that were reviewed included Title I, Title IIA, Title III, Title III Immigrant, and IDEA Basic and Preschool from July 1, 2011 through December 4, 2012. 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 AND IDEA FUNDS**

**Title I Projects**

The district operates a Targeted Assistance program at its Title I funded school: South Amboy Elementary School. The district has identified English Language Arts for its Economically Disadvantaged and Limited English Proficient students as its priority problems.

**IDEA Projects (Special Education)**

The majority of the FY 2011-2012 IDEA Basic and Preschool funds are being used to reduce district tuition expenditures to support out-of-district placements for students who have educational needs which cannot be currently addressed within the existing district programs. In addition a small amount is used to fund testing supplies for the child study team and specialized evaluations.

**DETAILED FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

**Title I**

**Finding 1:** The designated employees who were charged to the federal grants were not approved in the district's board minutes for the 2011-2012 school year. All employees were properly board approved for the 2012-2013 school year. This approval must be done annually to ensure that the district is practicing the proper internal controls to properly manage its grant funds.

**Citation:** EDGAR, PART 80--*Uniform Administrative Requirements for Grants and Cooperative Agreements to State and Local Governments*, Section 20, Standards for financial management systems

**Required Action:** The district must ensure all staff members charged to the grant are approved in the board minutes. The district must submit a list of FY 2011-2012 and FY 2012-2013 funded staff, salaries, funding percentages and a sample time sheet to date to the NJDOE for review.

**Finding 2:** The notification letters sent to the parents/guardians of identified Title I students did not include entrance and exit criteria.

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

**Required Action:** The district must include in its parental notification letter the multiple measures used to identify students, as well as clearly defined exit criteria. The district must provide a copy of its revised parental notification letter to the NJDOE for review. This information is necessary for parents to understand the academic deficiencies that resulted in their child's placement and the performance expectations for their child to exit the program.

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**Finding 3:** The district does not have a parental involvement program that reflects the requirements of the Title I legislation because the district did not have school-level parental involvement policies developed in conjunction with the parents. The exclusion of parents in the development of these documents does not offer them the opportunity for full participation in their child's educational program.

**Citation:** ESEA §1118: *Parental Involvement*.

**Required Action:** The district must ensure that each Title I school has a parental involvement policy that is developed with the input of parents and distributed directly to parents of students participating in the Title I program. The district must submit a copy of the policy to the NJDOE for review.

**Finding 4:** The district could not provide documented evidence that consultation of services for all nonpublics were provided. Without this documentation, the monitoring team could not verify that eligible resident nonpublic students were afforded the opportunity to participate in the Title I program.

**Citation:** ESEA §1120 (b): *Participation of Children Enrolled in Private Schools*.

**Required Action:** In addition to the district retaining certified/signed receipts of its correspondence to nonpublic schools, copies of Affirmation of Consultation signed by all consulted parties and refusal forms; the district must also provide copies of meeting agenda, minutes, and sign in sheets. The district must submit verification of the above notices to the NJDOE for review.

## **Title IIA**

**Finding 5:** The district does not have the required supporting documents to verify the activity of Title IIA staff as required by federal law. The documentation must reflect what the staff is doing, when and where and must match their funded percentage.

**Citation:** OMB Circular A-87, Attachment B, Section 8(h): *Cost Principles for State, Local and Indian Tribal Governments (Compensation for personal services)*.

**Required Action:** The district must verify the time and activity of staff charged to the grant. The district must submit a list of FY 2011-2012 Title IIA funded staff, salaries, funding percentages and time sheets to date to the NJDOE for review (including administrative staffing).

## **Title III**

**Finding 6:** The district had a parental notification letter, but the letter did not outline all of the Title III parental notification requirements. Although the district has a parental notification letter for students identified for English as a Second Language, there is no letter for parents that specifically outlines the requirements for Title III.

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**Citation:** ESEA 3302 *Parental Notification*.

**Required Action:** The district's Title III parental notification letter needs to outline the specific requirements for Title III. Additional information is located at: <http://www.state.nj.us/education/bilingual/title3/accountability/notification/title3par.htm>. Evidence of a revised letter is required to be developed and submitted to the NJDOE for review.

**Title III Immigrant**

A review of the Title III Immigrant program yielded no findings.

**IDEA (Special Education)**

**Finding 7:** The district did not provide an excess cost calculation for FY 2011-2012. An excess cost computation was provided, but it did not reflect the most up-to-date information. Also, the district has not yet completed the FY 2012-2013 calculation in the System for Administering Grants Electronically.

**Citation:** 34 CFR §300.818, Appendix A. *Use of Amounts – Amounts provided to the LEA under Part B of the Act must be used only to pay the excess costs of providing special education and related services to children with disabilities.*

**Required Action:** The district must provide an excess cost calculation that reflects the most up-to-date information to the NJDOE for review. That calculation must be in accordance with the guidance in 34 CFR §300.818, Appendix A.

**IDEA (Special Education)**

**Finding 8:** The district did not consistently provide parents of students eligible for special education and related services and students eligible for speech-language services notice of a meeting for the following:

- Identification meetings;
- Reevaluation planning meetings;
- Eligibility meetings; and
- IEP team meetings.

Additionally, the district's notices of meetings did not consistently inform the parent of participants of the meeting, or all intended purposes of the meeting when a meeting was conducted for more than one purpose. Noncompliance was due to a lack of consistent implementation of district procedures.

**Citation:** N.J.A.C. 6A:14-2.3(k)3, 5; 20 U.S.C. §1414(b)(1); and 34 CFR §300.304(a).

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**Required Action:** The district must provide parents notice of a meeting in writing that contains all required components, early enough to ensure they have an opportunity to attend. In order to demonstrate correction of noncompliance, the district must conduct training for child study team members and speech-language specialists regarding the procedures for implementing the requirements in the citation listed above. A monitor from the NJDOE will conduct an on-site visit to interview staff and review meeting documentation, including the sign in sheets, for meetings conducted between February 2013 and May 2013.

**Finding 9:** The district did not consistently provide parents written notice that contains all required components, within 15 calendar days following eligibility meetings for students evaluated for speech and language services. Noncompliance was due to a lack of implementation of district procedures.

**Citation:** 20 U.S.C. §1414(b)(1)(c)(4)(A); 34 CFR §300.304(a)(4); and 34 CFR §300.305(a) and N.J.A.C. 6A:14-2.3(f) and 2.3(g)1-7.

**Required Action:** The district must ensure parents are provided written notice following a meeting that contains all required components within 15 calendar days of the meeting. In order to demonstrate correction of noncompliance, the district must provide training for speech-language specialists regarding the procedures for implementing the requirements in the citation listed above. In addition, a monitor from the NJDOE will conduct an on-site visit to interview staff and review copies of written notice sent to parents following meetings conducted between February 2013 and April 2013.

**Finding 10:** The district did not consistently ensure that required participants are in attendance at meetings for students eligible for special education and related services. Specifically, general education teachers were not in attendance at eligibility and IEP meetings for students attending district programs, for reevaluation planning and IEP meetings for students placed in separate settings and for identification meetings for preschool age students. Further, the school psychologist was not in attendance at identification meetings for preschool age students. Additionally, the district did not consistently ensure the meeting participant signatures were obtained and maintained in student records. Noncompliance was due to a lack of implementation of district procedures.

**Citation:** N.J.A.C. 6A:14-2.3(k)1(i-vii); 20 U.S.C. §1414(d)(1)(B); and 34 CFR §300.321(a).

**Required Action:** The district must ensure identification, eligibility, reevaluation planning and IEP meetings are conducted with required participants and documentation of attendance and/or written parental consent to excuse a member of the team is maintained in student files. In order to demonstrate correction of noncompliance, the district must conduct training for child study team members regarding the procedures for implementing the requirements in the citation listed above. A monitor from the NJDOE will conduct an on-site visit to interview staff and review meeting documentation,



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including the sign in sheets, for meetings conducted between February 2013 and May 2013.

**Finding 11:** The district did not consistently document consideration of placement in the least restrictive environment in the IEPs of students removed from the general education setting for more than 20 percent of the school day, including students placed in separate settings. Specifically, IEPs of school age students did not consistently include:

- the supplementary aids and services considered;
- an explanation of why the supplementary aids and services were rejected;
- for those students placed in separate settings, activities to transition the student to a less restrictive environment; and
- for preschool age students, the potentially beneficial or harmful effects which a placement in general education may have on the students with disabilities or other students in the class.

Noncompliance was due to a lack of implementation of district procedures.

**Citation:** N.J.A.C. 6A:14-4.2 (a)8(i),(ii) and (iii); N.J.A.C. 6A:14-4.2 (a)4.

**Required Action:** The district must ensure when determining the educational placement of a child with a disability, the IEP team considers the general education class first and all required decisions regarding the placement are documented in the IEP for each student removed from general education for more than 20 percent of the school day. The district must also ensure that for students placed in separate settings, the IEP team identifies activities to transition the student to a less restrictive environment and document them in the IEP. In order to demonstrate correction of noncompliance, the district must conduct training for child study team members regarding the district's procedures. To demonstrate that the district has corrected the individual instances of noncompliance, the district must conduct annual review meetings and revise the IEPs for specific students with IEPs that were identified as noncompliant. A monitor from the NJDOE will conduct an on-site visit to interview staff and review the revised IEPs, along with the IEPs for students whose annual review meetings were conducted between February 2013 and May 2013.

**Finding 12:** The district did not consistently provide to students beginning at age 14, written invitations to meetings where post school transition was being discussed. Specifically, the district did not identify the title of the person of the postsecondary liaison in the post school transition section of the IEP. Noncompliance was due to a lack of consistent implementation of district procedures.

**Citation:** N.J.A.C. 6A:14-2.3(k)2x and 3.7(e)11,13, 3.7(h); 20 U.S.C. §1414 (d)(1)(A)(i)(1)(VIII); and 34 CFR §300.322.b(2).

**Required Action:** The district must ensure each student with an IEP age 14 or above is provided with a written invitation to any IEP meeting where transition to adult life will be discussed and that transition is discussed at each IEP meeting for students age 14 or

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above, and decisions are documented in the IEP. In order to demonstrate correction of noncompliance, the district must conduct training for child study team members regarding the district's procedures. Additionally, the district must conduct annual review meetings to review/revise IEPs for the specific students whose IEPs were identified as noncompliant during monitoring. A monitor from the NJDOE will conduct an on-site visit to interview staff, review student invitations to IEP meetings, the revised IEPs and IEPs for students whose annual review meetings will be held between February 2013 and May 2013. Names of the students whose IEPs were identified as noncompliant will be provided to the district by the monitor.

**Finding 13:** The district did not consistently conduct vision/hearing screenings and health/medical summaries for every preschool and school-age student referred to the child study team for evaluation. Noncompliance was due to a lack of implementation of district procedures.

**Citation:** N.J.A.C. 6A:14-3.4(j).

**Required Action:** The district must ensure vision and audiometric screenings are conducted for every student referred to the child study team, with a copy of the results maintained in students' files, along with available health/medical summaries. In order to demonstrate correction of noncompliance, the district must conduct training for child study team members regarding the procedures for implementing the requirements in the citation listed above. To demonstrate implementation of the procedures, a monitor from the NJDOE will conduct an on-site visit to interview staff and review documentation verifying receipt of the health summary, including the vision and hearing screening, for students referred to the child study team between February 2013 and May 2013.

**Finding 14:** The district did not consistently conduct all required sections of the functional assessment as a component of an initial evaluation for students referred for speech-language services. Specifically, informal measures were not consistently conducted. Noncompliance was due to a lack of implementation of district procedures.

**Citation:** N.J.A.C. 6A:14-3.4(f)4(i-vi); 20 U.S.C. §1414(b)(4) and (5); and 34 CFR §300.306(c)(i).

**Required Action:** The district must ensure all components of the functional assessment are conducted as part of the initial evaluations process. In order to demonstrate correction of noncompliance, the district must conduct training for child study team members regarding the district's procedures for implementing the requirements in the citation listed above. In addition, a monitor from the NJDOE will conduct an on-site visit to review evaluation reports developed for students referred for special education and related services between February 2013 and May 2013.

**Finding 15:** The district did not consistently maintain documentation of the description, frequency, duration and effectiveness of the interventions provided in the general education setting through the Intervention and Referral Service (I&RS). Noncompliance was due to a lack of compliant district procedures.

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**Citation:** N.J.A.C. 6A:14-3.3(b); 20 U.S.C. §1413(f)(2); and 34 CFR §300.226(b).

**Required Action:** The district must ensure interventions are provided in the general education setting for students exhibiting academic and/or behavioral difficulties prior to referring the student for an evaluation. In addition, the district must ensure that when the I&RS team identifies interventions to meet the needs of a struggling learner that they maintain documentation of the nature, description, frequency and duration of the interventions and measure the effectiveness. In order to demonstrate correction of noncompliance, the district must conduct training for administrators and staff regarding the procedures for implementing the requirements in the citations listed above. Additionally, a monitor from the NJDOE will conduct an on-site visit to interview I&RS team member and teachers and review documentation for students who were provided interventions in general education between February 2013 and May 2013.

**Finding 16:** The district did not consistently include in the IEPs of students eligible for speech-language services the required considerations and statements in the Present Levels of Academic Achievement and Functional Performance statement. Specifically, the IEPs did not include:

- a description of the student's strengths;
- a description of the student's status in speech-language performance including how the student's disability affects his or her involvement and progress in the general education curriculum; and
- the special considerations.

Noncompliance was due to a lack of implementation of district procedures.

**Citation** N.J.A.C. 6A:14-3.7(c)1-11, (e) 1-17, (d) 1 and (f); 20 U.S.C. §1414(d)(3)(A)(B); 34 CFR §300.324(a)(1)(2); N.J.A.C. 6A:14-3.7(e)7(i); 20 U.S.C. §1412(a)(16)(A); and 34 CFR §300.160(a) and (f).

**Required Action:** The district must ensure each IEP contains the required considerations and statements. In order to demonstrate correction of noncompliance, the district must conduct training for speech-language specialists regarding the procedures for implementing the requirements in the citation listed above. In addition, the district must conduct annual review meetings and revise IEPs for the specific students whose IEPs were identified as noncompliant during monitoring. A monitor from the NJDOE will conduct an on-site visit to interview staff, review the revised IEPs and IEPs for students whose annual review meetings will be conducted between February 2013 and May 2013. Names of the students whose IEPs were identified as noncompliant will be provided to the school by the monitor. For assistance with correction of noncompliance, the district is referred to the state IEP sample form which is located at: [www.statenj.us/education/specialed/forms](http://www.statenj.us/education/specialed/forms).

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**Administrative**

**Finding 17:** The purchase orders for FY 2011-2012 were not complete; some were missing required signatures, detail as to the nature of the expense was not included on the purchase order or the support documentation, nor was the grant that was charged for the purchase identified on the purchase orders. Several purchase orders for professional development were missing sign in sheets and agendas. Additionally, the district failed to issue a purchase order prior to services being rendered (confirming order). The district's policy and state regulations require that a properly executed purchase order be issued prior to services being rendered. The purchase orders reviewed for FY 2012-2013 were in conformity of the regulations, as a result of a change in the business administrator and refinement of the business office policies.

**Citation:** N.J.S.A 18A:18A(2)(v) *Public School Contracts Law*.

**Required Action:** The district must continue to implement the processes to ensure that purchase orders are created according to the regulations and are issued prior to receiving goods and services from vendors.

**Finding 18:** Purchase orders from FY 2011-2012 were paid without proper review of the invoice support documentation. For example, the literacy coach and fees for professional development were not supported with dates of services and attendees of such services in a way that one can properly approve the expenditure. Contracts for the Title I literacy consultant were also not board approved. A review of the current year expenditures to date reflects proper support to substantiate the invoice as a result of a change in the business administrator and refinement of the business office policies.

**Citation:** N.J.S.A 18A:18A(2)(v) *Public School Contracts Law*.

**Required Action:** The district must continue to implement the processes to ensure that purchase orders are created and paid according to the board approved contracts and approved invoices.

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 Lori Ramella via phone at (609) 984-0937 or via email at [lori.ramella@doe.state.nj.us](mailto:lori.ramella@doe.state.nj.us).