

2011 Paperwork Reduction Report

In 2010, section 1008.31, Florida Statutes, was revised to read:

Section 1008.31. Florida's K-20 education performance accountability system; legislative intent; mission, goals, and systemwide measures; data quality improvements.

(3) K-20 EDUCATION DATA QUALITY IMPROVEMENTS.

(c) The commissioner shall continuously monitor and review the collection of paperwork, data, and reports by school districts and complete an annual review of such collection no later than June 1 of each year. The annual review must include recommendations for consolidating paperwork, data, and reports, wherever feasible, in order to reduce the burdens on school districts.

(d) By July 1 of each year, the commissioner shall prepare a report assisting the school districts in eliminating or consolidating paperwork, data, and reports by providing suggestions, technical assistance, and guidance."

In February 2011, Commissioner Smith asked school district superintendents to identify statutes and State Board rules that could be amended and/or repealed if they placed unnecessary restrictions on school districts. The request also asked for input on requirements that may be duplicative or unnecessary. Ten districts responded to this request.

To compile this report, Department of Education divisions reviewed district responses and provided information on the following three categories:

1. Things that have occurred over the last year to eliminate or consolidate paperwork, data, and reports;
2. Things that districts could do now to eliminate or consolidate paperwork, data, and reports; and
3. Statutory or rule changes that would help eliminate or consolidate paperwork, data, and reports.

Category 1

Division of Finance and Operations

The Office of Educational Facilities has moved to a Project Tracking system that reduces some paper forms for the districts by placing the information (forms) concerning construction projects online.

Division of Accountability, Research and Measurement

The Accountability Reporting unit has been essentially paper-free for several years, as all legislatively mandated reporting is provided on a website (<http://schoolgrades.fldoe.org/>) that provides users with downloadable files (reports) as well as an interactive report at

<http://schoolgrades.fldoe.org/default.asp>. The website will be used to provide any new types of reports that are required in the future.

Division of Public Schools

Bureau of Exceptional Education and Student Services (BEESS):

- This year all BEESS project applications will be processed using an online application system. This reduces the amount of paperwork applicants use in developing their application and submitting to the Department. The Department uses the online system for reviewing and processing the award. Final awards are prepared in electronic format for maintaining at the Department and sharing with project contacts.
- As part of the accountability for BEESS discretionary projects, certain data will be exported from the online applications to the Project Tracking System database for collecting and reporting project performance, eliminating the need for submission of paper reports.
- BEESS developed a web reporting system to meet new legislative requirements for reporting incidents of restraint and seclusion for students with disabilities. The web reporting system eliminated the need for districts to develop forms and procedures for reporting as incident reports are created on the web and submitted to the Department electronically. Except for the requirement that districts mail a copy of the report to parents to be signed and returned to the school, no additional paperwork need be created.
- BEESS staff uses an online survey tool to conduct surveys and capture information from school district contacts for short turn around information negating the need for email/paper responses.
- The annual Guidance Report is submitted by school districts online (if it were not available online, districts would have to submit as a paper document).
- Medicaid Tracking System 3.0, developed by BEESS, is a web-based tool for school district Medicaid reimbursement billing and service documentation, reducing time spent on billing tasks and increases efficiency.
- School district personnel are able to register for the BEESS Administrators' Management Meeting via an online web-based application.
- Many of the BEESS reports and publications that were in print format are now on the BEESS website, saving on printing and distribution. These include:
 - Public reports, including the State Performance Plan and Annual Performance Report, are posted in easily downloadable and printable format.
 - Curriculum materials, including the 37 sets of Parallel Alternative Strategies for Students (PASS) teacher and student books, are now available on DVD upon request.
 - Grant information and applications.
 - Contact lists that allow for easy updating and avoid printing and distributing each time changes are made.
- Portal to Exceptional Education Resources (PEER) provides districts a web-based application used to implement and document procedures related to exceptional student education. PEER includes the development of individual educational plans (IEPs) for students with disabilities, educational plans (EPs) for gifted students, and services plans (SPs) for parentally-placed private school students, as well as related activities such as reporting of student progress, development of matrix of services documents, and the provision of prior written notice. PEER provides a secure database to store all plans. District administrators can generate reports from the database.
- BEESS self-assessment/monitoring:

- Bureau staff reviews each district's *Exceptional Student Education Policies and Procedures* (SP&P) electronically and post them on the BEESS website.
- Final reports for on-site monitoring visits are posted on the BEESS website.
- For self-assessment monitoring, districts enter data on the General Supervision Website (GSW); only a small percentage of the student records are required to be provided via printed copy for validation by Bureau staff.
- All results of the self-assessment monitoring are viewable via the GSW.
- Electronic notices are provided to districts by the GSW regarding the self-assessment process.
- Interview questions, focus group protocols, and other information regarding on-site visits for various areas [e.g., matrix of services, State Performance Plan (SPP) 1, SPP 2, SPP 4, problem-solving/response to intervention (PS/Rtl), restraint/seclusion] are filed by topic on the section's I-drive and shared electronically.

The Bureau of School Improvement made revisions to the online School Improvement Plan (SIP) template related to functionality including new print and ease of use features. A workgroup of superintendents, principals, and district teams will convene in August 2011 to start the discussion on how the SIP should change based on the transition to FCAT 2.0 and end-of-course assessments.

For Race to the Top participating districts, the district Scope of Work was put into a web-based system. This allows for ease of tracking deliverables and timelines, as well as quarterly amendments of both program and budget items. Signature forms are uploaded into the system. Districts will no longer have to submit paper copies of their Scope of Work and related documents.

Division of Career and Adult Education

Upgrades were made to the Perkins Data System to permit electronic transmission of program improvement plans for 2011-12.

Category 2

Division of Accountability, Research and Measurement

Districts should take advantage of web-enabled reporting to eliminate the need (to the extent possible) for printed reports. Increasingly, web-based reporting is considered acceptable as a means for providing public access to data/reports for meeting public reporting requirements. With regard to consolidation of data and reports, communication between offices/departments and/or consolidation of bureau structures can be a factor in eliminating redundancy or overlap in reporting.

Category 3

Division of Accountability, Research and Measurement

Statutory/rule authorization of web-based reporting as an acceptable way to provide public access to required reports can be helpful in eliminating the need to have printed copies distributed to schools/districts or distributed to parents.

For web-based reporting, requirements for accessibility in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) should allow for alternate formats to provide required content (for example, links to the same content featuring a non-ADA-compliant PowerPoint file and an ADA-compliant Word document [Word documents are easier to format for ADA compliance]). The flexibility to provide two formats covering the same content does not of itself consolidate reporting, but this flexibility will in some cases make it easier to provide required information via the web as contrasted with some other form of distribution that may be less efficient and/or involve paperwork.