

FINAL REPORT OF FOCUSED MONITORING OF  
EXCEPTIONAL STUDENT EDUCATION PROGRAMS IN

# HAMILTON COUNTY

MARCH 29 - 31, 2004



FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION  
BUREAU OF EXCEPTIONAL EDUCATION AND STUDENT SERVICES  
ESE PROGRAM ADMINISTRATION AND QUALITY ASSURANCE

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telephone: (850) 245-0477

FAX: (850) 245-0987

Suncom: 205-0477

e-mail: [cicbiscs@fldoe.org](mailto:cicbiscs@fldoe.org)

website: <http://myfloridaeducation.com/commhome/>

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January 26, 2005

Mr. Charles Blalock, Jr., Superintendent  
Hamilton County School District  
4280 S.W. County Road 152  
Jasper, Florida 32052

Dear Superintendent Blalock:

We are pleased to provide you with the Final Report of Focused Monitoring of Exceptional Student Education Programs in Hamilton County. This report was developed by integrating multiple sources of information including student record reviews; interviews with school and district staff; information from focus groups; and parent, teacher, and student survey data from our visit on March 29-31, 2004. The report includes a system improvement plan outlining the findings of the monitoring team. The final report will be placed on the Bureau of Exceptional Education and Student Services' website and may be viewed at [www.firn.edu/doe/commhome/mon-home.htm](http://www.firn.edu/doe/commhome/mon-home.htm).

Bureau staff have worked with Regina Jordan, ESE Director, and her staff to develop a system improvement plan that includes strategies and activities to address the areas of concern and noncompliance identified in the report. We anticipate that some of the action steps that will be implemented will be long term in duration, and will require time to assess the measure of effectiveness. In addition, as appropriate, plans related to the district's continuous improvement monitoring may also relate to action steps proposed in response to this report. The system improvement plan has been approved and is included as a part of this final report.

Semi-annual updates of outcomes achieved and/or a summary of related activities, as identified in your district's plan, must be submitted for the next two years, unless otherwise noted on the plan. The first scheduled update will be due on May 30, 2005. A verification monitoring visit to your district will take place two years after your original monitoring visit.

**BAMBI J. LOCKMAN**  
*Chief*

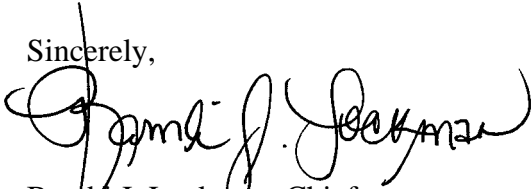
*Bureau of Exceptional Education and Student Services*

Superintendent Blalock  
January 26, 2005  
Page 2

If my staff can be of any assistance as you implement the System Improvement Plan, please contact Eileen L. Amy, ESE Program Administration and Quality Assurance Administrator. Mrs. Amy may be reached at 850/245-0476, or via electronic mail at [Eileen.Amy@fldoe.org](mailto:Eileen.Amy@fldoe.org).

Thank you for your continuing commitment to improve services for exceptional education students in Hamilton County.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Bambi J. Lockman". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "B" and "L".

Bambi J. Lockman, Chief  
Bureau of Exceptional Education and Student Services

Enclosure

cc: Martha Butler, School Board Chairman  
Members of the School Board  
Donald Rudser, School Board Attorney  
School Principals  
Regina Jordan, ESE Director  
Eileen Amy  
Evy Friend  
Kim Komisar

# Hamilton County Final Monitoring Report

## Focused Monitoring Visit

### March 29-31, 2004

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**Hamilton County School District**  
**Focused Monitoring Visit**  
**March 29-31, 2004**

**Executive Summary**

The Florida Department of Education, Bureau of Exceptional Education and Student Services, in carrying out its roles of leadership, resource allocation, technical assistance, monitoring, and evaluation is required to oversee the performance of district school boards in the enforcement of all laws and rules (Sections 1001.03(8) and 1008.32, Florida Statutes (F.S.)). In fulfilling this requirement, the Bureau conducts monitoring activities of the exceptional student education (ESE) programs provided by district school boards in accordance with Sections 1001.42 and 1003.57, F.S. Through these monitoring activities, the Bureau examines and evaluates procedures, records, and programs of exceptional student education (ESE); provides information and assistance to school districts; and otherwise assists school districts in operating effectively and efficiently. One purpose of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) is to assess and ensure the effectiveness of efforts to educate children with disabilities (Section 300.1(d) of the Title 34, Code of Federal Regulations (CFR)), and districts are required to make a good faith effort to assist children with disabilities to achieve their stated goals and objectives in the least restrictive environment (34 CFR Sections 300.350(a)(2) and 300.556). In accordance with the IDEA the Department is responsible for ensuring that the requirements of the IDEA are carried out and that each educational program for children with disabilities administered in the state meets the educational requirements of the state (34 CFR Section 300.600(a)(1) and (2)).

During the week of March 29, 2004, the Florida Department of Education, Bureau of Exceptional Education and Student Services, conducted an on-site review of the exceptional student education (ESE) programs in Hamilton County Public Schools. Regina Jordan, Exceptional Student Education Director, served as the coordinator and point of contact for the district during the monitoring visit. In its continuing effort to focus the monitoring process on student educational outcomes, the Bureau identified four key data indicators: percentage of students with disabilities participating in regular classes (i.e., spending at least 80% of the school day with their nondisabled peers); dropout rate for students with disabilities; percentage of students with disabilities exiting with a standard diploma; and percentage of students with disabilities participating in statewide assessments. Hamilton County was selected for monitoring on the basis of the percent of students with disabilities participating in Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test (FCAT). The results of the monitoring process are reported under categories or related areas that are considered to impact or contribute to the key data indicator. In addition, information related to services for gifted students, services provided to ESE students in Department of Juvenile Justice(DJJ) facilities and charter schools, records and forms reviews, and supplementary compliance issues are reported.

## **Summary of Findings**

### **General Information**

A majority of students in the lower grades and middle grades participate in the FCAT. Participation in the FCAT drops to 50% during high school. The district provides services to students with severe and profound disabilities from neighboring districts.

### **Decision-Making**

Staff reported that the decision to exempt students from the FCAT is made during the IEP meeting based on State Board of Education rule exemption criteria; this was supported by the record reviews. Alternate assessments used in the district are Brigance, LCCE, and Miami-Dade assessments.

### **Access to the General Curriculum**

Students with disabilities have access to the general curriculum, through enrollment in general curriculum courses with support from ESE teachers. They participate in all remediation programs and are provided accommodations in order to successfully participate in general education curricula.

### **Student Preparation**

Interviews with district administrators and school staff revealed that students with disabilities have a wide range of programs and materials to aid in their preparation for the state assessment. Student surveys and focus group interviews with students confirm that students have access to appropriate FCAT preparation activities and materials.

### **Parent Involvement**

District and school staff reported that parents are actively involved in the decision-making process during individual educational plan (IEP) meetings or through teacher contact to determine whether or not students participate in the FCAT. If parents do not wish for their children to take the FCAT, school staff often counsel them regarding the FCAT and its benefits. Although they did not specifically report discussing the exemption criteria under Rule 6A-1.0493, FAC, with parents, staff reported discussing reasons for exemption.

### **Stakeholder Opinions Related to the Indicator**

District and school staff are of the opinion that appropriate decisions are being made for students related to participation in the FCAT; however, absenteeism and refusal to take the FCAT have affected the participation rate. Lack of use of the appropriate curriculum instruction and current textbooks may impact the students taking or able to take statewide assessments.

Recommendations of providing more information to teachers and providing more guidance to administrators as a means to increase the participation rate of students with disabilities was provided.

### **Gifted**

The district has a limited number of students identified as gifted. The district's continuous monitoring improvement plan addresses procedures used by the district to increase the gifted representation in the district.



## **Department of Juvenile Justice (DJJ)**

Students with disabilities in DJJ facilities have similar opportunities for instruction and participation in general education settings as student in the middle and high schools in Hamilton County. DJJ students with disabilities participate in statewide assessments according to IEP team decisions, and participation rate in the FCAT is consistently high.

## **Student Records Reviews**

A systemic finding was identified in one area. Individual or non-systemic findings for student IEPs were noted in 14 areas. Record reviews at one school indicated IEPs are not being placed in student records in a timely manner. Five IEP teams were required to reconvene to write annual measurable goals. The reconvenes have been completed and reviewed and all are in compliance. There were no systemic findings in the review of EPs. There were no funding adjustments for noncompliance.

## **Forms Reviews**

Information related to the review of district forms for ESE teacher services were reviewed for compliance. Forms representing the thirteen areas were submitted to Bureau staff for a review to determine compliance with federal and state laws. Only one form, utilized by student support services for general students and ESE for students with disabilities required changes to meet compliance standards.

## **Additional Compliance**

Students in Hamilton County with communication needs are having those needs addressed by ESE teachers through communication and instructional goals on the IEPs. Student who have counseling needs are having those needs met through a variety of models. Student needs in the area of counseling are being addressed and included on the IEP as a related service. Transition services in Hamilton County are addressed through the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation.

## **System Improvement Plan**

In response to these findings, the district is required to develop a system improvement plan for submission to the Bureau. This plan must include activities and strategies intended to address specific findings, as well as measurable evidence of change. Compliance and procedural issues regarding the IEP and direct services to students are required to be resolved by a date, designated by the monitoring team leader, not to exceed 90 days. In addition, long-term and/or systemic issues may be required to be included in the district's continuous improvement plan. The district may be required to address an issue for an extended period of time, identifying benchmarks to reach acceptable changes. In developing the system improvement plan, every effort should be made to link the system improvement activities resulting from this focused monitoring report to the district's continuous improvement monitoring plan. The format for the system improvement plan, including a listing of the critical issues identified by the Bureau as most significantly in need of improvement, is provided with this executive summary. Also included in this report will be a list of recommendations and technical assistance available to the district.

## Hamilton County School District Focused Monitoring System Improvement Strategies

This section includes the issues identified by the Bureau as most significantly in need of improvement. The district is required to provide system improvement strategies to address identified findings, which may include an explanation of specific activities the district has committed to implementing, or it may consist of a broader statement describing planned strategies. For each issue, the plan also must define the measurable evidence of whether or not the desired outcome has been achieved. Target dates that extend for more than one year should include benchmarks in order to track interim progress. Findings identified as “ESE” are those findings that reflect issues specific to ESE students. Findings identified as “All” are those findings that reflect issues related to the student population as a whole, including ESE students.

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| Category                         | Findings  | ESE | All | System Improvement Strategy   | Evidence of Change<br>(Including target date) |
|----------------------------------|---|-----|-----|---|---|
| Decision-Making                  | There are no findings in this area.<br><br>Recommendations are included in the <i>Recommendations and Technical Assistance</i> section of the report. | X   |     | The district is encouraged to review the recommendations related to this area and address it the system improvement plan. |   |
| Access to the General Curriculum | There are no findings in this area.   |     |     |   |   |
| Student Preparation              | There are no findings in this area.<br><br>Recommendations are included in the <i>Recommendations and Technical Assistance</i> section of the report. | X   |     | The district is encouraged to review the recommendations related to this area and address it the system improvement plan. |   |

| Category               | Findings  | ESE | All | System Improvement Strategy  | Evidence of Change<br>(Including target date)  |
|------------------------|---|-----|-----|--|--|
| Parental Involvement   | There are no findings in this area.   |     |     |  |  |
| Gifted                 | There are no findings in this area.   |     |     |  |  |
| DJJ                    | There are no findings in this area.   |     |     |  |  |
| Forms Review           | One specific form requires revision to demonstrate compliance: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Annual Notice of Confidentiality requires additional phrases</li> </ul> | X   |     | Develop new forms to comply with monitoring compliance issues; develop a Policy and Procedures manual for use of forms for ESE Staff.  | Forms to be submitted to the Bureau for review and approval.<br><br>June 2005  |
| Additional Compliance  | Communication <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>There are no findings in this area</li> </ul>  |     |     |  |  |
|                        | Counseling as a related service <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>There are no findings in this area.</li> </ul>   |     |     |  |  |
|                        | Transition <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>There are no findings in this area.</li> </ul>  |     |     |  |  |
| Student record Reviews | A systemic finding was made in <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Measurable goals – requiring 10 IEPs to be reconvened</li> </ul>  | X   |     | The district will reconvene five IEP Teams to address measurable goals.<br><br>The district will be required to target these elements in its training on IEP development and conduct a self-evaluation using protocols developed by the Bureau to ensure | IEP Teams reconvened all IEP annual goals were measurable and in compliance.<br><br>District reports of self-assessment reveals compliance in targeted areas of 100% in IEPs reviewed. |

| Category | Findings   | ESE | All | System Improvement Strategy   | Evidence of Change<br>(Including target date)   |
|----------|--|-----|-----|---|---|
|          |  |     |     | <p>compliance.</p> <p>The district will conduct a self-assessment of 25 IEPs by February 1, 2005.</p>   | <p>Submitted June 2005 and June 2006.</p>   |
|          | <p>Items of non-compliance include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• lack of evidence that the parent was provided a copy of the IEP</li> <li>• lack of adequate description of location of services</li> <li>• inadequate or incomplete short term objectives</li> <li>• lack of evidence that the results of the student's performance on state or district assessment were considered</li> <li>• present level of performance statement and goals do not support the services on the IEP</li> <li>• progress reported on objectives rather than goals</li> <li>• lack of description of the purpose of the meeting including transition when necessary</li> </ul> | X   |     | <p>The district will be required to target these elements in its training on IEP development and conduct a self-evaluation using protocols developed by the Bureau to ensure compliance.</p> <p>The district will conduct a self-assessment of 25 IEPs by February 1, 2005.</p> | <p>District reports of self-assessment reveals compliance in targeted areas of 100% in IEPs reviewed.</p> <p>Submitted June 2005 and June 2006.</p> |

# Monitoring Process

## Authority

The Florida Department of Education, Bureau of Exceptional Education and Student Services, in carrying out its roles of leadership, resource allocation, technical assistance, monitoring, and evaluation is required to oversee the performance of district school boards in the enforcement of all laws and rules (Sections 1001.03(8) and 1008.32, Florida Statutes (F.S.)). In fulfilling this requirement, the Bureau conducts monitoring activities of the exceptional student education (ESE) programs provided by district school boards in accordance with Sections 1001.42 and 1003.57, F.S. Through these monitoring activities, the Bureau examines and evaluates procedures, records, and programs of exceptional student education (ESE); provides information and assistance to school districts; and otherwise assists school districts in operating effectively and efficiently. One purpose of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) is to assess and ensure the effectiveness of efforts to educate children with disabilities (Section 300.1(d) of Title 34, Code of Federal Regulations (CFR), and districts are required to make a good faith effort to assist children with disabilities to achieve their stated goals and objectives in the least restrictive environment (34 CFR §300.350(a)(2) and §300.556). In accordance with the IDEA the Department is responsible for ensuring that the requirements of the IDEA are carried out and that each educational program for children with disabilities administered in the state meets the educational requirements of the state (34 CFR §300.600(a)(1) and (2)).

The monitoring system established to oversee exceptional student education (ESE) programs reflects the Department's commitment to provide assistance and service to school districts. The system is designed to emphasize improved outcomes and educational benefits for students while continuing to conduct those activities necessary to ensure compliance with applicable federal and state laws, rules, and regulations. The system provides consistency with other state efforts, including the State Improvement Plan required by the IDEA.

## Focused Monitoring

The purpose of the focused monitoring process is to implement a methodology that targets the Bureau's monitoring intervention on key data indicators identified as significant for educational outcomes for students. Through this process, the Bureau will use such data to inform the monitoring process, thereby implementing a strategic approach to intervention and commitment of resources that will improve student outcomes.

## Key Data Indicators

Four key data indicators were recommended by the monitoring stakeholders' workgroup and were adopted for implementation by the Bureau. The key data indicators for the 2004 school year and their sources of data are as follows:

- percentage of students with disabilities participating in regular classes (i.e., spending at least 80% of the school day with their nondisabled peers) (Data source: Survey 9)
- dropout rate for students with disabilities (Data source: Survey 5)

- percentage of students with disabilities exiting with a standard diploma (Data source: Survey 5)
- participation in statewide assessments by students with disabilities (Data sources: performance data from the assessment files and Survey 3 enrollment data)

## **District Selection**

Districts were selected to be monitored based on a review of data from the 2002-03 school year that was submitted electronically to the Department of Education (DOE) Information Database for Surveys 2, 3, 5, 9, and from the assessment files. This data was then compiled into an annual data profile.

In making the decision to include Hamilton County in this year's focused monitoring visits, the data reviewed was related to the FCAT participation from Survey 3 and the assessment files of the 2001 – 02 school year. The participation rate was calculated in a manner consistent with the data reported in the local education agency (LEA) profile for 2003. The discrepancy between the district's participation rate and the state goal of 85% participation was determined for each grade level and subject area (4, 5, 8, and 10). The sum of these discrepancies for Hamilton County approached the highest rate for all districts in the state for the 2001 – 02 school year. Participation rates for the district ranged from a low of 50% in reading and math in the 10<sup>th</sup> grade to a high of 82% in reading and math in the 8<sup>th</sup> grade. The district's current 2004 LEA profile and the listing of districts rank ordered on data related to the key data indicator as reported in the 2003 LEA Profile are attached as appendix A in this report.

## **Sources of Information**

### **On-Site Monitoring Activities**

The on-site monitoring visit occurred during the week of March 29, 2004. A team composed of three DOE staff and five peer monitors conducted the on-site activities. Peer monitors are exceptional student education personnel from other school districts who are trained to assist with the DOE's monitoring activities. A list of Bureau staff and peer monitors who conducted the monitoring activities for this visit is included in appendix B.

### ***Interviews***

Interviews with district and school level staff were conducted to gather information about the indicator from multiple sources offering different points of view. The monitoring team conducted a total of three district interviews, five school-based administrator interviews, 11 ESE teacher interviews, and 13 general education teacher interviews.

### ***Focus Group Interviews***

Focus groups for students are conducted by Department of Education staff to gather information related to the participation rate in statewide assessments. In order to provide maximum opportunity for input about the district's ESE services, a minimum of two separate focus group interviews are conducted. Focus groups are held for students with disabilities pursuing a standard

diploma and students with disabilities pursuing a special diploma. Separate focus group sessions are held for each group of participants.

In conjunction with the 2004 Hamilton County monitoring activities, eight students participated in the focus group for students pursuing a standard diploma and seven students participated in the focus group for students pursuing a special diploma.

### ***Student Case Studies***

Student case studies are conducted for the purpose of performing an in-depth review of the services a student receives in accordance with his or her IEP. The on-site selection of students for the case studies at each school is based on criteria that have been identified as characteristic of students who may have the cognitive ability to participate in statewide assessments but who have not participated in the FCAT. As part of this process, the student's records are reviewed, teachers are interviewed regarding the implementation of the student's IEP, and the student's classroom may be observed. Two in-depth case studies were conducted in Hamilton County.

### ***Classroom Visits***

Classroom visits are conducted in both ESE and general education classes. Some are conducted in conjunction with individual student case studies, while others are conducted as general observations of classrooms that include exceptional students. Curriculum and instruction, classroom management and discipline, and classroom design and resources are observed during general classroom visits. Teachers of the classes visited are interviewed regarding practices related to students with disabilities. A total of 11 ESE and general education classrooms were visited during the focused monitoring visit in Hamilton County.

Prior to the on-site visit, Bureau staff notified district staff of the selection of the following schools to be visited based on data related to the key data indicator:

- Hamilton County High School
- Central Hamilton Elementary School
- Greenwood School
- Panther Success Center
- Success Academy

### **Off-Site Monitoring Activities**

Surveys are designed by the University of Miami research staff in order to provide maximum opportunity for input about the district's ESE services from parents of students with disabilities and students identified as gifted, ESE and general education teachers, and students with disabilities in grades 9-12. Results of the surveys are incorporated into the body of this report. Data from each of the surveys are included as appendix C.

### ***Parent Surveys***

Surveys are mailed to parents of students with disabilities and parents of students identified as gifted. The survey that is sent to parents is printed in English, Spanish, and Haitian Creole, where applicable. It includes a cover letter and a postage paid reply envelope. The parent survey was sent to parents of the 353 students with disabilities for whom complete addresses were provided by the district. A total of 27 parents (PK, n = 5; K-5, n = 9; 6-8, n = 6; 9 – 12, n = 7)

representing 8% of the sample, returned the survey. 34 surveys were returned as undeliverable, representing 10% of the sample. Parents represented the following students with disabilities: 4 educable mentally handicapped, 3 trainable mentally handicapped, 2 orthopedically impaired, 1 speech impaired, 1 language impaired, 3 specific learning disabled, 3 profoundly mentally handicapped, 1 traumatic brain injured, and 9 developmentally delayed.

### ***Teacher Surveys***

In addition, surveys for all teachers are mailed to each school, with a memo explaining the key data indicator and the monitoring process. Seventy-three teachers from six schools, representing 49% of ESE and general education teachers responded to the teacher survey for Hamilton County School District.

### ***Student Surveys***

A sufficient number of surveys were provided to allow all students with disabilities, grades 9-12, to respond. Instructions for administration of the survey by classroom teachers, including a written script, were provided for each class or group of students. Since participation in this survey is not appropriate for some students whose disabilities might impair their understanding of the survey, professional judgement is used to determine appropriate participants. Forty-nine students, representing 49% of students with disabilities in grades 9-12, completed the survey.

### ***Reviews of Student Records and District Forms***

Prior to the on-site monitoring visit, Bureau staff members conduct a compliance review of student records that are randomly selected from the population of students with disabilities and students identified as gifted. A total of 23 student records were reviewed from five schools in Hamilton County. The review included 15 records of students with disabilities, two records for students identified as speech impaired only, two records for students identified as gifted, two records from the low incidence population, and two records from the DJJ facility in the district. The monitoring team also reviewed 26 records during the on-site visit to determine whether records were current and to review the IEP team decision regarding participation in statewide assessment and matrixes.

In addition, Bureau staff review selected district forms and notices to determine if the required components are included. The results of the review of student records and district forms are described in this report.

## **Reporting Process**

### ***Interim Reports***

Preliminary findings and concerns are shared with the ESE director and/or designee through daily debriefings throughout the monitoring visit. The district ESE director is invited to attend the final debriefing. Within two weeks of the visit, Bureau administrative staff conduct a telephone conference with the ESE director to discuss major findings.

### ***Preliminary Report***

Subsequent to the on-site visit, Bureau staff prepare a written report. The report is sent to the district ESE director. Data for the report are compiled from sources that have been previously



discussed in this document. The director will have the opportunity to discuss and clarify with Bureau staff any concerns regarding the report before it becomes final.

The report is developed to include the following elements: an executive summary, a description of the monitoring process, and the results section. Appendices with data specific to the district accompany each report.

### ***Final Report***

Upon final review and revision by Bureau staff, the final report is issued. The report is sent to the district, and is posted to the Bureau's website at [www.firn.edu/doe/commhome/mon-home.htm](http://www.firn.edu/doe/commhome/mon-home.htm).

Within 30 days of the district's receipt of the final report, the system improvement plan, including activities targeting specific findings, must be submitted to the Bureau for review. In developing this plan, every effort should be made to link the system improvement plan for focused monitoring to the district's continuous improvement plan. Compliance and procedural issues regarding the IEP and direct services to students are required to be resolved by a date, designated by the team leader, not to exceed 90 days. In addition, long-term and/or systemic issues may be required to be included in the district's continuous improvement plan. The district may be required to address an issue for an extended period of time, identifying benchmarks to reach acceptable changes. In collaboration with Bureau staff, the district is encouraged to develop methods that integrate activities in order to utilize resources, staff, and time in an efficient manner in order to improve outcomes for students with disabilities. Upon approval of the system improvement plan, the plan is posted on the website noted above.



## **Reporting of Information**

The data generated through the surveys, focus group interviews, individual interviews, case studies, and classroom visits are summarized in this report. In addition, the results from the review of student records and district forms are presented in the report. This report provides conclusions with regard to the key data indicator and specifically addresses related areas that may contribute to or impact the indicator. These areas include the following:

- decision-making
- access to the general curriculum
- student preparation
- parental involvement
- stakeholder opinion related to the indicator

In addition, information related to services for gifted students, services provided to ESE students in Department of Juvenile Justice (DJJ) facilities and charter schools, the results of records and forms reviews, and supplementary compliance issues are reported.

To the extent possible, this report focuses on systemic issues rather than on isolated instances of noncompliance or need for improvement. Systemic issues are those that occur at a sufficient enough frequency that the monitoring team could reasonably infer a system-wide problem. Findings are presented in a preliminary report, and the district has the opportunity to clarify items of concern. In a collaborative effort between the district and Bureau staff, system improvement areas are identified. Findings are addressed through the development of strategies for improvement, and evidence of change will be identified as a joint effort between the district and the Bureau. Strategies that are identified as long-term approaches toward improving the district's issue related to the key data indicator are also addressed through the district's continuous improvement plan.

## **Results**

### **General Information**

This category provides demographic and background information specific to the district as well as information regarding the identification of students with disabilities who are exempt from taking statewide assessments. Based on the 2004 LEA profile, Hamilton County School District has a total school population (PK-12) of 2,067 with 17% of students being identified as students with disabilities (20% of the 17% identified as receiving only speech services), and <1% identified as gifted.

Hamilton County is considered a "small" district and is one of 25 districts in this enrollment group. Hamilton County School District is comprised of three elementary schools, one middle/high school, one ESE school, one alternative school, and one DJJ facility. Based on data reported to DOE for the 2002 – 03 school year, 31% of students in Hamilton County graduated with a standard diplomas, 15% through the standard diploma GED exit option, and none with a standard diploma through the FCAT waiver process. ESE staff later verified that three FCAT waivers were used during the 2002-03 school year that had not been appropriately recorded.

Hamilton County applied and was approved for a waiver to exceed the 1% of the total population assessed by alternate assessment. Hamilton County's waiver was approved based on the fact that they house multi-district programs for student with significant cognitive disabilities.

According to data provided in the 2003 LEA Profile as reported in February (survey 3), the following are FCAT participation rates for Hamilton County student with disabilities:

- 3<sup>rd</sup> grade math 63%
- 3<sup>rd</sup> grade reading 63%
- 5<sup>th</sup> grade math 68%
- 5<sup>th</sup> grade reading 77%
- 8<sup>th</sup> grade math 82%
- 8<sup>th</sup> grade reading 82%
- 10<sup>th</sup> grade math 50%
- 10<sup>th</sup> grade reading 50%

In summary, a majority of students in the lower grades and middle grades participate in the FCAT. Participation in the FCAT drops to 50% during high school. The district provides services to students with severe and profound disabilities from neighboring districts.

### **Decision-making**

This category refers to the process by which the decision is made to exempt a student from the FCAT. State Board Rule 6A-1.0943(1)(a), Florida Administrative Code (FAC) states "... Students may be excluded from statewide or district assessment programs if the following criteria are met: 1. The student's demonstrated cognitive ability prevents the student from completing required coursework and achieving the Sunshine State Standards...even with appropriate and allowable course modifications, and 2. The student requires extensive direct instruction to accomplish the application and transfer of skills and competencies needed for domestic, community living, leisure, and vocational activities."

Interviews with district administrators revealed that the decision regarding assessment exemption was made by the IEP team based on the individual student. Interviews with school level personnel confirmed that decisions are made at IEP meetings by the team. Administrators and teachers referred to the state criteria for exemption as the primary factor in the decision-making process. Record reviews confirmed that IEP teams consider the state exemption criteria when making the FCAT participation decision and that appropriate participation decisions were made for students who typically do not meet the exemption criteria (e.g., specific learning disabled.)

Interviewees at the district and school level indicated that students who participate in alternate assessments are assessed with curriculum-based assessments. Some students are assessed with Brigance while others are assessed with Life Centered Career Education (LCCE) and Miami-Dade assessments, developed by the Miami-Dade School District.

In summary, staff reported that the decision to exempt students from the FCAT is made during the IEP meeting based on State Board of Education rule exemption criteria; this was supported

by the record reviews. Alternate assessments used in the district are Brigance, LCCE, and Miami-Dade assessments.

### **Access to the General Curriculum**

This category refers to access to the general curriculum by ESE students. In accordance with 34 CFR §300.26(b)(3)(ii), "...specially-designed instruction means adapting, as appropriate to the needs of an eligible child, the content, methodology, or delivery of instruction...to ensure access of the child to the general curriculum, so that he or she can meet the educational standards within the jurisdiction of the public agency that apply to all children." Access refers to the types of settings and course content available to students with disabilities and may be a factor affecting the decision-making process regarding participation in statewide assessment.

Interviews with district and school staff revealed that students at all levels have access to the general curriculum in general education classes. ESE teachers of students pursuing standard diplomas reported the use of the general curriculum for students with disabilities while teachers for students pursuing special diplomas report the use of Life Centered Career Education (LCCE) curriculum. General education teachers reported the use of accommodations in their classrooms; student focus groups and classroom visits confirmed the use of accommodations in general education classes.

Students who are pursuing standard diplomas and who take the FCAT are taught in general education classes with consultative support for the general education teachers provided by ESE teachers. ESE teachers and paraprofessionals also go to classes to assist students in those general education classes. ESE students have access to all remediation programs available to their nondisabled peers. The support for teachers and students from ESE teachers was confirmed through the standard diploma focus group. These students reported that ESE teachers "talk to" their other teachers and help them when they need assistance.

Interviews at Panther Success Center, the DJJ facility, revealed that students have access to the general curriculum with general education students. The ESE teacher reported that curricular materials are supplied through the high school and that there is access to all general education materials. ESE students also have access to vocational programs at the facility. The general education teacher reported the use of accommodations for all students. The use of accommodations was confirmed through a classroom visit.

Eleven classroom visits were conducted at the four school sites visited. Classroom visits validated the access to the general curriculum for students with disabilities and the provision of accommodations in general education classes.

In summary, students with disabilities have access to the general curriculum, through enrollment in general curriculum courses with support from ESE teachers. They participate in all remediation programs, and are provided individualized accommodations in order to successfully participate in general education curricula.

## **Student Preparation**

This category refers to student participation in statewide assessment. Section 1008.22(3)©8., F.S., requires that district school boards provide instruction to prepare students to demonstrate proficiency in the skills and competencies necessary for successful grade-to-grade progression and high school graduation. Student preparation refers to the activities and materials available to assist students in preparing for meaningful participation in statewide assessments. The lack of student preparation could negatively impact the rate of participation in the FCAT, as well as performance, in that IEP team decisions may be influenced by perceptions of how well students have been prepared or their expected level of performance.

Interviews with district administrators and school staff revealed that students with disabilities have access to FCAT Explorer, test taking strategies, Blast Off, FCAT remedial classes, after school tutoring, and computer-based FCAT preparation programs to aid in their preparation for the state assessment. The ESE director also reported that there is special after-school tutoring available to only students with disabilities in addition to the school-wide after-school tutoring.

Interviews with school staff at all schools reported that the FCAT preparation materials are regularly used in their schools. Each also reported that there are “morale booster” activities to encourage students to do their best on the test. These activities were confirmed through school visits.

Focus group interviews with students pursuing standard diplomas and special diplomas confirmed the use of FCAT preparation materials and remedial programs. Students in both groups indicated that the use of accommodations during the administration of the FCAT had been helpful to them.

Classroom observations revealed both direct FCAT preparation activities as well as instructional strategies designed to naturally integrate skills across subject areas. Of the student surveys returned, 88% of the students reported having taken the FCAT. Student surveys revealed that most students with disabilities are satisfied with the FCAT preparation they are receiving. Eighty-two percent of the respondents reported that teachers help prepare them for the FCAT; 84% of the students reported that they work on the skills needed to pass the FCAT in their reading/language arts class and 76% reported that in their math class they work on the kinds of problems that are on the FCAT.

The district has also provided numerous in-service opportunities to teachers related to FCAT. Several interviewees reported that training related to Florida Writes, reading skills, math skills, accommodations, test-taking skills, and differentiated instruction had been provided to teachers. In addition, it was reported that Florida Diagnostic and Learning Resources System (FDLRS) had provided training to teachers on various topics related to FCAT.

In summary, interviews with district administrators and school staff revealed that students with disabilities have a wide range of programs and materials to aid in their preparation for the state assessment. Student surveys and focus group interviews with students confirm that students have access to appropriate FCAT preparation activities and materials.

## **Parental Involvement**

This category refers to parental involvement in the decision-making process regarding participation in statewide assessment. District and school staff reported that parents are actively involved in the decision-making process during IEP meetings to determine whether or not students participate in the FCAT.

Interviews with district and school personnel revealed that they actively seek parental participation. To obtain parent input regarding decisions to be made at the IEP meetings, teachers often call parents prior to the meeting. If parents do not wish for their children to take the FCAT, school staff often counsel them regarding the FCAT and its benefits. It was not indicated by any staff that they specifically provide information about exemption criteria in State Board Rule 6A-1.0943 to the parents; however they do go review reasons for FCAT exemption.

There was evidence of parent attendance at the IEP meeting for 55% of records reviewed. Of the remaining ten records, parental input was documented in nine records and only one record reviewed did not have evidence of parental input in the development of the IEP. Surveys of parents of students with disabilities revealed a high participation rate of parents at meetings involving their children. Although surveys revealed that 74% of parents who responded have attended one or more meetings about their child this year, only 30% reported talking about the FCAT and/or FCAT accommodations at the IEP meeting.

In summary, district and school staff reported that parents are actively involved in the decision-making process during IEP meetings or through teacher contact to determine whether or not students participate in the FCAT. If parents do not wish for their children to take the FCAT, school staff often counsel them regarding the FCAT and its benefits. Although they did not specifically report discussing the exemption criteria under Rule 6A-1.0493, FAC, with parents, staff reported discussing reasons for exemption.

## **Stakeholder Opinions Related to the Key Data Indicator**

This section provides information related to the opinions of district staff as to why they believe the number of ESE students participating in statewide assessments is low. Through interviews and focus groups, the members of the monitoring team asked district and school staff, parents, and students for their opinions related to the reasons that Hamilton County has the third lowest rate in the state for students with disabilities participating in the FCAT.

Student attendance was identified as a possibly significant factor. It was reported by faculty and staff that students with disabilities, especially at the high school level, often choose to stay home during administration of the FCAT. Lack of attendance prior to and during administration of the FCAT was confirmed during student focus group interviews.

All staff indicated that appropriate decisions are being made for students with disabilities. They presented these opinions based on their own experiences and unique perspectives. The following is a summary of comments from district and school staff related to the reasons more students did not participate in FCAT.

- large number of severe/profound students from other districts at Greenwood

- absenteeism
- refusal to take FCAT
- data entry errors i.e., sixteen students at Greenwood coded as gifted (Greenwood is the school for the severely and profoundly handicapped)

Teacher survey results indicated that all schools encourage students who are capable of taking the FCAT to participate. In contrast however, only 38% of teachers reported ESE students have updated textbooks and 36% reported that they align the curriculum with standards that are tested on the FCAT. Due to the newness of staff and recent staff turnover, lack of use of appropriate curriculum instruction and current textbooks may have impacted the students taking or able to take statewide assessments. They did make the recommendation of providing more information to teachers and providing more guidance to administrators as a means to increase the participation rate of students with disabilities.

In summary, district and school staff are of the opinion that appropriate decisions are being made for students related to participation in the FCAT; however, absenteeism and refusal to take the FCAT have affected the participation rate. Lack of use of the appropriate curriculum instruction and current textbooks may impact the students taking or able to take statewide assessments. Recommendations of providing more information to teachers and providing more guidance to administrators as a means to increase the participation rate of students with disabilities was provided.

### **Gifted**

This section provides information related to the district's gifted program across all grade levels. In accordance with section 1003.57, F.S., districts are required to "...provide for an appropriate program of special instruction, facilities, and services to exceptional students..." and this includes students who are gifted (section 1003.01(3)(a), F.S.). Information provided by the district revealed that the Hamilton County gifted program is currently limited. Interviews with the district ESE administrator confirmed efforts to increase the number of students identified as gifted throughout the county. The county has increased gifted participation from one gifted student to two gifted students. These students are provided gifted services through the enhancement of specific classroom activities.

Referrals are generated from parents, teachers, and administrators. Due to the low identification rate of gifted students in the district, the district has identified this area for their continuous monitoring improvement plan.

In summary, the district has a limited number of students identified as gifted. The district's continuous monitoring improvement plan addresses strategies used by the district to increase the gifted representation in the district.

### **Services to ESE Students in DJJ Facilities**

This section provides information related to the services provided in DJJ facilities to students with disabilities. Rule 6A-6.05281(1)(c), FAC, requires that all ESE students placed in a DJJ program be provided a free appropriate public education consistent with state board rules pertaining to special programs for exceptional students. Bureau staff visited Panther Success



Academy; a level 6 DJJ facility which houses students in grades 6 through 12 (ages 13 through 18). The average length of stay is 180 days with some students staying as little as four months and others much longer.

Educational programs are available for special diploma, standard diploma, general educational development (GED) preparation, and vocational programs. The available vocational programs are masonry and horticulture. ESE and general education students have the opportunity to participate in these programs. There is a computer lab with 12 student work stations and computers for student use in the classroom.

Curricular materials are provided through the high school and staff reported that they have access to all general education materials. The ESE teacher reported that culturally relevant materials are used in order to make instruction meaningful for all students. The general education teacher reported that 24 of the past 28 students who have attempted to pass the GED did so.

IEPs are developed for ESE student within two days of their arrival at the facility. The team looks at the previous IEP and uses parent and student input in the development of the IEP. It was reported that all ESE students for the past three years have participated in the FCAT. It was also reported that there are additional assessments used in the facility, including the Tests of Adult Basic Education (TABE), LCCE and Curriculum Based Education Assessments. Diploma option decisions are made at the IEP meeting and staff reported for younger students, the recommendation is that the students pursue a standard diploma, because students need not be “locked into” a diploma option that is not appropriate. The IEP team does consider previous diploma decisions when discussing diploma options with the team.

In summary, students with disabilities in DJJ facilities have similar opportunities for instruction and participation in general education settings as student in the middle and high schools in Hamilton County. DJJ students with disabilities participate in statewide assessments according to IEP team decisions, and participation rate in the FCAT is consistently high.

### **Student Record Reviews**

This section provides information related to the findings of noncompliance in Hamilton County records reviewed by Bureau staff. A total of 21 student records of students with disabilities and two records of students identified as gifted, randomly selected from the population of ESE students, were reviewed from five schools in Hamilton County. Of the 21 records reviewed, 11 were transition IEPs. There were no findings of noncompliance that resulted in funding adjustments. There were findings of noncompliance in five records that require the reconvening of the IEP teams.

To be determined systemic in nature, an item must be found noncompliant in at least 25% of the records reviewed. In Hamilton County, at least six of the 21 records must have been noncompliant to be considered systemic. The only systemic area of noncompliance was the following:

- lack of majority of measurable annual goals (10)

In addition, of the 21 IEPs reviewed, individual or non-systemic findings are as follows:

- lack of evidence that the parent was provided a copy of the IEP (5)
- lack of adequate description of location of services (5)
- inadequate or incomplete short term objectives (4)
- lack of evidence that the results of the student's performance on state or district assessment were considered (4)
- present level of performance statement and goals do not support the services on the IEP (3)
- progress reported on objectives rather than goals (2)
- lack of description of the purpose of the meeting including transition when necessary (2)
- incomplete or inadequate present level of educational performance statements (1)
- lack of appropriate signatures (interpreter of instructional implications) on the IEP (1)
- lack of evidence that concerns of the parent were considered (1)
- lack of identification of location and frequency of accommodations (1)
- lack of evidence that results of initial or most recent evaluation were considered (1)
- lack of evidence that the language needs of a Limited English Proficient (LEP) student were considered (1)
- progress report did not indicate whether progress was adequate to enable the student to achieve the goal by the end of the year (1)

Ten of the 21 records reviewed had at least one goal that was not measurable. For five of the 21 students a majority of the goals were not measurable, and IEP teams must be reconvened to address this finding. The district was notified of the specific students requiring reconvened IEP meetings in a letter dated April 2, 2004.

In addition to IEP reviews, the Bureau conducted reviews of three matrix of services documents for students reported at the 254 or 255 funding level. Of those reviews, the services identified on the matrix were in evidence on the IEPs. Provision of services to those students was confirmed through classroom visits.

Of the two EPs reviewed, there were no systemic issues. Both were in compliance on all items.

An area of concern resulting from the on-site review of records was the lack of current IEPs in student records and updated information in the county database for exceptional student information. Upon requesting current IEPs, all IEPs were provided; however, completion dates of the IEPs ranged from days to months before being placed in the student records.

In summary, a systemic finding was identified in one area. Individual or non-systemic findings for student IEPs were noted in 14 areas. Record reviews at one school indicated IEPs are not being placed in student records in a timely manner. Five IEP teams were required to reconvene to write annual measurable goals. The reconvenes have been completed and reviewed and all are in compliance. There were no systemic findings in the review of EPs. There were no funding adjustments for noncompliance.

## **District Forms Review**

This section provides information related to the review of district forms for ESE teacher services. Forms representing the thirteen areas identified below were submitted to Bureau staff for a review to determine compliance with federal and state laws. Only one form required changes. The district was notified of the specific findings via a separate letter dated April 29, 2004. A detailed explanation of the specific findings may be found in the notification letter, see appendix D.

- *Parent Notification of Individual Education Plan (IEP) Meeting*
- *IEP forms*
- *EP forms*
- *Notice and Consent for Initial Placement*
- *Informed Notice and Consent for Evaluation*
- *Informed Notice and Consent for Reevaluation*
- *Notification of Change of Placement*
- *Notification of Change of FAPE (Free Appropriate Public Education)*
- *Informed Notice of Refusal*
- *Documentation of Staffing/Eligibility Determination*
- *Informed Notice of Dismissal*
- *Notice: Not Eligible for Exceptional Student Placement*
- *Summary of Procedural Safeguards*
- *Annual Notice of Confidentiality\**

\*indicates findings that require immediate attention

In summary, information related to the review of district forms for ESE teacher services were reviewed for compliance. Forms representing the thirteen areas were submitted to Bureau staff for a review to determine compliance with federal and state laws. Only one form, utilized by student support services for general education students and ESE for students with disabilities required changes to meet compliance standards.

## **Additional Compliance**

This section provides information related to supplementary categories of compliance. In addition to monitoring categories related to the 2004 focused visit, the Bureau also conducted interviews related to the provision of speech and language services, psychological counseling as a related service, and transition services. Through interviews and record reviews, there is evidence that the speech and language needs of students in Hamilton County are being met. If the ESE teachers need assistance with writing or implementing appropriate communication goals, they consult the speech/language pathologist. Some ESE teachers utilize a curriculum, "Language for Learning" that assists in the development of communication skills.

It is reported that counseling services are provided to students with disabilities who are in need of such services. Mental health counseling is routinely provided by school guidance counselors, and individual and small group counseling is available through a district negotiated contract with Meridian Behavioral Services, and social workers involved with the schools. Staff interviews,

supported by record reviews, indicated that students receiving counseling would have the service indicated on the IEP as a related service and record reviews supported this.

Transition services were also explored through the monitoring process. Of the 21 IEPs reviewed by Bureau staff, there were no findings within the transition services area. District staff reported they receive cooperation from the local office of the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR). IEP reviews documented agency participation and when agency staff was unable to attend the meetings, written information was provided.

In summary, students in Hamilton County with communication needs are having those needs addressed by ESE teachers through communication and instructional goals on the IEPs. Student who have psychological counseling needs are having those needs met through a variety of models. Student needs in the area of psychological counseling are being addressed and included on the IEP as a related service. Transition services in Hamilton County are addressed through the DVR.

## **System Improvement Plan**

In response to these findings, the district is required to develop a system improvement plan for submission to the Bureau. This plan must include activities and strategies intended to address specific findings, as well as measurable evidence of change. In developing the system improvement plan, every effort should be made to link the system improvement activities resulting from this focused monitoring report to the district's continuous improvement plan. Following is the format for the system improvement plan, including a listing of the critical issues identified by the Bureau as most significantly in need of improvement.

During the course of conducting the focused monitoring activities, including daily debriefings with the monitoring team and district staff, it is often the case that suggestions and/or recommendations related to interventions or strategies are proposed. Listings of these recommendations as well as specific discretionary projects and DOE contacts available to provide technical assistance to the district in the development and implementation of the plan are included following the plan format.

## Hamilton County School District Focused Monitoring System Improvement Strategies

This section includes the issues identified by the Bureau as most significantly in need of improvement. The district is required to provide system improvement strategies to address identified findings, which may include an explanation of specific activities the district has committed to implementing, or it may consist of a broader statement describing planned strategies. For each issue, the plan also must define the measurable evidence of whether or not the desired outcome has been achieved. Target dates that extend for more than one year should include benchmarks in order to track interim progress. Findings identified as “ESE” are those findings that reflect issues specific to ESE students. Findings identified as “All” are those findings that reflect issues related to the student population as a whole, including ESE students.

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| Category                         | Findings  | ESE | All | System Improvement Strategy   | Evidence of Change<br>(Including target date) |
|----------------------------------|---|-----|-----|---|---|
| Decision-Making                  | There are no findings in this area.<br><br>Recommendations are included in the <i>Recommendations and Technical Assistance</i> section of the report. | X   |     | The district is encouraged to review the recommendations related to this area and address it the system improvement plan. |   |
| Access to the General Curriculum | There are no findings in this area.   |     |     |   |   |
| Student Preparation              | There are no findings in this area.<br><br>Recommendations are included in the <i>Recommendations and Technical Assistance</i> section of the report. | X   |     | The district is encouraged to review the recommendations related to this area and address it the system improvement plan. |   |

| Category               | Findings  | ESE | All | System Improvement Strategy  | Evidence of Change<br>(Including target date)  |
|------------------------|---|-----|-----|--|--|
| Parental Involvement   | There are no findings in this area.   |     |     |  |  |
| Gifted                 | There are no findings in this area.   |     |     |  |  |
| DJJ                    | There are no findings in this area.   |     |     |  |  |
| Forms Review           | One specific form requires revision to demonstrate compliance: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Annual Notice of Confidentiality requires additional phrases</li> </ul> | X   |     | Develop new forms to comply with monitoring compliance issues; develop a Policy and Procedures manual for use of forms for ESE Staff.  | Forms to be submitted to the Bureau for review and approval.<br><br>June 2005  |
| Additional Compliance  | Communication <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>There are no findings in this area</li> </ul>  |     |     |  |  |
|                        | Counseling as a related service <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>There are no findings in this area.</li> </ul>   |     |     |  |  |
|                        | Transition <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>There are no findings in this area.</li> </ul>  |     |     |  |  |
| Student record Reviews | A systemic finding was made in <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Measurable goals – requiring 10 IEPs to be reconvened</li> </ul>  | X   |     | The district will reconvene five IEP Teams to address measurable goals.<br><br>The district will be required to target these elements in its training on IEP development and conduct a self-evaluation using protocols developed by the Bureau to ensure | IEP Teams reconvened all IEP annual goals were measurable and in compliance.<br><br>District reports of self-assessment reveals compliance in targeted areas of 100% in IEPs reviewed. |

| Category | Findings   | ESE | All | System Improvement Strategy   | Evidence of Change<br>(Including target date)   |
|----------|--|-----|-----|---|---|
|          |  |     |     | <p>compliance.</p> <p>The district will conduct a self-assessment of 25 IEPs by February 1, 2005.</p>   | <p>Submitted June 2005 and June 2006.</p>   |
|          | <p>Items of non-compliance include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• lack of evidence that the parent was provided a copy of the IEP</li> <li>• lack of adequate description of location of services</li> <li>• inadequate or incomplete short term objectives</li> <li>• lack of evidence that the results of the student's performance on state or district assessment were considered</li> <li>• present level of performance statement and goals do not support the services on the IEP</li> <li>• progress reported on objectives rather than goals</li> <li>• lack of description of the purpose of the meeting including transition when necessary</li> </ul> | X   |     | <p>The district will be required to target these elements in its training on IEP development and conduct a self-evaluation using protocols developed by the Bureau to ensure compliance.</p> <p>The district will conduct a self-assessment of 25 IEPs by February 1, 2005.</p> | <p>District reports of self-assessment reveals compliance in targeted areas of 100% in IEPs reviewed.</p> <p>Submitted June 2005 and June 2006.</p> |





## **Recommendations and Technical Assistance**

As a result of the focused monitoring activities conducted in Hamilton County, the Bureau has identified specific findings related to the percentage of students with disabilities who participate in the FCAT. The following are recommendations for the district to consider when developing the system improvement plan and determining strategies that are most likely to effect change. The list is not all-inclusive, and is intended only as a starting point for discussion among the parties responsible for the development of the plan. A partial listing of technical assistance resources is also provided. These resources may be of assistance in the development and/or implementation of the system improvement plan.

### **Recommendations**

- District Management Information Systems in coordination with ESE staff shall establish a standard process for data entry including the provision of data sheets to data entry personnel and monitoring the timelines of data entry and conduct school-level data review to ensure accurate reporting of students with disabilities participating in FCAT and data specific to IEPs and eligibility status
- Mentoring for new staff members (beginning teachers) would be beneficial in the areas of classroom management and curriculum delivery
- Review policies and procedures related to attendance; ensure implementation of required interventions for improvement; consider incentive program
- The ESE director currently serves as the principal of the Greenwood School in addition to her duties administering ESE programs, the effect this may have on parents, students, teachers and other staff in their need to communicate with her in a timely manner should be reviewed.
- Provide more information to teachers and guidance to administrators as a means of increasing the participation rates of students with disabilities.

### **Technical Assistance**

#### **Florida Inclusion Network**

Website: <http://www.FloridaInclusionNetwork.com/>

The project provides learning opportunities, consultation, information, and support to educators, families, and community members, resulting in the inclusion of all students. Technical assistance on literacy strategies, curriculum adaptations, suggestions for resource allocations, and expanding models of service delivery, positive behavioral supports, ideas on differentiating instruction, and suggestions for building and maintaining effective school teams is available.

#### **Project CENTRAL**

Website: <http://reach.ucf.edu/~CENTRAL/>

This comprehensive, statewide project is designed to identify and disseminate information about resources, training, and research related to current and emerging effective instructional practices. The ultimate goals are to provide information leading to appropriate training, products, and other

resources that provide benefits and appropriate outcomes for all students, including students with disabilities.

**Alternate Assessment Project**

Website: <http://www.firn.edu/doi/bin00014/essproj.htm>

The project purpose is to provide support to schools and districts to implement alternate assessment for those students with disabilities who are not included in the general state and district testing programs. Project participants have the opportunity to attend workshops on alternate assessment throughout the school year.

**Bureau of Exceptional Education and Student Services**

In addition to the special projects described above, Bureau staff are available for assistance on a variety of topics. Following is a partial list of contacts:

**Education Information  
and Accountability Services**

Lavan Dukes, Bureau Chief  
(850) 245-0400

**EH/SED, Behavior and Discipline**

Lee Clark, Program Specialist  
(850) 245-0478

**Alternate Assessment  
Project Liaison**

Sheryl Brainard, Program Specialist  
(850) 245-0478

**Compliance**

Eileen Amy, Administrator  
Kim Komisar, Program Director  
April Katine, Program Specialist  
Barbara McAnelly, Program Specialist  
Jessica Miller, Program Specialist  
Anitra Moreland, Program Specialist  
(850) 245-0476

**Clearinghouse  
Information Center**

[cicbiscs@fldoe.org](mailto:cicbiscs@fldoe.org)  
(850) 245-0477

**APPENDIX A—DISTRICT DATA**





FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION  
BUREAU OF INSTRUCTIONAL SUPPORT AND COMMUNITY SERVICES

# 2004 LEA PROFILE

JIM HORNE, COMMISSIONER

|                   |                 |                   |       |
|-------------------|-----------------|-------------------|-------|
| DISTRICT:         | HAMILTON        | PK-12 POPULATION: | 2,057 |
| ENROLLMENT GROUP: | LESS THAN 7,000 | PERCENT DISABLED: | 17%   |
|                   |                 | PERCENT GIFTED:   | <1%   |

## INTRODUCTION

The LEA profile is intended to provide districts with a tool for use in planning for systemic improvement. The profile contains a series of data indicators that describe measures of educational benefit, educational environment, and prevalence for exceptional students. The data are presented for the district, their enrollment group (districts of comparable size), and the state. Where appropriate and available, comparative data for general education students are included.

Data presented as indicators of educational benefit (*Section One*)

- Graduation rates for students with disabilities receiving standard diplomas through meeting all graduation requirements, GED Exit Option, and FCAT waivers
- Dropout rates
- Post-school outcome data
- Third grade promotion and retention, including good cause promotions

*Note: FCAT participation and performance data formerly included in the LEA profile will be published separately in Fall 2004.*

Data presented as indicators of educational environment (*Section Two*)

- Regular class, resource room, and separate class placement, ages 6-21
- Early childhood setting or home, part-time early childhood/part-time early childhood special education setting and early childhood special education setting, ages 3-5
- Discipline rates

Data presented as indicators of prevalence (*Section Three*)

- Student membership by race/ethnicity
- Gifted membership by free/reduced lunch and limited English proficiency (LEP) status
- Student membership in selected disabilities by race/ethnicity
- Selected disabilities as a percentage of all disabilities and as a percentage of total PK-12 population

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**LEA PROFILE 2004**

Three of the indicators included in the profile, graduation rate, dropout rate, and regular class placement, are also used in the selection of districts for focused monitoring. Indicators describing the prevalence and separate class placement of students identified as educable mentally handicapped (EMH) are included to correspond with provisions of the Bureau's partnership agreement with the Office for Civil Rights.

**DATA SOURCES**

The data contained in this profile were obtained from data submitted electronically by districts through the Department of Education Information Database in surveys 2, 9, 3, and 5 and through the Florida Education and Training Placement Information Program (FETPIP).

**DISTRICTS IN HAMILTON'S ENROLLMENT GROUP:**

Baker, Bradford, Calhoun, DeSoto, Dixie, Franklin, Gadsden, Gilchrist, Glades, Gulf, Hamilton, Hardee, Holmes, Jefferson, Lafayette, Levy, Liberty, Madison, Sumter, Suwannee, Taylor, Union, Wakulla, Walton, Washington



## SECTION ONE: EDUCATIONAL BENEFIT

Educational benefit refers to the extent to which children benefit from their educational experience. Progression through and completion of school are dimensions of educational benefits as are post-school outcomes and indicators of consumer satisfaction. This section of the profile provides data on indicators of student progression, school completion, and post-school outcomes.

### STANDARD DIPLOMA STUDENTS MEETING ALL GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS:

The number of students with disabilities graduating with a standard diploma (withdrawal code W06) divided by the total number of students with disabilities who completed their education (withdrawal codes W06-W10, W27, WGD, WFW, WFT) as reported in end of year (survey 5). The resulting percentages are reported for the three-year period from **2000-01** through **2002-03**.

|                  | 2000-01 | 2001-02 | 2002-03 |
|------------------|---------|---------|---------|
| Hamilton         | 33%     | 33%     | 31%     |
| Enrollment Group | 42%     | 41%     | 44%     |
| State            | 51%     | 48%     | 45%     |

### STANDARD DIPLOMA THROUGH GED EXIT OPTION:

The number of students with disabilities in a GED Exit Option Model who passed the GED Tests and the FCAT or HSCT and were awarded a standard high school diploma (withdrawal code W10) divided by the total number of students with disabilities who completed their education (withdrawal codes W06-W10, W27, WGD, WFW, WFT) as reported in end of year (survey 5). The resulting percentages are reported for the three-year period from **2000-01** through **2002-03**.

|                  | 2000-01 | 2001-02 | 2002-03 |
|------------------|---------|---------|---------|
| Hamilton         | 5%      | 0%      | 15%     |
| Enrollment Group | 2%      | 2%      | 2%      |
| State            | 1%      | 1%      | 1%      |

### STANDARD DIPLOMA THROUGH FCAT WAIVER:

The number of students with disabilities graduating with a standard diploma through the FCAT waiver (withdrawal code WFW) divided by the total number of students with disabilities who completed their education (withdrawal codes W06-W10, W27, WGD, WFW, WFT) as reported in end of year (survey 5). The resulting percentages are reported for **2002-03**, the first year waivers were available.

|                  | 2002-03 |
|------------------|---------|
| Hamilton         | 0%      |
| Enrollment Group | 8%      |
| State            | 9%      |

**DROPOUT RATE:**

The number of students grades 9-12 for whom a dropout withdrawal reason (DNE, W05, W11, W13-W23) was reported, divided by the total enrollment of grade 9-12 students and students who did not enter school as expected (DNEs) as reported in end of year (survey 5). The resulting percentages are reported for students with disabilities, gifted students, all PK-12 students, students identified as EH/SED, and students identified as SLD for the years **2000-01** through **2002-03**.

|                  | Students with Disabilities |         |         | Gifted Students |         |         | All Students |         |         |
|------------------|----------------------------|---------|---------|-----------------|---------|---------|--------------|---------|---------|
|                  | 2000-01                    | 2001-02 | 2002-03 | 2000-01         | 2001-02 | 2002-03 | 2000-01      | 2001-02 | 2002-03 |
| Hamilton         | 3%                         | 6%      | 4%      | 0%              | 0%      | 0%      | 2%           | 2%      | 5%      |
| Enrollment Group | 5%                         | 5%      | 5%      | <1%             | <1%     | 0%      | 4%           | 3%      | 3%      |
| State            | 5%                         | 5%      | 4%      | <1%             | <1%     | <1%     | 4%           | 3%      | 3%      |

|                  | EH/SED  |         |         | SLD     |         |         |
|------------------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
|                  | 2000-01 | 2001-02 | 2002-03 | 2000-01 | 2001-02 | 2002-03 |
| Hamilton         | 6%      | 0%      | 4%      | 4%      | 7%      | 5%      |
| Enrollment Group | 7%      | 5%      | 5%      | 5%      | 5%      | 5%      |
| State            | 9%      | 7%      | 7%      | 5%      | 5%      | 4%      |

**POSTSCHOOL OUTCOME DATA:**

The Florida Education and Training Placement Information Program (FETPIP) is an interagency data collection system that obtains follow-up data on former students. The most recent FETPIP data available reports on students who exited Florida public schools during the **2001-02** school year. The table below displays percent of students with disabilities and students identified as gifted exiting school in 2001-02 who were found employed between October and December 2002 or in continuing education (enrolled for the fall or preliminary winter/spring semester) in 2002.

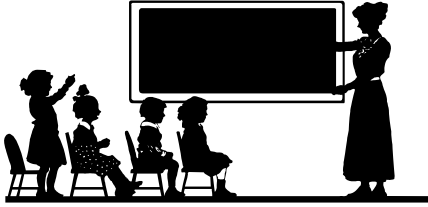
|                  | Students with Disabilities |           | Gifted Students |           |
|------------------|----------------------------|-----------|-----------------|-----------|
|                  | Employed                   | Cont. Ed. | Employed        | Cont. Ed. |
| Hamilton         | 0%                         | 11%       | 33%             | 0%        |
| Enrollment Group | 39%                        | 16%       | 60%             | 70%       |
| State            | 45%                        | 20%       | 38%             | 72%       |

**THIRD GRADE PROMOTION AND RETENTION RATE:**

The number of third grade students promoted, promoted with cause, and retained divided by the total year enrollment as reported in end of year (survey 5). The percent of students promoted with cause is a subset of total promoted. Total enrollment is the count of all students who attended school at any time during the school year. The results are reported for third grade students with disabilities and all third grade students for **2002-03**.

|                  | 2002-03                    |                     |          |              |                     |          |
|------------------|----------------------------|---------------------|----------|--------------|---------------------|----------|
|                  | Students with Disabilities |                     |          | All Students |                     |          |
|                  | Promoted                   | Promoted with Cause | Retained | Promoted     | Promoted with Cause | Retained |
| Hamilton         | 52%                        | 10%                 | 48%      | 72%          | 3%                  | 28%      |
| Enrollment Group | 74%                        | 19%                 | 26%      | 85%          | 6%                  | 15%      |
| State            | 74%                        | 17%                 | 26%      | 85%          | 6%                  | 15%      |





## SECTION TWO: EDUCATIONAL ENVIRONMENT

Educational environment refers to the extent to which students with disabilities receive special education and related services in natural environments, classes or schools with their nondisabled peers. This section of the profile provides data on indicators of educational environments.

### REGULAR CLASS, RESOURCE ROOM AND SEPARATE CLASS PLACEMENT, AGES 6-21:

The number of students with disabilities ages 6-21 in regular class, resource room, and separate class placement divided by the total number of students with disabilities ages 6-21 reported in December (survey 9). Regular class includes students who spend 80 percent or more of their school week with nondisabled peers. Resource room includes students spending between 40 and 80 percent of their school week with nondisabled peers. Separate class includes students spending less than 40 percent of their week with nondisabled peers. The resulting percentages are reported for the three years from **2001-02** through **2003-04**.

|                  | Regular Class |         |         | Resource Room |         |         | Separate Class |         |         |
|------------------|---------------|---------|---------|---------------|---------|---------|----------------|---------|---------|
|                  | 2001-02       | 2002-03 | 2003-04 | 2001-02       | 2002-03 | 2003-04 | 2001-02        | 2002-03 | 2003-04 |
| Hamilton         | 51%           | 54%     | 62%     | 16%           | 24%     | 25%     | 23%            | 21%     | 9%      |
| Enrollment Group | 46%           | 49%     | 52%     | 27%           | 27%     | 25%     | 20%            | 18%     | 16%     |
| State            | 48%           | 48%     | 50%     | 26%           | 26%     | 24%     | 22%            | 22%     | 22%     |

### EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION SETTINGS, AGES 3-5:

The number of students with disabilities ages 3-5 who are served in early childhood settings, part-time early childhood and part-time early childhood special education settings, and early childhood special education settings divided by the total number of students with disabilities ages 3-5 reported in December (survey 9). Students in early childhood settings receive all (100%) of their special education and related services in educational programs designed primarily for children without disabilities or in their home. Students in part-time early childhood and part-time early childhood special education settings receive special education and related services in multiple settings. Students in early childhood special education settings receive all (100%) of their special education and related services in educational programs designed primarily for children with disabilities housed in regular school buildings or other community-based settings. The resulting percentages are reported for the three years from **2001-02** through **2003-04**.

|                  | Early Childhood Setting or Home |         |         | Part-Time Early Childhood/<br>Part-Time Early Childhood<br>Special Education Setting |         |         | Early Childhood Special<br>Education Setting |         |         |
|------------------|---------------------------------|---------|---------|--|---------|---------|--|---------|---------|
|                  | 2001-02                         | 2002-03 | 2003-04 | 2001-02  | 2002-03 | 2003-04 | 2001-02                                      | 2002-03 | 2003-04 |
| Hamilton         | 12%                             | 23%     | 2%      | 28%  | 54%     | 36%     | 32%  | 0%      | 51%     |
| Enrollment Group | 10%                             | 10%     | 16%     | 67%  | 68%     | 62%     | 20%  | 19%     | 21%     |
| State            | 7%                              | 7%      | 7%      | 59%  | 57%     | 57%     | 30%  | 31%     | 31%     |

**SEPARATE CLASS PLACEMENT OF EMH STUDENTS, AGES 6-21:**

The number of students ages 6-21 identified as educable mentally handicapped who spend less than 40 percent of their day with nondisabled peers divided by the total number of EMH students reported in December (survey 9). The resulting percentages are reported for three years from **2001-02** through **2003-04**.

|                  | 2001-02 | 2002-03 | 2003-04 |
|------------------|---------|---------|---------|
| Hamilton         | 65%     | 51%     | 25%     |
| Enrollment Group | 56%     | 49%     | 47%     |
| State            | 62%     | 61%     | 62%     |

**DISCIPLINE RATES:**

The number of students who served in-school or out-of-school suspensions, were expelled, or moved to alternative placement at any time during the school year divided by the total year enrollment as reported in end of year (survey 5). The resulting percentages are reported for students with disabilities and nondisabled students for **2002-03**.

|                  |  | 2002-03                    |                      |                            |                      |                            |                      |                            |                      |
|------------------|--|----------------------------|----------------------|----------------------------|----------------------|----------------------------|----------------------|----------------------------|----------------------|
|                  |  | In-School Suspensions      |                      | Out-of-School Suspensions  |                      | Expulsions                 |                      | Alternative Placement*     |                      |
|                  |  | Students with Disabilities | Nondisabled Students | Students with Disabilities | Nondisabled Students | Students with Disabilities | Nondisabled Students | Students with Disabilities | Nondisabled Students |
| Hamilton         |  | 19%                        | 16%                  | 19%                        | 16%                  | 0%                         | 0%                   | 0%                         | 0%                   |
| Enrollment Group |  | 15%                        | 11%                  | 13%                        | 8%                   | <1%                        | <1%                  | <1%                        | <1%                  |
| State            |  | 13%                        | 8%                   | 14%                        | 7%                   | <1%                        | <1%                  | <1%                        | <1%                  |

\* Student went through expulsion process but was offered alternative placement.



### SECTION THREE: PREVALENCE

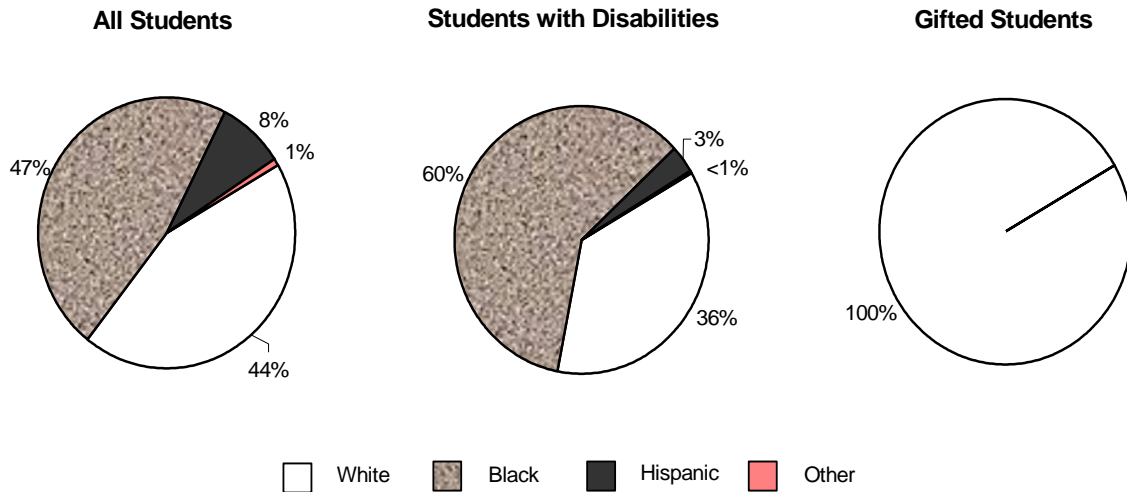
Prevalence refers to the proportion of the PK-12 population identified as exceptional at any given point in time. This section of the profile provides prevalence data by demographic characteristics.

#### STUDENT MEMBERSHIP BY RACIAL/ETHNIC CATEGORY:

The three columns on the left show the statewide racial/ethnic distribution for all PK-12 students, all students with disabilities, and all gifted students as reported in **October 2003** (survey 2). Statewide, there is a larger percentage of black students in the disabled population than in the total PK-12 population (28 percent vs. 24 percent) and a smaller percentage of black students in the gifted population (10 percent vs. 24 percent). Similar data for the district are reported in the three right-hand columns and displayed in the graphs.

|                        | State        |                            |                 | District     |                            |                 |
|------------------------|--------------|----------------------------|-----------------|--------------|----------------------------|-----------------|
|                        | All Students | Students with Disabilities | Gifted Students | All Students | Students with Disabilities | Gifted Students |
| White                  | 50%          | 51%                        | 64%             | 44%          | 36%                        | 100%            |
| Black                  | 24%          | 28%                        | 10%             | 47%          | 60%                        | 0%              |
| Hispanic               | 22%          | 18%                        | 19%             | 8%           | 3%                         | 0%              |
| Asian/Pacific Islander | 2%           | <1%                        | 4%              | <1%          | 0%                         | 0%              |
| Am Ind/Alaskan Native  | <1%          | <1%                        | <1%             | <1%          | <1%                        | 0%              |
| Multiracial            | 2%           | 2%                         | 3%              | <1%          | 0%                         | 0%              |

District Membership by Race/Ethnicity



**FREE/REDUCED LUNCH AND LEP:**

The percent of all students and all gifted students in the district and the state on free/reduced lunch. The percent of all students and all gifted students in the district and in the state who are identified as limited English proficient (LEP). These percentages are based on data reported in **October 2003** (survey 2).

|                    | State        |                 | District     |                 |
|--------------------|--------------|-----------------|--------------|-----------------|
|                    | All Students | Gifted Students | All Students | Gifted Students |
| Free/Reduced Lunch | 44%          | 21%             | 7%           | 0%              |
| LEP                | 11%          | 3%              | 4%           | 0%              |

**SELECTED DISABILITIES BY RACIAL/ETHNIC CATEGORY:**

Racial/ethnic data for all students as well as students with a primary disability of specific learning disabled (SLD), emotionally handicapped or severely emotionally disturbed (EH/SED), and educable mentally handicapped (EMH) are presented below. The data are presented for the state and the district as reported in **October 2003** (survey 2).

|                        | All Students |          | SLD   |          | EH/SED |          | EMH   |          |
|------------------------|--------------|----------|-------|----------|--------|----------|-------|----------|
|                        | State        | District | State | District | State  | District | State | District |
| White                  | 50%          | 44%      | 52%   | 39%      | 48%    | 38%      | 32%   | 18%      |
| Black                  | 24%          | 47%      | 24%   | 52%      | 39%    | 62%      | 52%   | 79%      |
| Hispanic               | 22%          | 8%       | 21%   | 9%       | 11%    | 0%       | 13%   | 1%       |
| Asian/Pacific Islander | 2%           | <1%      | <1%   | 0%       | <1%    | 0%       | <1%   | 0%       |
| Am Ind/Alaskan Native  | <1%          | <1%      | <1%   | 0%       | <1%    | 0%       | <1%   | 1%       |
| Multiracial            | 2%           | <1%      | 2%    | 0%       | 2%     | 0%       | 1%    | 0%       |

**SELECTED DISABILITIES AS PERCENT OF DISABLED AND PK-12 POPULATIONS:**

The percentage of the total disabled population and the total population identified as SLD, EH/SED, EMH, and speech impaired (SI) for the district and the state. Statewide, seven percent of the total population is identified as SLD and 46 percent of all students with disabilities are SLD. The data are presented for the district and state as reported in **October 2003** (survey 2).

|        | All Students |          | All Disabled |          |
|--------|--------------|----------|--------------|----------|
|        | State        | District | State        | District |
| SLD    | 7%           | 4%       | 46%          | 24%      |
| EH/SED | 1%           | 1%       | 9%           | 6%       |
| EMH    | 1%           | 4%       | 7%           | 20%      |
| SI     | 2%           | 3%       | 14%          | 20%      |



**Jim Horne, Commissioner**

**Florida Department of Education  
Bureau of Exceptional Education and Student Services  
2004 Focused Monitoring**

**Districts Rank-Ordered on FCAT Participation for Students with Disabilities**  
(Survey 3 and Assessment Files; 2001-02)

The discrepancy between the district's participation rate and the state goal of 85% participation was determined for each grade level and subject area (4, 5, 8, and 10).

| District     | Total Discrep. | Rank |
|--------------|----------------|------|
| Madison      | -189.22        | 1    |
| Orange       | -117.39        | 2    |
| Hamilton     | -109.71        | 3    |
| Escambia     | -106.06        | 4    |
| DeSoto       | -104.10        | 5    |
| Washington   | -104.08        | 6    |
| Liberty      | -104.01        | 7    |
| Manatee      | -103.56        | 8    |
| Pasco        | -94.18         | 9    |
| Pinellas     | -90.93         | 10   |
| Gadsden      | -88.29         | 11   |
| Okeechobee   | -81.78         | 12   |
| Hernando     | -81.54         | 13   |
| Lee          | -80.93         | 14   |
| Palm Beach   | -80.88         | 15   |
| Hillsborough | -80.05         | 16   |
| Marion       | -73.88         | 17   |
| Highlands    | -70.82         | 18   |
| St. Lucie    | -70.61         | 19   |
| Citrus       | -69.39         | 20   |
| Leon         | -69.29         | 21   |
| Taylor       | -66.54         | 22   |
| Martin       | -66.04         | 23   |
| Monroe       | -65.34         | 24   |
| Okaloosa     | -62.57         | 25   |
| Lake         | -60.47         | 26   |
| Brevard      | -59.60         | 27   |
| Broward      | -59.33         | 28   |
| Franklin     | -58.86         | 29   |
| Sarasota     | -58.65         | 30   |
| Lafayette    | -58.08         | 31   |
| St. Johns    | -56.37         | 32   |
| Hardee       | -54.10         | 33   |
| Collier      | -53.66         | 34   |

| District       | Total Discrep. | Rank |
|----------------|----------------|------|
| Indian River   | -52.86         | 35   |
| Columbia       | -51.13         | 36   |
| Charlotte      | -50.52         | 37   |
| Duval          | -45.73         | 38   |
| Alachua        | -42.93         | 39   |
| Levy           | -41.94         | 40   |
| Bay            | -41.56         | 41   |
| Union          | -36.35         | 42   |
| Santa Rosa     | -34.55         | 43   |
| Miami Dade     | -33.14         | 44   |
| Osceola        | -31.21         | 45   |
| Baker          | -29.92         | 46   |
| Polk           | -26.95         | 47   |
| Dixie          | -26.22         | 48   |
| Wakulla        | -22.48         | 49   |
| Suwannee       | -21.89         | 50   |
| Hendry         | -21.20         | 51   |
| Volusia        | -20.99         | 52   |
| Seminole       | -17.18         | 53   |
| Jackson        | -13.72         | 54   |
| Holmes         | -12.79         | 55   |
| Flagler        | -7.96          | 56   |
| Clay           | -6.92          | 57   |
| Sumter         | -4.96          | 58   |
| Putnam         | -0.32          | 59   |
| Glades         | 12.22          | 60   |
| Nassau         | 13.10          | 61   |
| Walton         | 15.26          | 62   |
| Bradford       | 19.54          | 63   |
| Gilchrist      | 24.68          | 64   |
| Gulf           | 33.75          | 65   |
| Jefferson      | 35.14          | 66   |
| Calhoun        | 44.02          | 67   |
| District Total | -62.00         |      |



**APPENDIX B–ESE MONITORING TEAM MEMBERS**





**Hamilton County  
Focused Monitoring Visit  
March 29 – 31, 2004**

**ESE Monitoring Team Members**

**Department of Education Staff**

Michele Polland, Acting Chief, Bureau of Exceptional Education and Student Services

Eileen Amy, Administrator, ESE Program Administration and Quality Assurance

Kim Komisar, Program Director, ESE Program Administration and Quality Assurance

Gail Best, Program Specialist

Barbara McAnelly, Program Specialist

David Katcher, Program Specialist

**Peer Reviewers**

Ginny Chance, Santa Rosa District Schools

Joanie Mayer, Seminole District Schools

Mary Camp, Sumter District Schools

Maureen Guarino, Bay District Schools

Cathy Hedbawney, Jackson District Schools



## **APPENDIX C – SURVEY RESULTS**



## Hamilton Parent Survey Students with Disabilities

The Parent Survey was sent to parents of the 353 students with disabilities for whom complete addresses were provided by the district. A total of 27 parents (PK, n = 5; K-5, n = 9; 6-8, n = 6; 9 - 12, n = 7) representing 8% of the sample, returned the survey. 34 surveys were returned as undeliverable, representing 10% of the sample.

Teachers responded “always,” “most always,” “frequently,” “sometimes” “rarely” or “never” to each survey item. For the purposes of this report, responses of “always,” “almost always,” and “frequently” are combined for a single percentage representing an affirmative response.

### % Always, Almost Always, Frequently Combined

#### Overall, I am satisfied with:

- |   |    |
|---|----|
| • the way I am treated by school personnel.   | 92 |
| • the exceptional education services my child receives.   | 91 |
| • my child’s academic progress.   | 87 |
| • the level of knowledge and experience of school personnel.  | 84 |
| • the effect of exceptional student education on my child’s self-esteem.                            | 83 |
| • how quickly services are implemented following an IEP (Individualized Educational Plan) decision. | 81 |
| • the way special education teachers and regular education teachers work together.                  | 80 |
| • the amount of time my child spends with regular education students.                               | 70 |

#### My child:

- |   |    |
|---|----|
| • spends most of the school day involved in productive activities.        | 93 |
| • receives all the special education and related services on his/her IEP. | 89 |
| • has friends at school.  | 88 |
| • is happy at school.   | 81 |
| • is learning skills that will be useful later on in life.                | 78 |

#### At my child’s IEP meetings we have talked about:

- |   |    |
|---|----|
| • all of my child’s needs.  | 85 |
| • * which diploma my child may receive.                                 | 65 |
| • * the requirements for different diplomas.                            | 63 |
| • whether my child needed speech/language services.                     | 62 |
| • ways that my child could spend time with students in regular classes. | 52 |
| • whether my child needed transportation.                               | 52 |

**% Always, Almost Always,  
Frequently Combined**

- whether my child would take the FCAT (Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test). 41
- whether my child should get accommodations (special testing conditions), for example, extra time. 40
- whether my child needed physical and/or occupational therapy. 39
- whether my child needed services beyond the regular school year. 38
- whether my child needed psychological counseling services. 25

**My child's teachers:**

- are available to speak with me. 100
- set appropriate goals for my child. 91
- call me or send me notes about my child. 88
- expect my child to succeed. 83
- give students with disabilities extra time or different assignments, if needed. 83
- give homework that meets my child's needs. 48

**My child's school:**

- encourages acceptance of students with disabilities. 92
- sends me information written in a way I understand. 92
- addresses my child's individual needs. 88
- encourages me to participate in my child's education. 88
- makes sure I understand my child's IEP. 88
- does all it can to keep students from dropping out of school. 86
- involves students with disabilities in clubs, sports, or other activities. 85
- explains what I can do if I want to make changes to my child's IEP. 81
- sends me information about activities and workshops for parents. 80
- offers students with disabilities the classes they need to graduate with a standard diploma. 75
- informs me about all of the services available to my child. 73
- wants to hear my ideas. 72
- provides students with disabilities updated books and materials. 72
- informed me, beginning when my child turned 14, that one purpose of the IEP meeting was to discuss a plan for my child's transition out of high school. 50
- \* provides information to students about education and jobs after high school. 38
- \* offers a variety of vocational courses, such as computers and business technology. 29

**% Always, Almost Always,  
Frequently Combined**

**Parent Participation**

- I am comfortable talking about my child with school staff. 96
- I meet with my child's teachers to discuss my child's needs and progress. 96
- I have attended my child's IEP meetings. 89
- I participate in school activities with my child. 76
- I have heard about the Florida Diagnostic and Learning Resources System ("FDLRS") and the services they provide to families of children with disabilities. 67
- I attend meetings of organizations for parents of students with disabilities. 31
- I have used parent support services in my area. 27
- I attend meetings of the PTA/PTO. 23
- I attend School Advisory Committee meetings concerning school improvement. 20

\* Starred items are for parents of students in grades 8 and above.

**2004 Parent Survey Report  
Students Identified as Gifted  
Hamilton County**

Responding to the need to increase the involvement of parents and families of students identified as gifted in evaluating the educational services provided to their children, the Florida Department of Education, Bureau of Exceptional Education and Student Services contracted with the University of Miami to develop and administer a parent survey in conjunction with the Bureau's district monitoring activities.

The responses to the parent survey for students identified as gifted are statistically insufficient to report.



**2004 Teacher Survey Report  
Students with Disabilities  
Hamilton County**

In order to obtain the perspective of teachers who provide services to students with disabilities, the Florida Department of Education, Bureau of Exceptional Education and Student Services contracted with the University of Miami to develop and administer a teacher survey in conjunction with the Bureau's focused monitoring activities. The survey was administered for the first time during the 2002 monitoring year.

A total of 73 teacher surveys representing approximately 49% of ESE and general education teachers in the district were returned. Data are from 6 (100%) of the district's 6 schools.

Teachers responded "always," "most always," "frequently," "sometimes" "rarely" or "never" to each survey item. For the purposes of this report, responses of "always," "almost always," and "frequently" are combined for a single percentage representing an affirmative response.

**% Always, Almost  
Always, Frequently combined**

**To provide students with disabilities access to the general curriculum, my school:**

- places students with disabilities into general education classes whenever possible. 90
- ensures that students with disabilities feel comfortable when taking classes with general education students. 90
- modifies and adapts curriculum for students as needed. 90
- encourages collaboration among ESE teachers, GE teachers and service providers. 88
- addresses each student's individual needs. 85
- ensures that the general education curriculum is taught in ESE classes to the maximum extent possible. 83
- provides adequate support to GE teachers who teach students with disabilities. 71
- offers teachers professional development opportunities regarding curriculum and support for students with disabilities. 69

**To help students with disabilities who take the FCAT, my school:**

- provides teachers with FCAT test preparation materials. 89
- provides students with appropriate testing accommodations. 88
- aligns curriculum for students with the standards that are tested on the FCAT. 87
- gives students in ESE classes updated textbooks. 77

**To keep students with disabilities from dropping out, my school:**

- makes an effort to involve parents in their child's education. 93
- conducts ongoing assessments of individual students' performance. 93
- develops IEPs according to student needs. 92

**% Always, Almost  
Always, Frequently Combined**

- allows students to make up credits lost due to disability-related absences. 90
- ensures that classroom material is grade- and age-appropriate. 88
- provides positive behavioral supports. 87
- encourages participation of students with disabilities in extracurricular activities. 85
- ensures that classroom material is culturally appropriate. 84
- provides social skills training to students as needed. 83
- ensures that students are taught strategies to manage their behavior as needed. 81
- implements dropout prevention activities. 67

**The items below relate primarily to middle and high school students.  
If any items did not apply, respondents marked N/A. N/A responses varies from 14 to 23.**

**My school:**

- implements an IEP transition plan for each student. 100
- provides extra help to students who need to retake the FCAT. 98
- provides students with information about options after graduation. 98
- encourages students to aim for a standard diploma when appropriate. 96
- informs students through the IEP process of the different diploma options and their requirements. 93
- teaches transition skills for future employment and independent living. 93
- provides students with job training. 87
- coordinates on-the-job training with outside agencies. 85

**2004 Student Survey Report  
Students with Disabilities  
Hamilton County**

In order to obtain the perspective of students with disabilities who receive services from public school districts, the Florida Department of Education, Bureau of Exceptional Education and Student Services contracts with the University of Miami to develop and administer a student survey in conjunction with the Bureau's focused monitoring activities. The survey was administered for the first time during the 2002 monitoring year.

We received 49 surveys representing approximately 49% of students with disabilities in grades 9-12 in the district. Data are from 2 (67%) of the district's 3 schools with students in grades 9-12.

| <b>I am taking the following ESE classes:</b> | <b>% Yes</b> |
|---|--------------|
| • English                                     | 59           |
| • Math  | 53           |
| • Electives (physical education, art, music)  | 32           |
| • Vocational (woodshop, computers)            | 31           |
| • Science                                     | 27           |
| • Social Studies                              | 24           |

**At my school:**

|  |    |
|--|----|
| • ESE teachers give students extra time or different assignments, if needed. | 93 |
| • ESE teachers give students extra help, if needed.                          | 93 |
| • ESE teachers teach students in ways that help them learn.                  | 92 |
| • ESE teachers believe that ESE students can learn.                          | 85 |
| • ESE teachers teach students things that will be useful later on in life.   | 83 |
| • ESE teachers provide ESE students with updated books and materials.        | 71 |
| • ESE teachers understand ESE students' needs.                               | 70 |

**I am taking the following regular/mainstream classes:**

|  |    |
|--|----|
| • Electives (physical education, art, music) | 93 |
| • Vocational (woodshop, computers)           | 84 |
| • Social Studies                             | 69 |
| • Science                                    | 67 |
| • Math                                       | 45 |
| • English                                    | 34 |

| <b>At my school:</b>  | <b>% Yes</b> |
|---|--------------|
| • general education teachers provide students with updated books and materials.               | 79           |
| • general education teachers teach ESE students things that will be useful later on in life.  | 78           |
| • general education teachers believe that ESE students can learn.                             | 75           |
| • general education teachers give ESE students extra help if needed.                          | 74           |
| • general education teachers understand ESE students' needs.                                  | 70           |
| • general education teachers teach ESE students in ways that help them learn.                 | 70           |
| • general education teachers give ESE students extra time or different assignments if needed. | 67           |

**At my school, ESE students:**

|  |    |
|--|----|
| • get the help they need to do well in school.                           | 90 |
| • get work experience (on-the-job training) if they are interested.      | 90 |
| • can take vocational classes such as computers and business technology. | 88 |
| • are encouraged to stay in school.                                      | 86 |
| • are treated fairly by teachers and staff.                              | 85 |
| • participate in clubs, sports, and other activities.                    | 85 |
| • students fit in at school.   | 83 |
| • get information about education after high school.                     | 79 |
| • spend enough time with general education students.                     | 77 |

**Diploma Option**

|  |    |
|--|----|
| • I know the difference between a regular and a special diploma. | 91 |
| • I know what courses I have to take to get my diploma.          | 79 |
| • I agree with the type of diploma I am going to receive.        | 78 |
| • I will probably graduate with a regular diploma.               | 77 |
| • I had a say in the decision about which diploma I would get.   | 71 |

**IEP**

|   |    |
|---|----|
| • I attended my IEP meeting this year.  | 72 |
| • I was invited to attend my IEP meeting this year.   | 70 |
| • I had a say in the decision about which classes I would take.   | 67 |
| • I had a say in the decision about whether I need to take the FCAT or a different test.                | 40 |
| • I had a say in the decision about special testing conditions I might get for the FCAT or other tests. | 39 |

| <b>FCAT</b>  | <b>% Yes</b> |
|--|--------------|
| • I took the FCAT this year.   | 88           |
| • in my English/reading classes, we work on the kinds of skills that are tested on the reading part of the FCAT. | 84           |
| • teachers help ESE students prepare for the FCAT.   | 82           |
| • in my math classes, we work on the kinds of problems that are tested on the math part of the FCAT.             | 76           |
| • I received accommodations (special testing conditions) for the FCAT.   | 53           |



## **APPENDIX D—FORMS REVIEW**





**Hamilton County  
Focused Monitoring Report  
Forms Review**

This forms review was completed as a component of the focused monitoring visit conducted the week of March 29, 2004. The following district forms were compared to the requirements of applicable State Board of Education rules, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), and applicable sections of Part 300, Code of Federal Regulations. The review includes required revisions and recommended revisions based on programmatic or procedural issues and concerns. The results of the review are detailed below and list the applicable sources used for the review

**Parent Notification of Individual Educational Plan (IEP) Meeting**  
*Form Notice of Conference Form HCS 7026*  
**Title 34 of the Code of Federal Regulation Section 300.345**

This form contains the components for compliance.

**Individual Educational Plan (IEP) Meeting**  
*Form Individual Education Plan HCS 7005*  
**Title 34 of the Code of Federal Regulation Section 300.347**

This form contains the components for compliance.

**Informed Notice and Consent for Evaluation**  
*Form Informed Notice And Consent For Evaluation Form HCS 7020*  
**Title 34 of the Code of Federal Regulation Sections 300.503 and 300.505**

This form contains the components for compliance.

**Informed Notice and Consent for Reevaluation**  
*Form Parent Notice/Consent For Re-evaluation Form HCS 7021*  
**Title 34 of the Code of Federal Regulation Sections 300.503 and 300.505**

This form contains the components for compliance.

**Notice and Consent for Initial Placement**  
*Form Eligibility Determination And Staffing Form- Form HCS 7012*  
**Title 34 of the Code of Federal Regulation Sections 300.503 and 300.505**

This form contains the components for compliance.

**Notice of Change in Placement Form**  
*Form Informed Notice of Change In Educational Placement/FAPE Form HCS 7116*  
**Title 34 of the Code of Federal Regulation Sections 300.503 and 300.505**

This form contains the components for compliance.

**Notice of Change in FAPE**

**Form** *Informed Notice of Change In Educational Placement/FAPE Form HCS 7116*

**Title 34 of the Code of Federal Regulation Sections 300.503 and 300.505**

This form contains the components for compliance.

**Informed Notice of Refusal**

**Form** *Informed Notice of Refusal to Take a Specific Action Form HCS 7161*

**Title 34 of the Code of Federal Regulation Section 300.503**

This form contains the components for compliance.

**Notice of Dismissal**

**Form** *Eligibility Determination And Staffing Form- Form HCS 7012*

**Title 34 of the Code of Federal Regulation Sections 300.503 and 300.505**

This form contains the components for compliance.

**Notice of Ineligibility**

**Form** *Eligibility Determination And Staffing Form- Form HCS 7012*

**Title 34 of the Code of Federal Regulation Sections 300.503 and 300.505**

This form contains the components for compliance.

**Documentation of Staffing Form**

**Form** *Eligibility Determination And Staffing Form HCS 7020*

**Title 34 of the Code of Federal Regulation Sections 300.534, 300.503**

This form contains the components for compliance.

**Confidentiality of Information**

**Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act, Part 99 Title 34 of the Code of Federal Regulation Title 34 of the Code of Federal Regulation Section 300.503**

**The following must be addressed:**

- The notice states that a parent can challenge the records, but it does not say a parent can have the records amended or the procedures to do so.
- The notice does not state the right to consent to disclosure of personally identifiable information contained in the student's educational record.
- The notice does not inform the parent of the right to file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Education concerning alleged failures by the district to comply with the requirements of FERPA.

- The notice does not convey who constitutes a school official and what constitutes a legitimate educational interest.

**Educational Plan**

**Form** *Gifted Program Educational Plan (EP) Form HCS 7162*

This form contains the basic components for compliance.

It was noted that the district utilizes the procedural safeguards wording provided by the Bureau of Exceptional Education and Student Services.



**APPENDIX E—GLOSSARY OF ACRONYMS**



## Glossary of Acronyms

|        |  |
|--------|--|
| Bureau | Bureau of Exceptional Education and Student Services |
| CFR    | Code of Federal Regulations                          |
| DJJ    | Department of Juvenile Justice                       |
| DOE    | Department of Education                              |
| DVR    | Division of Vocational Rehabilitation                |
| EH     | Emotionally Handicapped                              |
| EP     | Educational Plan (for gifted students)               |
| ESE    | Exceptional Student Education                        |
| FAC    | Florida Administrative Code                          |
| FCAT   | Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test                |
| FDLRS  | Florida Diagnostic and Learning Resource Center      |
| FS     | Florida Statutes                                     |
| GE     | General Education                                    |
| GED    | General Educational Development                      |
| IDEA   | Individuals with Disabilities Education Act          |
| IEP    | Individual Educational Plan                          |
| LCCE   | Life Center Career Education                         |
| LEA    | Local Education Agency                               |
| PK     | Pre-kindergarten                                     |
| SED    | Severely Emotionally Disturbed                       |
| SLD    | Specific Learning Disabled                           |
| TABE   | Tests of Adult Basic Education                       |