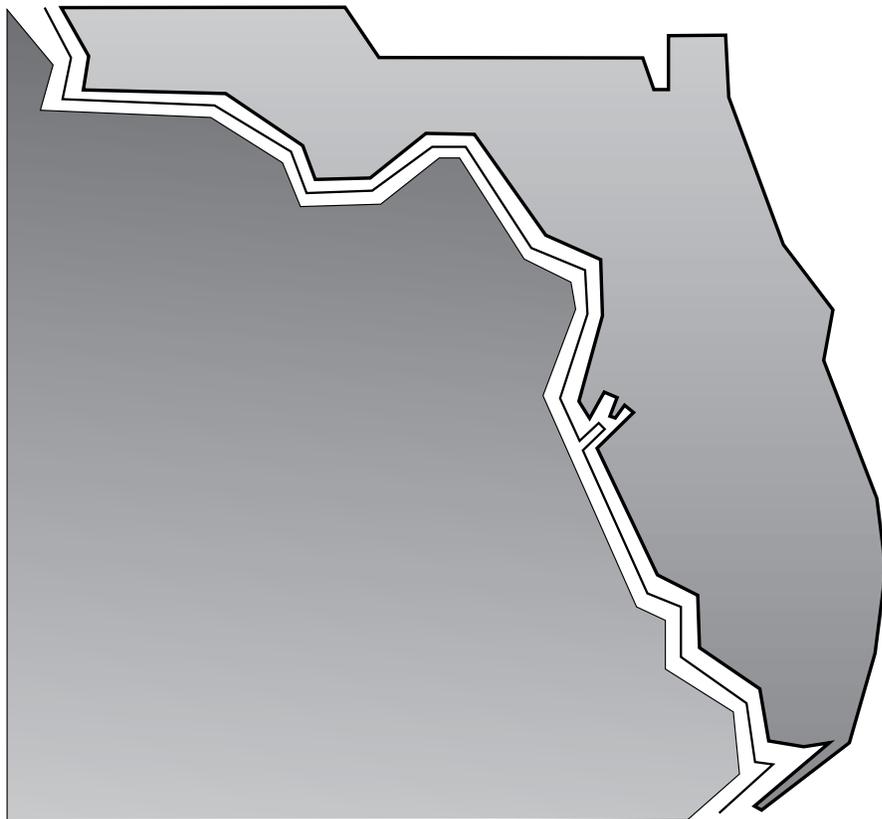


FINAL REPORT OF FOCUSED MONITORING OF  
EXCEPTIONAL STUDENT EDUCATION PROGRAMS IN

# **LIBERTY COUNTY**

AUGUST 25-27, 2004



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

This is one of many publications available through the Bureau of Exceptional Education and Student Services, Florida Department of Education, designed to assist school districts, state agencies which support educational programs, and parents in the provision of special programs. For additional information on this publication, or for a list of available publications, contact the Clearinghouse Information Center, Bureau of Exceptional Education and Student Services, Florida Department of Education, Room 628, Turlington Bldg., Tallahassee, Florida 32399-0400.

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July 12, 2005

Mr. David Summers, Superintendent  
Liberty County School District  
P.O. Box 429  
Bristol, Florida 32321-0429

Dear Superintendent Summers:

We are pleased to provide you with the Final Report of Focused Monitoring of Exceptional Student Education Programs in Liberty 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 August 25-27, 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 Sue Summers, 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 November 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 Summers  
July 12, 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 Liberty County.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Bambi J. Lockman". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name being the most prominent.

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

Enclosure

cc: Darrel Hayes, School Board Chairman  
Members of the School Board  
David House, School Board Attorney  
School Principals  
Sue Summers, ESE Director  
Eileen Amy  
Evy Friend  
Kim Komisar

**Liberty County Final Monitoring Report**  
**Focused Monitoring**  
**August 25 - 27, 2004**

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**Liberty County School District**  
**Focused Monitoring**  
**August 25 - 27, 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 August 23, 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 Liberty County Public Schools. Dr. Sue Summers, Exceptional Student Education Director of Procedures and Policy, 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. Liberty County was selected for monitoring on the basis of the percent of students with disabilities exiting with standard diplomas. 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, records and forms reviews, and supplemental compliance issues are reported.

## **Summary of Findings**

### **General Information**

Liberty County is a small, rural district with a relatively stable population. Six of the district's 22 students with disabilities who exited from high school in 2003 received standard diplomas by

meeting all graduation requirements and one graduated through the general education development (GED) exit option.

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

Students with disabilities in all schools visited had access to general education classes and general education curriculum. ESE teachers provide support to students with disabilities and their general education teachers to help ensure that the students are successful in the general curriculum. Remediation activities that target FCAT skills are provided to all students who need it through special instruction or classes during the school day as well as after school programs. More intensive ESE services are available for students whose need warrant placement in a more restrictive setting. There were no findings of noncompliance in this area.

### **Accommodations/Modifications**

A variety of accommodations are provided to students with disabilities in general education classrooms. While many of the accommodations are provided to almost all students, others specifically target individual student needs. For the student records reviewed on-site and in the classrooms observed, instructional and testing accommodations were provided to students with disabilities in general education classes, and students reported receiving adequate support. There were no findings of noncompliance in this area that the district will be required to address in its system improvement plan; however, recommendations related to the use of accommodations are provided in the *Recommendations and Technical Assistance* section of this report.

### **Decision-Making**

IEP teams review student performance and progress data from a variety of sources when making the diploma option decision, with some staff reporting use of the diploma option checklist produced by DOE. Staff and students report a strong commitment on the part of the district to encourage students to pursue a standard diploma, although the timeliness requirements under the IDEA and State Board of Education rules related to the provision of information regarding the student's course of study and diploma options are not consistently implemented. The district will be required to address this finding in its system improvement plan.

### **Staff Development**

School staff have been afforded opportunities to participate in multiple training activities relating to fostering the participation of students with disabilities in general education classes. While no staff members reported attending training related to decision-making for diploma options for students with disabilities, most staff reported that the district strongly supports having students pursue a standard diploma. There were no findings of noncompliance in this area.

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

District and school level staff reported that barriers to students with disabilities graduating with a standard diploma include: the rigor of the Florida Comprehensive Achievement Test (FCAT); the rigor of the specific courses, such as Algebra I; the rural nature of the community; and, parents' ambitions for their children.

### **Services to Gifted Students**

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**

Students at both Liberty Wilderness Crossroads Camp and Apalachicola Forest Youth Camp are provided self-paced instruction through a computerized curriculum, and are provided most instruction by a general education teacher. The criteria used for making diploma option decisions are unclear, but appear to be based on the facility the student is enrolled in rather than the individual strengths and needs of the student. Support services on some IEPs were not in evidence during classroom visits. General education teachers at Liberty Wilderness Crossroads Camp reported not participating in IEP team meetings. The district will be required to address these findings in its system improvement plan.

### **Student Record and Forms Reviews**

Systemic findings of noncompliance were noted in five components of the IEPs, with individual or non-systemic findings noted in 32 additional components. There were three findings related to matrix of services documents, representing a systemic concern at the Department of Juvenile Justice facilities. There were no findings related to EPs. All forms submitted included the required components. The district will be required to address targeted components of the IEP and matrix of services documents through its system improvement plan.

### **Additional Compliance**

There was evidence that the communication needs of students who are not eligible for programs for students who are speech or language impaired are addressed by the ESE teacher, at times in conjunction with informal consultation with the speech and language pathologist. Counseling, including psychological counseling, is readily available through multiple providers, although students receiving educationally relevant counseling do not routinely have the service documented as a related service on the IEP. Transition service agencies rarely are invited to transition IEP meetings in the district. Staff report that the district transition specialist provides all the necessary information; however, this information was not evident in the records reviewed. The district will be required to address the provision of counseling as a related service and agency participation in transition planning for students with disabilities in its system improvement plan.

### **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 monitoring plan. The format and shell contents 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 is a list of recommendations and technical assistance available to the district.



## Liberty 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.

Category	Findings	ESE	All	System Improvement Strategy	Evidence of Change (Including target date)
Access to General Curriculum	There were no findings of noncompliance in this area.				
Accommodations/ Modifications	There were no findings of noncompliance in this area.  Recommendations are included in the <i>Recommendations and Technical Assistance</i> section of the report.				
Decision-Making	Information regarding courses of study and diploma options is not always provided to families by eighth grade or age 14.	X		The district will be required to target this element in its training schedule, and to incorporate a method to document discussion of the diploma decision. District and/or school staff will conduct periodic self-assessments via this	The district will report the number of staff attending training on diploma option decision-making.  District report of self-assessment reveals evidence of IEP team participation in the decision-making process

Category	Findings	ESE	All	System Improvement Strategy	Evidence of Change (Including target date)
Decision-Making (continued)				documentation.	regarding diploma options.  December 2005 May 2006
Staff Development	There were no findings of noncompliance in this area.				
Gifted Services	A very small number of students currently are participating in the program for students who are gifted.		X	The district will continue to address this issue through its continuous improvement monitoring plan for gifted students.	The district will continue to provide semiannual reports of progress.
Department of Juvenile Justice	The criteria used for making diploma option decisions are unclear, but appear to be based on the facility the student is enrolled in rather than the individual strengths and needs of the student.	X		The district will conduct a review of IEPs at Liberty Wilderness Crossroads Camp and at Apalachicola Forest Youth Camp to determine if the decisions regarding student course of study and diploma option reflect the abilities and interests of the students. For those records in which this is not clearly indicated the IEP teams must reconvene to review the decision.	District report of self-assessment indicates that appropriate course of study and diploma option decisions in 100% of records reviewed.  December 2005 May 2006
	Support services on some IEPs were not in evidence during classroom visits.	X		District and facility staff will review the IEPs at these facilities to determine if all supports and services are being provided as required by the IEP.	District report of self-assessment indicates that 100% of IEPs are implemented fully.

Category	Findings	ESE	All	System Improvement Strategy	Evidence of Change (Including target date)
Department of Juvenile Justice (continued)					December 2005 May 2006
	General education teachers at Liberty Wilderness Crossroads Camp reported not participating in IEP team meetings.		X	Training on the role of the general education teacher in IEP development will be provided to facilities staff, and the district will conduct periodic self-assessments to ensure that at least one general education teacher of the attends all IEP team meetings.	District report of self-assessment indicates that at least one general education teacher of the student attends the IEP team meeting for a student who is or who is expected to spend at least part of the day in the general education classroom with nondisabled peers.  December 2005 May 2006
	Findings related to the matrix of services documents at these sites are included under the <i>Records Review</i> section.	X			
Additional Compliance	Communication: Communication needs of the student are not routinely documented on the IEP.	X		The district will target this element in its training on IEP development and conduct a self-evaluation using protocols developed by the Bureau to ensure compliance.	District report of self-assessment reveals compliance in targeted area for 100% of IEPs reviewed.  December 2005 May 2006.
	Counseling as a Related Service: Counseling services provided to students with disabilities as a related service are not routinely documented on the IEP.	X		District staff will review the IEPs of students with disabilities who are being provided counseling to determine if it is included as	District report of self-assessment reveals compliance in targeted areas for 100% of IEPs reviewed.

Category	Findings	ESE	All	System Improvement Strategy	Evidence of Change (Including target date)
Additional Compliance (continued)				<p>a related service. If not, staff will determine if the student was referred based on educationally relevant concerns or for other reasons, and IEP teams will reconvene to address educationally relevant counseling as a related services when this need is indicated.</p> <p>Decision-making regarding the provision of counseling as a related service, including psychological counseling, will be incorporated into existing IEP training opportunities.</p> <p>District and/or school staff will conduct a self-evaluation using protocols developed by the Bureau to ensure compliance.</p>	December 2005 May 2006.
	Transition: Transition service agencies are not routinely invited to transition IEP team meetings. There is no evidence of information from transition agencies being provided when agencies are unavailable to	X		The district will be required to ensure transition agencies are invited to transition IEP meetings as appropriate, and document information provided when unavailable to attend.	District report of self-assessment reveals compliance in targeted areas for 100% of IEPs reviewed.  June 2005 June 2006.

Category	Findings	ESE	All	System Improvement Strategy	Evidence of Change (Including target date)
Additional Compliance (continued)	participate in transition IEP team meetings.			District and/or school staff will conduct a self-evaluation using protocols developed by the Bureau to ensure compliance.	
Records Review	<p>Four IEPs were required to be reconvened due to a lack of a majority of measurable annual goals.</p> <p>Systemic findings were made in the following areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• inadequate description of the extent of participation with nondisabled peers</li> <li>• lack of documentation reports of progress was provided as often as nondisabled</li> <li>• short term objectives lacked measurement and benchmarks lacked time frames</li> <li>• reports of progress lacked description of progress toward annual goal(s) and a statement of the degree to which that progress is sufficient to meet the annual goal(s)</li> </ul> <p>Individual or non-systemic</p>	X		<p>The IEP teams for the identified students were reconvened to develop measurable annuals goals.</p> <p>The identified noncompliant elements will be targeted in the district's IEP training.</p> <p>Pre-and post- training surveys will be conducted to determine perceived effectiveness of the training.</p> <p>Using protocols developed by the Bureau, school and/or district staff will conduct compliance reviews of a random sample of 15 IEPs developed by staff who participated in the training session</p>	<p>Documentation of the reconvened IEPs was submitted to the Bureau prior to the dissemination of this report.</p> <p>District report of self-assessment reveals compliance with all targeted elements for 100% of IEPs reviewed.</p> <p>December 2005 May 2006</p>

Category	Findings	ESE	All	System Improvement Strategy	Evidence of Change (Including target date)
Forms Review (continued)	findings were noted in 32 additional areas.				
	There were three findings related to matrix of services documents.	X		Using protocols developed by the Bureau, district staff will conduct reviews of two IEPs per school for students reported through the FEFP at the 254 or 255 level of funding (first and last record from alphabetical list of 254/255 records). For students whose IEPs do not support the services on the matrix or for whom the services are not in evidence, the district will submit an amendment to the Automated Student Information System database for the open window of correction.	Results of the matrix review must be submitted by the district with its report of progress.  May 2005
Forms Review	There were no findings of noncompliance in this area.				

## **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 uses 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) (Survey 9)
- dropout rate for students with disabilities (Survey 5)
- percentage of students with disabilities exiting with a standard diploma (Survey 5)

- participation in statewide assessments by students with disabilities (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 is compiled into an annual data profile for each district (LEA Profile). The 2004 LEA profiles for all Florida school districts are available on the web at <http://www.firn.edu/doe/commhome/datapage.htm>.

In making the decision to include Liberty County in this year's focused monitoring visits, Bureau staff reviewed data related to the percentage of students with disabilities exiting with a standard diploma from survey 5. This review indicated that Liberty County's rate of 32% approached the lowest rate of graduation with a standard diploma for students with disabilities for all districts in the state. Liberty County School District's current 2004 LEA profile and the 2003 listing of districts rank-ordered on standard diploma rate for students with disabilities, which was used for district selection, are included in this report as appendix A.

### **Sources of Information**

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

The Bureau conducted the on-site focused monitoring visit from August 25-27, 2004. Five Bureau staff members and one peer monitor conducted site-visits to the following four schools:

- Liberty County High School
- W. R. Tolar School (K-8)
- Liberty Wilderness Camp (Department of Juvenile Justice)
- Apalachicola Forest Youth Camp (Department of Children and Families)

Peer monitors are exceptional student education personnel from other school districts who are trained to assist with the DOE's monitoring activities. A listing of all participating monitors is provided as 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 23 interviews with the following district- and school-level staff: three district staff, six school-based administrators and/or guidance counselors, six ESE teachers, and eight general education teachers.

#### **Focus Group Interviews**

Focus groups for students are conducted by Department of Education staff to gather information related to students graduating with a standard diploma. 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 Liberty 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 identified as characteristic of students who may have the cognitive ability to graduate with a standard diploma but who are pursuing a special diploma. 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. Four in-depth case studies were conducted in Liberty 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 nine ESE and general education classrooms were visited during the focused monitoring visit in Liberty County.

### ***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 other service providers, and students with disabilities in grades 9-12. Results of the surveys are discussed in the body of this report. Data from each of the surveys are included as appendix C. For the purposes of this report, responses of "always," "almost always," and "frequently" are combined into a single affirmative response.

### ***Parent Surveys***

Surveys are mailed to parents of students with disabilities and parents of students identified as gifted. The survey sent to parents is printed in English, Spanish, and Haitian Creole, where applicable. It includes a cover letter, and a postage paid reply envelope. A total of 343 surveys for parents of students with disabilities and one survey for the parent of the single student identified as gifted at the time of the survey administration were mailed. Responses were received from 26 (8%) of the parents of students with disabilities (PK, n = 6; K-5, n = 6; 6-8, n = 4; 9 - 12, n = 10). Forty-four surveys were returned as undeliverable, representing 13% of the sample. Parents represented the following students with disabilities: educable mentally handicapped, speech impaired, emotionally handicapped, specific learning disabled, and severely emotionally disturbed.

### ***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. All teachers and other service providers, both general education and ESE, were provided an opportunity to respond. The Bureau received 79 responses, representing 81% of general education and ESE service providers in the district. Data are from six of the district's eight schools or other educational facilities (75%).

### ***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 judgment is used to determine appropriate participants. Surveys were completed by 51 students, representing 42% of the students with disabilities in grades 9-12. Data are from 1 (25%) of the district's four schools with students in grades 9-12 (note: one of the four is a traditional high school; the remaining are very small alternative programs).

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

Prior to the on-site monitoring visit, Bureau staff conducts a compliance review of student records that are randomly selected from the population of exceptional students. The record of at least one student reported for funding through the Florida Education Finance Program (FEFP) at a matrix of services level of 254 or 255 may be reviewed at each school during the on-site visit, if available. In addition to the compliance reviews, selected student records are reviewed at the school site in conjunction with student case studies and classroom visits. In Liberty County, 25 IEPs and one educational plan (EP) were reviewed for compliance prior to the visit, and 35 IEPs were reviewed on-site, including seven matrix of services documents for students reported for funding at the 254 or 255 level. A total of 61 student records from 6 schools in Liberty County were reviewed.

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

## **Reporting Process**

### **Interim Reports**

Daily debriefing sessions are conducted by the monitoring team members in order to review findings, as well as to determine if there is a need to address additional issues or visit additional sites. Preliminary findings and concerns are shared with the ESE director and/or designee with the monitoring team leader during the monitoring visit. In addition, the district ESE director is invited to attend the final team debriefing with Bureau staff and peer monitors. During the course of these activities, suggestions for interventions or strategies to be incorporated into the district's system improvement plan may be proposed. Within two weeks of the visit, Bureau administrative staff conduct a telephone conference with the ESE director to review 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 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. Other 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 and approval. 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. 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 form reviews 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:

- general information
- access to the general curriculum
- accommodations/modifications
- decision-making
- staff development
- stakeholder opinion related to the indicator

In accordance with the Department's agreement with the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP), additional areas addressed during all monitoring visits include the following:

- the provision of counseling as a related service
- the communication needs of students with disabilities not eligible for programs for students who are speech or language impaired
- school to post-school transition

Information related to services for gifted students, services to students in Department of Juvenile Justice facilities (DJJ), and the results of records and forms reviews also 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 section provides information related to demographic and background information specific to the district as well as other influences that may impact the rate of students with disabilities graduating with a standard diploma. Based on the 2004 LEA profile, Liberty County School District has a total school population (PK-12) of 1,404 with 28% of students being identified as students with disabilities, 8% identified as only speech impaired, and <1% identified as gifted. Liberty County is considered a "small" district and is comprised of two combination K-8 schools, one high school, one alternative school, one pre-K center, one county-operated DJJ

facility, one contracted DJJ facility, and one Department of Children and Families residential facility. Liberty County is a relatively stable community, and staff reported that most of the students' parents grew up in the community and attended the same schools as their children.

Six of the district's 22 students with disabilities who exited from high school in 2003 received standard diplomas by meeting all graduation requirements and one graduated through the general education development (GED) exit option (student passed the FCAT and passed the GED exam).

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

This section provides information related to the types of settings and curriculum available to students with disabilities and the effectiveness or quality of instruction. 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 diploma options. Lack of access to the general curriculum could negatively impact the rate of students who graduate with a standard diploma.

A continuum of service delivery models is available in the school district. District and school staff reported that to the greatest extent possible all students with disabilities are included in the general curriculum through enrollment in general education classes. Support is available for the students and their general education teachers from ESE teachers. Focus group interviews, class visits and student case study reviews supported the respondents' statements that the district strongly supports inclusive environments. This is supported by data from the district's 2004 LEA profile, which indicates that 70% of students with disabilities are served in regular class placement (80% or more of the school day in general education classes), compared with 52% for the enrollment group and 50% for the state.

Survey results indicated that 88% of parents who responded were satisfied with the amount of time their children spend with nondisabled peers. Results of the teacher survey indicated that 97% of respondents believe their school places students with disabilities in general education classes whenever possible, 95% believe their school addresses each student's individual needs, and 92% believe their school ensures that students with disabilities feel comfortable when taking classes with general education students. Seventy-seven percent of the teachers who responded reported that their schools provide adequate support to general education teachers who teach students with disabilities. Of the students who responded to the student survey, all reported that they can take vocational classes and that they participate in clubs, sports, and other activities. Ninety-two percent reported spending enough time with general education students.

At both Liberty High School and Tolar Elementary/Middle School ESE teachers' schedules included co-teaching, inclusion support, and pull out classes for intensive remediation (e.g., learning strategies class). A separate class setting (more than 60% of the day outside of the general education setting) is available for students with significant cognitive impairments. Students in this class are included in general education classes to the extent possible.

All district and school staff reported that students with disabilities have access to intensive reading and math classes that provide remediation in the Sunshine State Standards. Tolar Elementary/Middle School students are provided with after-school tutoring on FCAT skills in addition to the intensive remediation available during the school day. Liberty High School students scoring level 2 or lower on the FCAT in math or reading are placed in intensive classes in the respective subjects. Students in the focus groups reported that participating in weekly FCAT preparation activities throughout the year, with daily activities during the month prior to FCAT testing. Ninety-four percent of the student survey respondents reported that their teachers worked on FCAT reading and 91% reported working on FCAT math skills. Additionally, 90% of the teacher survey respondents reported aligning their curriculum with the standards that are tested on the FCAT.

In summary, students with disabilities in all schools visited have access to general education classes and general education curriculum. ESE teachers provide support to students with disabilities and their general education teachers to help ensure that the students are successful in the general curriculum. Remediation activities that target FCAT skills are provided to all students who need it through special instruction or classes during the school day as well as after school programs. More intensive ESE services are available for students whose need warrant placement in a more restrictive setting. There were no findings of noncompliance in this area that the district will be required to address in its system improvement plan.

### **Accommodations/Modifications**

This section provides information related to the accommodations, modifications and supports available to students with disabilities in general education classes in order for them to be successful. In accordance with 34 CFR §300.347(a)(3), the IEP for a student with a disability must include "...a statement of the special education and related services and supplementary aids and services to be provided the child or on behalf of the child, and a statement of the program modifications or supports for school personnel that will be provided for the child (i) to advance appropriately toward attaining the annual goals; (ii) to be involved and progress in the general curriculum...; and (iii) to be educated and participate with other children with disabilities and nondisabled children..." Lack of necessary accommodations, modifications, and supports will affect student performance in the classroom as well as overall achievement. This in turn may negatively impact the likelihood of a student with a disability earning a standard diploma.

There was evidence of the use of a variety of instructional and assessment accommodations in general education classes at both Liberty High School and Tolar Elementary/Middle School. All general education staff interviewed reported providing extra time for assignments and tests within their classroom, and most of the records reviewed reflected the same accommodations for all students. In contrast to the records, individualization of accommodations was observed during classroom visits and was described in more detail during interviews. Three of the eight general education teachers interviewed reported using technology such as Alpha Smarts and PowerPoint presentations to assist students with disabilities in the area of note-taking. Other accommodations mentioned included books on tape, computer labs, colored overlays and peer tutors. One general education teacher and one administrator mentioned the use of modified grading scales for some students. Focus group interviews and class visits confirmed the use of accommodations in the classroom.

Regarding the supports they receive in school, 100% of the students who responded to the survey reported that they get the help they need to do well in school; 94% reported that general education teachers believe that ESE students can learn; 81% reported that general education teachers teach ESE students in ways that help them learn; 74% indicated that they received accommodations for the FCAT, and, 70% reported that general education teachers give ESE students extra time or different assignments if needed.

While 68% of parents reported that the school addresses their child's individual needs, 95% of teachers reported this. Sixty-three percent of parents reported that teachers give students with disabilities extra time or different assignments, if needed; in contrast, 92% of teachers reported that their school provides students with appropriate testing accommodation and modifies or adapts curriculum for students as needed. Fifty-seven percent of the parents who responded to the survey reported that the IEP team discussed whether their child should get accommodations, although it should be noted that only 77% reported attending their child's IEP meeting.

In summary, there was evidence that a variety of accommodations are provided to students with disabilities in general education classrooms. While many of the accommodations are provided to almost all students, others specifically target individual student needs. For the student records reviewed on-site and in the classrooms observed, instructional and testing accommodations were provided to students with disabilities in general education classes, and students reported receiving adequate support. There were no findings of noncompliance in this area that the district will be required to address in its system improvement plan; however, recommendations related to the use of accommodations are provided in the *Recommendations and Technical Assistance* section of this report.

### **Decision-Making**

This section provides information related to the process by which the diploma option decisions for students with disabilities are made. In accordance with 34 CFR 300.347(b)(1), the IEP "...for each student with a disability beginning at age 14 (or younger, if determined appropriate by the IEP team), and updated annually, [must include] a statement of the transition service needs of the student under the applicable components of the student's IEP that focuses on the student's courses of study (such as participation in advanced-placement courses or a vocational education program)..." Rule 6A-1.0996(2)(a), Florida Administrative Code (FAC) prescribes the requirements for graduation for students with disabilities and requires, "The individual educational plan (IEP) committee shall document whether the student is pursuing a course of study leading toward a Standard or Special Diploma on the IEP developed during the student's eighth grade year, or the IEP developed during the school year of the student's fourteenth birthday, whichever occurs first. This decision shall be reviewed annually."

Interviews with district and school staff provided conflicting information regarding how diploma option decisions are made, but were consistent in reporting that the standard diploma option is always the first option considered. This information was confirmed by on-site record reviews of ninth grade students. Of the seventeen ninth grade students with disabilities enrolled at Liberty High School, the IEPs of fourteen indicate that they are pursuing a standard diploma.

District staff reported using the checklist developed by the DOE to assist IEP teams in making diploma option decisions, although this was not consistently reported at the school level. Data used when making diploma option decisions include: grades and other information related to the student's performance; FCAT results; other available test information; and, the wishes of both the student and the parents. Staff reported that the district has a strong commitment to having as many students as possible pursue a standard diploma, and that as a result a formal discussion of course of study and diploma options may not take place at the time the student reaches age fourteen or the eighth grade. For some students, the student is automatically considered to be pursuing a course of study leading to a standard diploma, unless and until such time as the student experiences difficulty in general education classes in the high school. While the intent of this practice is a positive one (i.e., to encourage students to pursue a standard diploma), it does not comply precisely with the requirement that this be a decision made by the entire IEP team; rather, it is the default decision determined by school staff. Sixty-four percent of the parents who responded survey reported discussing diploma options at the IEP meeting and 54% reported talking about the requirements of the different diploma options.

Of the students who responded to the survey, 96% reported they agree with the diploma they are going to receive and 94% reported they know the difference between a standard diploma and a special diploma. Of the teachers who responded to the survey, 96% reported that their school encourages students to aim for a standard diploma and 94% reported that they inform students through the IEP process of the different diploma options and requirements. The district's commitment to encouraging students to pursue a standard diploma is commendable, but there is a concern that all requirements related to initiating this decision-making process with families beginning when the student turns 14 or during the eighth grade year are not being met.

In summary, IEP teams review student performance and progress data from a variety of sources when making the diploma option decision, with some staff reporting use of the diploma option checklist produced by DOE. Staff and students report a strong commitment on the part of the district to encourage students to pursue a standard diploma, although the timeliness requirements under the IDEA and State Board of Education rules related to the provision of information regarding the student's course of study and diploma options are not consistently implemented. The district will be required to address this finding in its system improvement plan.

### **Staff Development**

This category refers to any staff development activities that directly or indirectly target factors that promote students with disabilities pursuing a course of study leading to a standard diploma and obtaining that diploma. Interviews with district and school staff indicated that a wide variety of staff development opportunities are available regarding effective instruction and remediation of students with disabilities and other students who struggle to pass the FCAT. These staff development activities are clearly related to the students' ability to meet standard diploma requirements (e.g., grade point average; credits earned; passing the FCAT). None of the teachers reported receiving or knowing about training related to making a diploma option decision, although it was consistently reported that a standard diploma is the "default" option unless the student encounters significant difficulties.

Of the teachers who responded to the survey, 73% reported the district offers professional development opportunities regarding curriculum support for student with disabilities. This was supported through on-site interviews with general education teachers. Four general education teachers interviewed (50%) reported participating in training on the use of instructional accommodations and modifications. Five additional administrative and instructional staff reported receiving training in differentiated curriculum and instruction. The Panhandle Area Education Cooperative (PAEC) was frequently cited as a primary provider of staff development. In addition, teachers and school administrators reported that ESE teachers often conduct workshops for their general education peers on specific issues related to serving students with disabilities during faculty meetings.

In summary, school staff have been afforded opportunities to participate in multiple training activities relating to fostering the participation of students with disabilities in general education classes. While no staff members reported attending training related to decision-making for diploma options for students with disabilities, most staff reported that the district strongly supports having students pursue a standard diploma.

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

This category refers to respondents' views on issues directly related to the number of ESE students graduating with a standard diploma. When asked their opinion on the likely contributors to the relatively low standard diploma rate for students with disabilities in Liberty County, the following factors were cited:

- the rigor of the FCAT
- the rigor of specific courses, such as Algebra I
- the rural nature of the community
- parents' ambitions for their children (i.e., staff reported that school staff often have different expectations and ambitions for the students than the parents do)

### **Services to Gifted Students**

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 Liberty County gifted program currently is 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 in the past year from one gifted student to eight gifted students. These students are provided gifted services through Odyssey of the Mind activities conducted on weekends. Staff reported that the decision to provide this on weekends rather than during the school week was made with input from the families, and that it was the result of the parents of gifted students not wishing to have their children "pulled out" of general classes for gifted services.

Referrals for evaluation for the gifted program are made by parents, teachers, and administrators. Due to the low identification rate of gifted students in the district, the district has targeted increasing the referral rate for its continuous improvement plan. The district ESE administrator

reported that all supports and services available to students with disabilities are available to gifted students. A teacher with the gifted endorsement has been hired and the Institute for Small and Rural Districts (ISRD) has assisted in the support of the teacher.

In summary, the district has a limited number of students identified as gifted. Those students currently are served through a weekend Odyssey of the Mind program, at parent request. The district's continuous improvement plan targets increasing participation in the gifted program.

### **Services to ESE Students in Department of Juvenile Justice Facilities**

This section provides information related to the services provided to exceptional education students in Department of Juvenile Justice (DJJ) facilities. 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. Liberty County has two DJJ facilities, one operated by the district and one operated through a contract with another entity. In addition, there is a Department of Children and Families facility that operates under the DJJ facility guidelines. Site-visits were conducted to Liberty Wilderness Crossroads Camp (LWCC), the contracted DJJ facility, and Apalachicola Forest Youth Camp (AFYC), the DCF facility adjacent to the DJJ facility that is operated by the same contractor. The average length of stay for both facilities is seven and one half months.

At both facilities students may pursue a standard diploma, a general education development (GED) diploma, or a special diploma. The ESE teacher who provides services for both facilities reported that all students at LWCC are pursuing standard diplomas and they receive instruction by working at their own pace through the PLATO software computer lab. In contrast, all students at AFYC are pursuing special diplomas and also are working at their own pace through the PLATO software computer lab. It was unclear in what way or to what degree the performance of the students in the two programs differed, or what factors were considered when making decisions regarding course of study and diploma option. General education staff reported using intelligence test scores and classroom testing as the basis for making decisions regarding diploma options, while the ESE teacher reported the team generally honors the diploma option on the IEP from the sending school or program.

Vocational experiences in welding, construction, small engine repair, and horticulture are available to all students at LWCC. No vocational experience options are available at AFYC. General education teachers and the ESE teacher reported all accommodations on the IEP are provided by the ESE teacher. General education teachers monitor the students with disabilities in their classes and meet with the ESE teacher monthly. Records reviews indicated numerous ESE services in the general education classroom; these services were not in evidence during the site visit.

The general education teachers at LWCC reported that they do not participate in IEP meetings. The general education teachers at AFYC reported that they participate on the treatment team meeting when students first arrive and then again when the IEP has been drafted by the ESE teacher and is presented to the team. The team discusses the draft and it is finalized. The ESE teacher reported that the treatment team meets to discuss options with her and that a point system and counseling are in place for all students.

All staff at AFYC reported that no students participate in FCAT and utilize the Life Centered Career Education (LCCE) curriculum as the alternate assessment. All staff at LWCC reported that all students participate in the FCAT with accommodations.

In summary, students at both Liberty Wilderness Crossroads Camp and Apalachicola Forest Youth Camp are provided self-paced instruction through a computerized curriculum, and are provided most instruction by a general education teacher. The criteria used for making diploma option decisions are unclear, but appear to be based on the facility the student is enrolled in rather than the individual strengths and needs of the student. Support services on some IEPs were not in evidence during classroom visits. General education teachers at Liberty Wilderness Crossroads Camp reported not participating in IEP team meetings. The district will be required to address these findings in its system improvement plan.

### **Additional Compliance Areas**

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 to students with disabilities who have communication needs, the provision of counseling as a related service, including psychological counseling, and transition services. Through interviews and record reviews, there was evidence that the communication needs of students who are not eligible for the speech and language impaired programs are addressed through classroom activities conducted by the ESE teachers, at times in consultation with the speech/language pathologist; staff reported that this may or may not be documented through goals and objectives on the IEP. Of the 19 records reviewed, there was evidence of a communication need for one student who was not identified as eligible for the programs for students who are speech impaired or language impaired; that student had communication goals and objectives on the IEP. In accordance with existing state policy, such speech and language services are not documented as related services on the IEP,

A wide range of counseling services, including psychological counseling, are available for students with disabilities through the school district. Counseling is provided by the guidance counselor; the district psychologist; Twin Oaks, a contracted service provider; as well as through interns from the Florida State University (FSU) Psychology Department operating under supervision. It was reported that educationally relevant counseling often is provided to students but is not included on the IEP as a related service. The district will be required to address this in its system improvement plan. Of ten records reviewed that indicated a perceived need for counseling services to be considered, four included counseling as a related service (40%). It should be noted that a perceived need for counseling reflects a subjective perception of the reviewer, and indicates only the counseling should be considered, not that it is clearly indicated as a need.

A transition specialist is employed by Liberty County School District to assist with the transition needs of students within a rural county. For the six records of the students age sixteen or older no notice of conference had an outside agency invited. Staff interviewed reported the district transition specialist is responsible for relaying all pertinent information related to outside

agencies, although there was no documentation of information being provided in the records reviewed.

In summary, there was evidence that the communication needs of students who are not eligible for programs for students who are speech or language impaired are addressed by the ESE teacher, at times with informal consultation with the speech and language pathologist. Counseling, including psychological counseling, is readily available through multiple providers, although students receiving educationally relevant counseling do not routinely have the service documented as a related service on the IEP. Transition service agencies rarely are invited to transition IEP meetings in the district. Staff report that the district transition specialist provides all the necessary information; however, this information was not evident in the records reviewed. The district will be required to address the provision of counseling as a related service and agency participation in transition planning for students with disabilities.

### **Student Record Reviews**

This section provides information related to the compliance of IEPs with state and federal requirements. A total of 27 student records randomly selected from the population of exceptional students in Liberty County were reviewed for compliance. Twenty records were sent to the DOE for review by Bureau staff prior to the on-site visit, and seven were reviewed on-site. The review included 19 IEPs for students with disabilities, one EP for a student identified as gifted, and seven matrix of services documents for students with disabilities reported through the Florida Educational Finance Program (FEFP) at the 254 or 255 levels. The sample group included records of elementary, middle, and high school students. Nine of the records reviewed were transition IEPs.

Four of the 19 IEPs reviewed required reconvening of the IEP team due to a more than 50% of the goals being not measurable. There was one finding of noncompliance that resulted in an adjustment of federal funds (i.e., lack of parental consent prior to administering assessments during a reevaluation). The district was notified of the specific student records for these findings in a letter dated on September 20, 2004.

Systemic findings are those that occur at a sufficient enough frequency (at least 25% of the records) that the monitoring team could reasonably infer a system-wide problem. For Liberty County's sampling, this represented at least seven IEPs. During the review of IEPs, the following area of noncompliance was determined to be systemic in nature:

- inadequate description of the extent of participation with nondisabled peers (15)
- lack of documentation report of progress was provided as often as nondisabled (15)
- short term objectives lacked measurement and benchmarks lacked time frames (14)
- reports of progress lacked description of progress toward annual goal(s) (10) and a statement of the degree to which that progress is sufficient to meet the annual goal(s) (10)

In addition, of the 19 IEPs reviewed, there were individual or non-systemic findings of noncompliance in the following areas:

- lack of an outside agency invited to the transition IEP meeting (6)
- inadequate present level of educational performance statements (5)
- reports of progress not provided (5)

- for transition service areas not currently in need, lack of a statement to that effect (5)
- lack of statement or insufficient statement of disability to indicate affect on participation in general education (4)
- lack of measurable goals (4)
- lack of a separate and distinct notice for transfer of rights (3)
- lack of evidence of participation of the interpreter of instructional implications on the IEP team (2)
- lack of student participation in or input into the IEP meeting (2)
- present level statement, annual goal and short term objectives do not support the services on the IEP (2)
- lack of results of performance on district or statewide assessments (2)
- lack of annual determination of student's diploma option (2)
- lack of documentation parent was provided a copy of the IEP (1)
- lack of documentation of a second attempt for the parent notice (1)
- special education teacher signature representing more than two entities on the IEP (1)
- lack of correspondence between the annual goal, short term objectives and present level statement (1)
- lack of statement of progress toward annual goals (1)
- lack of concerns of the parents considered at IEP meetings (1)
- lack of results of performance of recent or initial evaluation data (1)
- lack of consideration of the need for student utilizing assistive technology (1)
- lack of justification for extended school year services (1)
- lack of transition course of study statement at age 14 (1)
- lack of student attendance and preferences taken into account at Transition IEP development (1)
- lack of agency participation and documentation of steps to obtain information for transition IEP development (1)
- lack of notice for reevaluation meeting (1)
- lack of parent input for reevaluation determinations (1)
- lack of written consent for additional reevaluation testing (1)

During the site visit, seven matrix of services documents for students reported at the 254 or 255 funding level were reviewed for compliance. For the two matrix documents reviewed as AFYC, the IEPs did not support the matrix and the services were not in evidence in the classroom. For a third record, the matrix on file with the current IEP indicated the student should be reported at the 251 level, although the student was reported at the time at the 254 level. The district will be required to correct the data for those students through the Automated Student Information System database for surveys 1 and 2 for the 2004-05 school year. The names and student numbers of the students for whom data must be corrected were provided in the aforementioned letter.

These findings represent a systemic finding at AFYC, and the district is required to conduct a review of IEPs and matrices of services of students enrolled in each of its DJJ facilities to determine if the IEPs and matrices of services have been developed to address the individual needs of the students, and that only those services funded by the district are reported. Work papers provided by the district will be used to conduct the review. The district must develop and

implement a plan to ensure that IEPs and matrix of services documents for students in its DJJ facilities are developed in accordance with all state requirements.

As a result of concerns regarding the accuracy of the placement and course information on IEPs reviewed through case studies, an additional 36 records were reviewed during the site visit. For eight of the records, the location of ESE services on the IEP conflicted with the students' class schedules (22%). For example, one student's IEP indicated specially designed instruction provided through "intensive instruction in the general education class." This student's class schedule included enrollment only in ESE classes, with no general education courses scheduled. Another student's IEP included a justification for removing the student from the general education setting for part of the school day; however, this student was enrolled in only general education classes. The district will be required to target this area in its IEP training activities.

One EP for a gifted student was reviewed. All goals were measurable. The district is addressing increased participation in its gifted program through its continuous improvement plan.

In summary, systemic findings of noncompliance were noted in five components of the IEPs, with individual or non-systemic findings noted in 32 additional components. There were three findings related to matrix of services documents, representing a systemic concern. There were no findings related to EPs. The district will be required to address targeted components of the IEP and matrix of services documents through its system improvement plan.

### **District Forms Review**

This section provides information related to district forms review. Forms representing the thirteen areas identified below were submitted to the Bureau for review to determine compliance with federal and state laws. All forms included the required components, although a recommendation was made regarding the course of study statement on the IEP form. The district was notified of the specific findings via a separate letter dated October 12, 2004.

- *Parent Notification of Individual Education Plan (IEP) Meeting*
- *Individual Educational Plan forms*
- *Educational Plan 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*

## **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 and shell contents 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.

## Liberty 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.

Category	Findings	ESE	All	System Improvement Strategy	Evidence of Change (Including target date)
Access to General Curriculum	There were no findings of noncompliance in this area.				
Accommodations/ Modifications	There were no findings of noncompliance in this area.  Recommendations are included in the <i>Recommendations and Technical Assistance</i> section of the report.				
Decision-Making	Information regarding courses of study and diploma options is not always provided to families by eighth grade or age 14.	X		The district will be required to target this element in its training schedule, and to incorporate a method to document discussion of the diploma decision. District and/or school staff will conduct periodic self-assessments via this	The district will report the number of staff attending training on diploma option decision-making.  District report of self-assessment reveals evidence of IEP team participation in the decision-making process

Category	Findings	ESE	All	System Improvement Strategy	Evidence of Change (Including target date)
Decision-Making (continued)				documentation.	regarding diploma options.  December 2005 May 2006
Staff Development	There were no findings of noncompliance in this area.				
Gifted Services	A very small number of students currently are participating in the program for students who are gifted.		X	The district will continue to address this issue through its continuous improvement monitoring plan for gifted students.	The district will continue to provide semiannual reports of progress.
Department of Juvenile Justice	The criteria used for making diploma option decisions are unclear, but appear to be based on the facility the student is enrolled in rather than the individual strengths and needs of the student.	X		The district will conduct a review of IEPs at Liberty Wilderness Crossroads Camp and at Apalachicola Forest Youth Camp to determine if the decisions regarding student course of study and diploma option reflect the abilities and interests of the students. For those records in which this is not clearly indicated the IEP teams must reconvene to review the decision.	District report of self-assessment indicates that appropriate course of study and diploma option decisions in 100% of records reviewed.  December 2005 May 2006
	Support services on some IEPs were not in evidence during classroom visits.	X		District and facility staff will review the IEPs at these facilities to determine if all supports and services are being provided as required by the IEP.	District report of self-assessment indicates that 100% of IEPs are implemented fully.

Category	Findings	ESE	All	System Improvement Strategy	Evidence of Change (Including target date)
Department of Juvenile Justice (continued)					December 2005 May 2006
	General education teachers at Liberty Wilderness Crossroads Camp reported not participating in IEP team meetings.		X	Training on the role of the general education teacher in IEP development will be provided to facilities staff, and the district will conduct periodic self-assessments to ensure that at least one general education teacher of the attends all IEP team meetings.	District report of self-assessment indicates that at least one general education teacher of the student attends the IEP team meeting for a student who is or who is expected to spend at least part of the day in the general education classroom with nondisabled peers.  December 2005 May 2006
	Findings related to the matrix of services documents at these sites are included under the <i>Records Review</i> section.	X			
Additional Compliance	Communication: Communication needs of the student are not routinely documented on the IEP.	X		The district will target this element in its training on IEP development and conduct a self-evaluation using protocols developed by the Bureau to ensure compliance.	District report of self-assessment reveals compliance in targeted area for 100% of IEPs reviewed.  December 2005 May 2006.
	Counseling as a Related Service: Counseling services provided to students with disabilities as a related service are not routinely documented on the IEP.	X		District staff will review the IEPs of students with disabilities who are being provided counseling to determine if it is included as	District report of self-assessment reveals compliance in targeted areas for 100% of IEPs reviewed.

Category	Findings	ESE	All	System Improvement Strategy	Evidence of Change (Including target date)
Additional Compliance (continued)				<p>a related service. If not, staff will determine if the student was referred based on educationally relevant concerns or for other reasons, and IEP teams will reconvene to address educationally relevant counseling as a related services when this need is indicated.</p> <p>Decision-making regarding the provision of counseling as a related service, including psychological counseling, will be incorporated into existing IEP training opportunities.</p> <p>District and/or school staff will conduct a self-evaluation using protocols developed by the Bureau to ensure compliance.</p>	December 2005 May 2006.
	Transition: Transition service agencies are not routinely invited to transition IEP team meetings. There is no evidence of information from transition agencies being provided when agencies are unavailable to	X		The district will be required to ensure transition agencies are invited to transition IEP meetings as appropriate, and document information provided when unavailable to attend.	District report of self-assessment reveals compliance in targeted areas for 100% of IEPs reviewed.  June 2005 June 2006.

Category	Findings	ESE	All	System Improvement Strategy	Evidence of Change (Including target date)
Additional Compliance (continued)	participate in transition IEP team meetings.			District and/or school staff will conduct a self-evaluation using protocols developed by the Bureau to ensure compliance.	
Records Review	<p>Four IEPs were required to be reconvened due to a lack of a majority of measurable annual goals.</p> <p>Systemic findings were made in the following areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• inadequate description of the extent of participation with nondisabled peers</li> <li>• lack of documentation report of progress was provided as often as nondisabled</li> <li>• short term objectives lacked measurement and benchmarks lacked time frames</li> <li>• reports of progress lacked description of progress toward annual goal(s) and a statement of the degree to which that progress is sufficient to meet the annual goal(s)</li> </ul> <p>Individual or non-systemic</p>	X		<p>The IEP teams for the identified students were reconvened to develop measurable annuals goals.</p> <p>The identified noncompliant elements will be targeted in the district's IEP training.</p> <p>Pre-and post- training surveys will be conducted to determine perceived effectiveness of the training.</p> <p>Using protocols developed by the Bureau, school and/or district staff will conduct compliance reviews of a random sample of 15 IEPs developed by staff who participated in the training session</p>	<p>Documentation of the reconvened IEPs was submitted to the Bureau prior to the dissemination of this report.</p> <p>District report of self-assessment reveals compliance with all targeted elements for 100% of IEPs reviewed.</p> <p>December 2005 May 2006</p>

Category	Findings	ESE	All	System Improvement Strategy	Evidence of Change (Including target date)
Forms Review (continued)	findings were noted in 32 additional areas.				
	There were three findings related to matrix of services documents.	X		Using protocols developed by the Bureau, district staff will conduct reviews of two IEPs per school for students reported through the FEFP at the 254 or 255 level of funding (first and last record from alphabetical list of 254/255 records). For students whose IEPs do not support the services on the matrix or for whom the services are not in evidence, the district will submit an amendment to the Automated Student Information System database for the open window of correction.	Results of the matrix review must be submitted by the district with its report of progress. May 2005
Forms Review	There were no findings of noncompliance in this area.				

## **Recommendations and Technical Assistance**

As a result of the focused monitoring activities conducted in Liberty County, the Bureau has identified specific findings related to the number of ESE students graduating with a standard diploma. 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**

- Develop and implement procedures to ensure DJJ and DCF facilities adhere to state and federal regulations regarding ESE services.
- Conduct periodic self-assessments of ESE programs across schools to ensure that IEPs are being implemented and that all information (e.g., time with nondisabled) is reported accurately.
- Develop parent and teacher training modules to address options and decision-making for diploma selection. Include strategies for increasing district, school, and parent expectations for academic achievement for students with disabilities.
- Develop and implement a system training and/or review to ensure that students with disabilities are placed in courses that reflect the services documented on the IEP.
- Incorporate information on decision-making and the use of instructional and assessment accommodations based on the individual needs of students into staff training on IEP development.
- Develop and implement a system of self-assessment to encourage school and district staff to monitor compliance with state and federal requirements related to IEP development and contents.

### **Technical Assistance**

#### **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.

#### **Career Development and Transition/Project Connect**

Drew Andrews/Joyce Lubbers

(352) 392-0701 ext. 267/285

Website: <http://www.thetransitioncenter.org>

The Career Development and Transition Project helps school districts provide specialized instruction and services to students with disabilities that will assist them in achieving a more successful transition from school to adult and community living.

**The Able Trust  
High School/High Tech**

Donna Mundy  
(321) 631-5047

Website: <http://www.abletrust.org>

High School/High Tech is an initiative of the US Department of Labor, Office of Disability Employment Policy. It is sponsored in Florida by The Able Trust/Florida Governor's Alliance for the Employment of Citizens with Disabilities. The mission of the Able Trust is to provide Floridians with disabilities fair employment opportunities through fundraising, grant programs, public awareness and education.

The High School/High Tech project is a community-based partnership of students, parents, educators, rehabilitation professionals, and businesses. Schools may apply to be a pilot program under this project which, among other services, will offer assistance in establishing school and business partnerships.

**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:

**ESE Program Administration and Quality Assurance**

(850) 245-0476

Eileen Amy, Administrator

[Eileen.Amy@fldoe.org](mailto:Eileen.Amy@fldoe.org)

Kim Komisar, Program Director, Monitoring

[Kim.Komisar@fldoe.org](mailto:Kim.Komisar@fldoe.org)

April Katine, Program Specialist

[April.Katine@fldoe.org](mailto:April.Katine@fldoe.org)

Barbara McAnelly, Program Specialist

[Barbara.Mcanelly@fldoe.org](mailto:Barbara.Mcanelly@fldoe.org)

Angela Nathaniel, Program Specialist

[Angela.Nathaniel@fldoe.org](mailto:Angela.Nathaniel@fldoe.org)

**Special Programs Information, Clearinghouse, and Evaluation**

(850) 245-0475

Karen Denbroeder, Administrator

[Karen.Denbroeder@fldoe.org](mailto:Karen.Denbroeder@fldoe.org)

**Clearinghouse Information Center**

[cicbiscs@FLDOE.org](mailto:cicbiscs@FLDOE.org)

(850) 245-0477

**ESE Program Development and Services**

(850) 245-0478

Evy Friend, Administrator

[Evy.Friend@fldoe.org](mailto:Evy.Friend@fldoe.org)

**Behavior/Discipline and EH/SED**

Lee Clark, Program Specialist

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**Mentally Handicapped/Autism**

Sheryl Sandvoss, Program Specialist

[Sheryl.Sandvoss@fldoe.org](mailto:Sheryl.Sandvoss@fldoe.org)

**SLD, IEPs**

Heather Diamond, Program Specialist

[Heather.Diamond@fldoe.org](mailto:Heather.Diamond@fldoe.org)

**Assistive Technology**

Karen Morris, Program Specialist

[Karen.Morris@fldoe.org](mailto:Karen.Morris@fldoe.org)

**Transition**

Janet Adams, Program Specialist

[Janet.Adams@fldoe.org](mailto:Janet.Adams@fldoe.org)

**Gifted**

Donnajo Smith, Program Specialist

[Donnajo.Smith@fldoe.org](mailto:Donnajo.Smith@fldoe.org)



**APPENDIX A—DISTRICT DATA**



**FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION  
BUREAU OF EXCEPTIONAL EDUCATION AND STUDENT SERVICES****2005 LEA PROFILE****JOHN WINN, COMMISSIONER**

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DISTRICT:	<b>LIBERTY</b>	PK-12 POPULATION:	<b>1,392</b>
ENROLLMENT GROUP:	<b>LESS THAN 7,000</b>	PERCENT DISABLED:	<b>26%</b>
		PERCENT GIFTED:	<b>0%</b>

**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*)

- Standard diploma 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 2005.*

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 2005**

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 LIBERTY'S ENROLLMENT GROUP:**

BAKER, BRADFORD, CALHOUN, DESOTO, DIXIE, FRANKLIN, GADSDEN, GILCHRIST, GLADES, GULF, HAMILTON, HARDEE, HOLMES, JEFFERSON, LAFAYETTE, LEVY, LIBERTY, MADISON, 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) by earning required credits, maintaining required GPA and passing FCAT 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 **2001-02** through **2003-04**.

	2001-02	2002-03	2003-04
Liberty	58%	27%	13%
Enrollment Group	41%	44%	36%
State	48%	45%	42%

### 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 **2001-02** through **2003-04**.

	2001-02	2002-03	2003-04
Liberty	0%	5%	7%
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** and **2003-04**.

	2002-03	2003-04
Liberty	0%	0%
Enrollment Group	8%	15%
State	9%	14%

**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 **2001-02** through **2003-04**.

	Students with Disabilities			Gifted Students			All Students		
	2001-02	2002-03	2003-04	2001-02	2002-03	2003-04	2001-02	2002-03	2003-04
Liberty	0%	0%	<1%	0%	0%	0%	<1%	<1%	<1%
Enrollment Group	5%	5%	5%	<1%	0%	<1%	3%	3%	4%
State	5%	4%	5%	<1%	<1%	<1%	3%	3%	3%

	EH/SED			SLD		
	2001-02	2002-03	2003-04	2001-02	2002-03	2003-04
Liberty	0%	0%	2%	0%	0%	0%
Enrollment Group	5%	5%	6%	5%	5%	6%
State	7%	7%	7%	5%	4%	5%

**POSTSCHOOL OUTCOME DATA:**

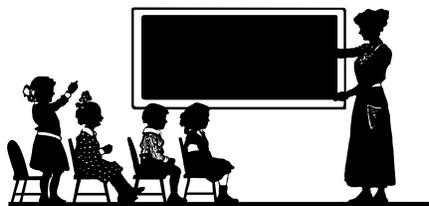
The Florida Education and Training Placement Information Program (FETPIP) is an interagency data collection system that obtains follow-up data on former students. The most recent FETPIP data available reports on students who exited Florida public schools during the **2002-03** school year. The table below displays percent of students with disabilities and students identified as gifted exiting school in 2002-03 who were found employed between October and December 2003 or in continuing education (enrolled for the fall or preliminary winter/spring semester) in 2003.

	Students with Disabilities		Gifted Students	
	Employed	Cont. Ed.	Employed	Cont. Ed.
Liberty	47%	16%	0%	0%
Enrollment Group	38%	15%	42%	84%
State	44%	20%	37%	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 **2003-04**.

	2003-04					
	Students with Disabilities			All Students		
	Promoted	Promoted with Cause	Retained	Promoted	Promoted with Cause	Retained
Liberty	89%	32%	11%	92%	8%	8%
Enrollment Group	81%	36%	19%	88%	12%	12%
State	82%	30%	18%	89%	11%	11%



## 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 **2002-03** through **2004-05**.

	Regular Class			Resource Room			Separate Class		
	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05
Liberty	61%	70%	59%	18%	13%	13%	22%	17%	28%
Enrollment Group	49%	52%	56%	27%	25%	21%	18%	16%	15%
State	48%	50%	55%	26%	24%	21%	22%	22%	20%

### 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 **2002-03** through **2004-05**.

	Early Childhood Setting or Home			Part-Time Early Childhood/ Part-Time Early Childhood Special Education Setting			Early Childhood Special Education Setting		
	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05
Liberty	3%	30%	8%	96%	70%	92%	1%	0%	0%
Enrollment Group	10%	16%	16%	68%	62%	64%	19%	21%	17%
State	7%	7%	7%	57%	57%	56%	31%	31%	33%

**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 **2002-03** through **2004-05**.

	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05
Liberty	38%	25%	53%
Enrollment Group	49%	47%	46%
State	61%	62%	57%

**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 **2003-04**.

		2003-04							
		In-School Suspensions		Out-of-School Suspensions		Expulsions		Alternative Placement*	
		Students with Disabilities	Nondisabled Students						
Liberty		4%	4%	5%	3%	0%	0%	<1%	<1%
Enrollment Group		15%	11%	14%	8%	<1%	<1%	<1%	<1%
State		14%	9%	15%	7%	<1%	<1%	<1%	<1%

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



### SECTION THREE: PREVALENCE

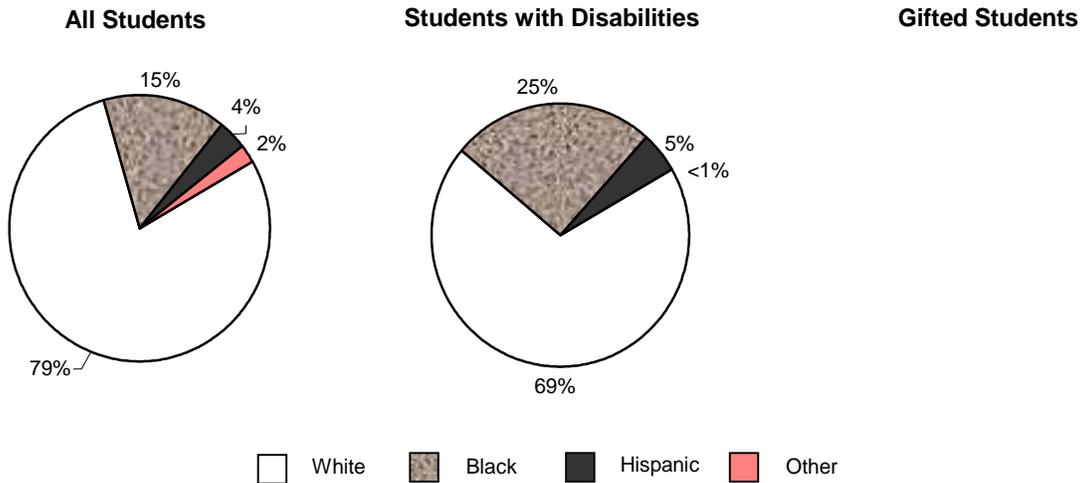
Prevalence refers to the proportion of the PK-12 population identified as exceptional at any given point in time. This section of the profile provides prevalence data by demographic characteristics.

#### 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 2004** (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	49%	50%	63%	79%	69%	0%
Black	24%	28%	10%	15%	25%	0%
Hispanic	23%	19%	20%	4%	5%	0%
Asian/Pacific Islander	2%	<1%	4%	0%	0%	0%
Am Ind/Alaskan Native	<1%	<1%	<1%	<1%	0%	0%
Multiracial	3%	2%	3%	2%	<1%	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 2004** (survey 2).

	State		District	
	All Students	Gifted Students	All Students	Gifted Students
Free/Reduced Lunch	46%	22%	49%	0%
LEP	11%	3%	<1%	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 2004** (survey 2).

	All Students		SLD		EH/SED		EMH	
	State	District	State	District	State	District	State	District
White	49%	79%	51%	71%	47%	43%	32%	57%
Black	24%	15%	24%	23%	39%	48%	51%	39%
Hispanic	23%	4%	22%	5%	12%	10%	14%	3%
Asian/Pacific Islander	2%	0%	<1%	0%	<1%	0%	<1%	0%
Am Ind/Alaskan Native	<1%	<1%	<1%	0%	<1%	0%	<1%	0%
Multiracial	3%	2%	2%	<1%	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 2004** (survey 2).

	All Students		All Disabled	
	State	District	State	District
SLD	7%	9%	46%	55%
EH/SED	1%	2%	9%	10%
EMH	1%	<1%	7%	4%
SI	2%	2%	14%	10%



John Winn, Commissioner

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

	Standard Diploma			
District	# Completers	# St. Dip.	%	Rank
Glades	3	0	0%	1
Charlotte	11	1	9%	2
Liberty	22	7	32%	3
Hendry	47	15	32%	4
Polk	507	165	33%	5
Suwannee	39	13	33%	6
Jefferson	14	5	36%	7
Jackson	70	26	37%	8
Marion	312	122	39%	9
Putnam	101	41	41%	10
Escambia	292	122	42%	11
Duval	607	258	43%	12
Osceola	269	121	45%	13
Manatee	298	137	46%	14
Hamilton	13	6	46%	15
Baker	28	13	46%	16
Holmes	28	13	46%	17
Orange	1,022	479	47%	18
Hernando	134	65	49%	19
Gadsden	45	22	49%	20
Broward	769	377	49%	21
Sumter	57	28	49%	22
DeSoto	34	17	50%	23
Washington	18	9	50%	24
Hardee	31	16	52%	25
Madison	31	16	52%	26
Citrus	165	86	52%	27
Columbia	15	8	53%	28
Collier	242	130	54%	29
Lee	355	191	54%	30
Pasco	556	300	54%	31
Highlands	137	74	54%	32
Lake	211	115	55%	33
Palm Beach	919	510	55%	34

	Standard Diploma			
District	# Completers	# St. Dip.	%	Rank
Martin	114	64	56%	35
Wakulla	28	16	57%	36
Leon	185	107	58%	37
Dixie	24	14	58%	38
Bradford	71	42	59%	39
Lafayette	5	3	60%	40
St. Lucie	160	97	61%	41
Miami Dade	1,382	844	61%	42
St. Johns	137	85	62%	43
Bay	173	108	62%	44
Hillsborough	941	595	63%	45
Pinellas	690	438	63%	46
Levy	63	40	63%	47
Alachua	163	104	64%	48
Volusia	452	289	64%	49
Nassau	14	9	64%	50
Gilchrist	29	19	66%	51
Monroe	58	38	66%	52
Indian River	98	65	66%	53
Okaloosa	272	182	67%	54
Sarasota	304	205	67%	55
Brevard	427	288	67%	56
Flagler	68	46	68%	57
Taylor	32	22	69%	58
Clay	252	174	69%	59
Santa Rosa	123	85	69%	60
Okeechobee	53	37	70%	61
Franklin	10	7	70%	62
Seminole	318	230	72%	63
Calhoun	14	11	79%	64
Union	14	11	79%	65
Walton	43	35	81%	66
Gulf	12	11	92%	67
<b>District Total</b>	<b>4,749</b>	<b>2,691</b>	<b>57%</b>	

Note: All data is from surveys conducted during the 2002-03 school year



**APPENDIX B–ESE MONITORING TEAM MEMBERS**



**Liberty County  
Focused Monitoring Visit  
August 25-27, 2004**

**ESE Monitoring Team Members**

**Department of Education Staff**

Bambi Lockman, 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  
Sheryl Sandvoss, Program Specialist  
Barbara McAnelly, Program Specialist  
Jessica Miller, Program Specialist  
Anitra Moreland, Program Specialist

**Peer Reviewer**

Scott Peters, Alachua County District Schools



## **APPENDIX C – SURVEY RESULTS**



**Liberty County School District  
2004 Parent Survey Report  
Students with Disabilities**

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

The parent survey was sent to parents of the 343 students with disabilities for whom complete addresses were provided by the district. A total of 26 parents (PK, n = 6; K-5, n = 6; 6-8, n = 4; 9 - 12, n = 10) representing 8% of the sample, returned the survey. Forty-four surveys were returned as undeliverable, representing 13% of the sample. Parents represented the following students with disabilities: educable mentally handicapped, speech impaired, emotionally handicapped, specific learning disabled, and severely emotionally disturbed.

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

**Overall, I am satisfied with:**

- the amount of time my child spends with regular education students. 88
- the way special education teachers and regular education teachers work together. 84
- the level of knowledge and experience of school personnel. 77
- how quickly services are implemented following an IEP (Individualized Educational Plan) decision. 77
- my child's academic progress. 76
- the way I am treated by school personnel. 73
- the effect of exceptional student education on my child's self-esteem. 68
- the exceptional education services my child receives. 64

**My child:**

- has friends at school. 88
- is learning skills that will be useful later on in life. 88
- is happy at school. 77
- spends most of the school day involved in productive activities. 77
- receives all the special education and related services on his/her IEP. 72

**At my child's IEP meetings we have talked about:**

- all of my child's needs. 68
- ways that my child could spend time with students in regular classes. 64
- \* which diploma my child may receive. 56
- whether my child should get accommodations (special testing conditions), for example, extra time. 56

\*These questions answered by parents of students grade 8 and above

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

- whether my child would take the FCAT (Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test). 54
- \* the requirements for different diplomas. 50
- whether my child needed speech/language services. 48
- whether my child needed transportation. 40
- whether my child needed services beyond the regular school year. 38
- whether my child needed psychological counseling services. 36
- whether my child needed physical and/or occupational therapy. 29

**My child's teachers:**

- expect my child to succeed. 84
- are available to speak with me. 73
- give homework that meets my child's needs. 64
- set appropriate goals for my child. 63
- give students with disabilities extra time or different assignments, if needed. 63
- call me or send me notes about my child. 60

**My child's school:**

- does all it can to keep students from dropping out of school. 75
- encourages acceptance of students with disabilities. 74
- addresses my child's individual needs. 68
- sends me information written in a way I understand. 68
- informs me about all of the services available to my child. 67
- makes sure I understand my child's IEP. 67
- encourages me to participate in my child's education. 64
- explains what I can do if I want to make changes to my child's IEP. 64
- \* provides information to students about education and jobs after high school. 63
- wants to hear my ideas. 60
- offers students with disabilities the classes they need to graduate with a standard diploma. 59
- \* offers a variety of vocational courses, such as computers and business technology. 59
- sends me information about activities and workshops for parents. 58
- involves students with disabilities in clubs, sports, or other activities. 58
- provides students with disabilities updated books and materials. 57
- 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. 40

\*These questions answered by parents of students grade 8 and above

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

**Parent Participation**

- I am comfortable talking about my child with school staff. 92
- I meet with my child’s teachers to discuss my child’s needs and progress. 85
- I have attended my child’s IEP meetings. 77
- I participate in school activities with my child. 61
- attend meetings of the PTA/PTO. 25
- I attend meetings of organizations for parents of students with disabilities. 19
- I have used parent support services in my area. 17
- I have heard about the Florida Diagnostic and Learning Resources System (“FDLRS”) and the services they provide to families of children with disabilities. 16
- I attend School Advisory Committee meetings concerning school improvement. 12

**Liberty County School District  
2004 Teacher Survey Report  
Students with Disabilities**

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 contracted with the University of Miami to develop and administer a teacher survey as part of the Bureau's focused monitoring activities.

Surveys were received from 79 teachers and other service providers, representing approximately 81% of ESE and general education teachers in the district. Data are from 4 (67%) of the district's 6 schools.

**% 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. 97
- addresses each student's individual needs. 95
- ensures that students with disabilities feel comfortable when taking classes with general education students. 92
- modifies and adapts curriculum for students as needed. 92
- ensures that the general education curriculum is taught in ESE classes to the maximum extent possible. 81
- encourages collaboration among ESE teachers, GE teachers and service providers. 79
- provides adequate support to GE teachers who teach students with disabilities. 77
- offers teachers professional development opportunities regarding curriculum and support for students with disabilities. 73

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

- provides teachers with FCAT test preparation materials. 95
- provides students with appropriate testing accommodations. 92
- gives students in ESE classes updated textbooks. 91
- aligns curriculum for students with the standards that are tested on the FCAT. 90

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

- ensures that classroom material is grade- and age-appropriate. 97
- conducts ongoing assessments of individual students' performance. 97
- develops IEPs according to student needs. 97
- makes an effort to involve parents in their child's education. 96
- ensures that students are taught strategies to manage their behavior as needed. 96
- provides positive behavioral supports. 96

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

- ensures that classroom material is culturally appropriate. 96
- encourages participation of students with disabilities in extracurricular activities. 93
- allows students to make up credits lost due to disability-related absences. 92
- provides social skills training to students as needed. 87
- implements dropout prevention activities. 82

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

**My school:**

- implements an IEP transition plan for each student. 100
- provides students with information about options after graduation. 100
- provides extra help to students who need to retake the FCAT. 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. 94
- teaches transition skills for future employment and independent living. 90
- provides students with job training 89
- coordinates on-the-job training with outside agencies. 85

**Liberty County School District  
2004 Student Survey Report  
Students with Disabilities**

Responding to the need to increase the involvement of the service providers of students with disabilities 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 teacher survey in conjunction with the Bureau's district monitoring activities.

In conjunction with the 2004 Liberty County School District monitoring activities, 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 judgment is to be used to determine appropriate participation.

Surveys were received from 51 students, representing 42% of students with disabilities in grades 9-12 in the district. Data are from 1 (25%) of the district's 4 schools with students in grades 9-12.

**% Yes**

**I am taking the following ESE classes:**

- |   |    |
|---|----|
| • I am taking the following ESE classes: English                                    | 44 |
| • I am taking the following ESE classes: Math                                       | 44 |
| • I am taking the following ESE classes: Social Studies                             | 25 |
| • I am taking the following ESE classes: Science                                    | 24 |
| • I am taking the following ESE classes: Electives (physical education, art, music) | 10 |
| • I am taking the following ESE classes: Vocational (woodshop, computers)           | 0  |

**At my school:**

- |  |    |
|--|----|
| • ESE teachers teach students in ways that help them learn.                  | 98 |
| • ESE teachers believe that ESE students can learn.                          | 98 |
| • ESE teachers give students extra time or different assignments, if needed. | 96 |
| • ESE teachers understand ESE students' needs.                               | 96 |
| • ESE teachers give students extra help, if needed.                          | 94 |
| • ESE teachers teach students things that will be useful later on in life.   | 92 |
| • ESE teachers provide ESE students with updated books and materials.        | 90 |

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

- |  |    |
|--|----|
| • Electives (physical education, art, music) | 74 |
| • Vocational (woodshop, computers)           | 71 |
| • English                                    | 58 |
| • Math                                       | 57 |

	<b>% Yes</b>
• Science	56
• Social Studies	49

**At my school:**

• regular education teachers teach ESE students things that will be useful later on in life.	96
• regular education teachers provide students with updated books and materials.	94
• regular education teachers believe that ESE students can learn.	94
• regular education teachers give ESE students extra help if needed.	87
• regular education teachers understand ESE students' needs.	86
• regular education teachers teach ESE students in ways that help them learn.	81
• regular education teachers give ESE students extra time or different assignments if needed.	70

**At my school, ESE students:**

• get the help they need to well in school.	100
• can take vocational classes such as computers and business technology.	100
• participate in clubs, sports, and other activities.	100
• are encouraged to stay in school.	98
• get work experience (on-the-job training) if they are interested.	94
• get information about education after high school.	94
• are treated fairly by teachers and staff.	92
• spend enough time with regular education students.	92
• fit in at school.	84

**Diploma Option**

• I agree with the type of diploma I am going to receive.	96
• I know the difference between a regular and a special diploma.	94
• I know what courses I have to take to get my diploma.	93
• I had a say in the decision about which diploma I would get.	91
• I will probably graduate with a regular diploma.	67

**IEP**

• I had a say in the decision about which classes I would take.	84
• I was invited to attend my IEP meeting this year.	70
• I attended my IEP meeting this year.	62
• I had a say in the decision about special testing conditions I might get for the FCAT or other tests.	52
• I had a say in the decision about whether I need to take the FCAT or a different test.	31

**% Yes**

**FCAT**

- In my English/reading classes, we work on the kinds of skills that are tested on the reading part of the FCAT. 94
- Teachers help ESE students prepare for the FCAT. 92
- In my math classes, we work on the kinds of problems that are tested on the math part of the FCAT. 91
- I took the FCAT this year. 78
- I received accommodations (special testing conditions) for the FCAT. 74

## **APPENDIX D—FORMS REVIEW**



**Liberty County School District  
Focused Monitoring Report  
Forms Review**

This forms review was completed as a component of the focused monitoring visit that was conducted the week of August 23, 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, Title 34 Code of Federal Regulations (34 CFR 300). The review includes 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.

The following are **non-computerized** forms submitted by the district:

<b>Parent Notification of Individual Educational Plan (IEP) Meeting</b> <i>Form Meeting Participation Form ESE # 11</i> <b>34 CFR 300.345</b>
---

This form contains the components for compliance.

<b>Individual Educational Plan (IEP) Meeting</b> <i>Form Individual Education Plan Form ESE #13</i> <b>34 CFR 300.347</b>
---

This form contains the components for compliance.

<b>Informed Notice and Consent for Evaluation</b> <i>Form Parental Notice/Consent for Evaluation Form ESE # 9</i> <b>34 CFR 300.503 and 300.505</b>
---

This form contains the components for compliance.

<b>Informed Notice and Consent for Reevaluation</b> <i>Form Parent Notice/ Consent for Re-evaluation Form ESE # 19</i> <b>34 CFR 300.503 and 300.505</b>
--

This form contains the components for compliance.

<b>Notice and Consent for Initial Placement</b> <i>Form Informed Notice and Consent for Initial Placement Form ESE #12</i> <b>34 CFR 300.503 and 300.505</b>
--

This form contains the components for compliance.

**Notice of Change in Placement Form**

**Form** *Informed Notice of Change in Placement and/or Free Appropriate Public Education Form ESE # 13n*

**34 CFR 300.503 and 300.505**

**The following must be addressed:**

- The statement “Your child’s individual education plan (IEP) was revised” Needs to be changed to the present or future tense such as “Your child’s IEP is being revised” Or “will be revised as of \_\_\_\_”. The student’s placement must not be changed until the parent has been given prior written notice.

**Notice of Change in FAPE**

**Form** *Informed Notice of Change in Placement and/or Free Appropriate Public Education Form ESE # 13n*

**34 CFR 300.503 and 300.505**

**The following must be addressed:**

- The statement “Your child’s individual education plan (IEP) was revised” Needs to be changed to the present/future tense such as “Your child’s IEP is being revised” Or will be revised as of \_\_\_\_”. FAPE must not be changed until the parent has been given prior written notice.

**Informed Notice of Refusal**

**Form** *Notice of Refusal To Take A Specific Action Form ESE #13g*

**34 CFR 300.503**

This form contains the components for compliance.

**Notice of Dismissal**

**Form** *Eligibility Determination and Staffing Form ESE #12*

**34 CFR 300.503 and 300.505**

This form contains the components for compliance.

**Notice of Ineligibility**

**Form** *Eligibility Determination and Staffing Form ESE #12*

**34 CFR 300.503 and 300.505**

This form contains the components for compliance.

**Documentation of Staffing Form**

**Form** *Eligibility Determination and Staffing Form ESE #12*

**34 CFR 300.534 and 300.503**

This form contains the components for compliance.

**Confidentiality of Information**  
**Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act, Part 99 34 CFR 300.503**

This form contains the components for compliance.

**Educational Plan**  
**Form *Gifted Program Educational Plan (EP) Form ESE # 24***

This form contains the basic components for compliance.

The following are the **computerized** forms used by the district:

**Parent Notification of Individual Educational Plan (IEP) Meeting**  
**Form *Meeting Participation Form ESE # 11***  
**34 CFR 300.345**

This form contains the components for compliance.

**Individual Educational Plan (IEP) Meeting**  
**Form *Individual Education Plan Form ESE #13***  
**34 CFR 300.347**

**The following must be addressed:**

- Goals provided in the drop down boxes are not all measurable. A review of the available goals should be conducted to ensure measurability.

**Recommendation:**

- Statements in the “LRE Factors for Non-Participation” (extent statement) refer to designated subjects, yet no subjects are provided and nothing allows for input of those subjects. A field should be added to accommodate for the subjects when a student will be removed from general education classes.

**Informed Notice and Consent for Reevaluation**  
**Form *Parent Notice/ Consent for Re-evaluation Form ESE # 19***  
**34 CFR 300.503 and 300.505**

This form contains the components for compliance.

No other computerized forms were provided for the other relevant special education actions. 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

AYFC	Apalachicola Forest Youth Camp
Bureau	Bureau of Exceptional Education and Student Services
CFR	Code of Federal Regulations
CIP	Continuous Improvement Plan
DCF	Department of Children and Families
DJJ	Department of Juvenile Justice
DOE	Department of Education
EH	Emotionally Handicapped
EMH	Educable Mentally Handicapped
EP	Educational Plan (for gifted students)
ESE	Exceptional Student Education
F.S.	Florida Statutes
FAC	Florida Administrative Code
FAPE	Free Appropriate Public Education
FCAT	Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test
FEFP	Florida Education Finance Program
FERPA	The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act
FSU	Florida State University
GED	General Educational Development diploma
GSC	Guidance Support Committee
IDEA	Individuals with Disabilities Education Act
IEP	Individual Educational Plan (for students with disabilities)
ISRD	Institute for Small and Rural Districts
LCCE	Life Centered Career Education
LEA	Local Educational Agency
LWCC	Liberty Wilderness Crossroads Camp
N/A	Not Applicable
OSEP	Office of Special Education Programs (USDOE)
PAEC	Panhandle Area Education Cooperative
SI	Speech Impaired
SIP	System Improvement Plan
S/L	Speech and Language
SLD	Specific Learning Disability
UM	University of Miami