

SANTA ROSA COUNTY

Focused Monitoring

Exceptional Student Education Programs

February 22-24, 2007

Florida Department of Education
Bureau of Exceptional Education and Student Services
ESE Program Administration and Quality Assurance

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May 17, 2007

Mr. John W. Rogers, Superintendent
Santa Rosa County School District
5086 Canal Street
Milton, Florida 32570-6726

Dear Superintendent Rogers:

We are pleased to provide you with the Final Report of Focused Monitoring of Exceptional Student Education Programs in Santa Rosa 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 survey data from our visit on February 22-24, 2007. 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.

The report includes a system improvement plan outlining the findings of the monitoring team. Bureau staff has worked with Linda Novota, 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. The system improvement plan has been approved and is included as a part of this final report.

The first scheduled update on the system improvement plan will be due on November 30, 2007. The Department of Education must ensure timely corrections on noncompliance within one year of reporting to the district. The successful completion of improvement plan activities and the submission of the annual report no later than May 7, 2008, will be required. A verification monitoring visit to your district may take place after review of the annual report.

BAMBI J. LOCKMAN
Chief

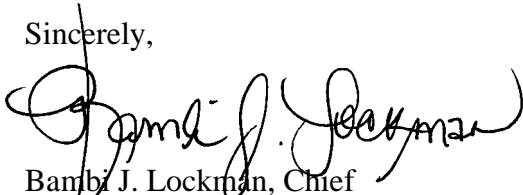
Bureau of Exceptional Education and Student Services

Superintendent Rogers
May 17, 2007
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If my staff or I can be of any assistance as you implement the system improvement plan, please contact me or Eileen L. Amy, ESE Program Administration and Quality Assurance Administrator. Ms. Amy may be reached at 850-245-0476, or via electronic mail at Eileen.Amy@fldoe.org.

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

Sincerely,



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

Enclosure

cc: E. Hugh Winkles, School Board Chair
Members of the School Board
Paul Green, School Board Attorney
School Principals
Linda Novota, ESE Director
Eileen L. Amy
Ginny Chance

SANTA ROSA COUNTY

Focused Monitoring

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February 22-24, 2007

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**Santa Rosa County Final Monitoring Report
Focused Monitoring
February 22-24, 2007**

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Santa Rosa County Report

Focused Monitoring

February 22-24, 2007

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 of 2004 (IDEA 2004) 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 2004, 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)). Federal Regulations for IDEA 2004 were made public on August 14, 2006, and implementation required October 13, 2006.

The monitoring system reflects the Department's commitment to provide assistance, service, and accountability to school districts, and is designed to emphasize improved educational outcomes for students while continuing to conduct those activities necessary to ensure compliance with applicable federal laws and regulations and state statutes and rules. In addition, these activities serve to ensure implementation of corrective actions such as those required subsequent to monitoring by the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP), and by the Office for Civil Rights (OCR), as well as other quality assurance activities of the Department.

State Performance Plan and Monitoring

In accordance with 34 CFR 300.600(a)(1), not later than one (1) year after the date of enactment of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act of 2004, each State must have in place a performance plan that evaluates the State's efforts to implement the requirements and purposes of Part B and describe how the State will improve such implementation. The purpose of the monitoring process is to implement a methodology that targets the Bureau's monitoring

intervention on key data indicators identified by IDEA 2004 as significant for educational outcomes for students. Through this process, the Bureau uses data to inform the monitoring process, thereby implementing a strategic approach to intervention and commitment of resources that will improve student outcomes. A detailed description of the Bureau's monitoring processes is provided in *Focused Monitoring and Verification Monitoring: Work Papers and Source Book for Exceptional Student Education Programs (2006-07)*. The protocols used by Bureau staff when conducting procedural compliance reviews are available in *Compliance Manual: Work Papers and Source Book for Exceptional Student Education Programs (2006-07)*. These documents are available on the Bureau's website at www.firn.edu/doe/commhome/mon-home.htm.

Indicator Selection

In its continuing effort to focus the monitoring process on student educational outcomes, there are three (3) specific monitoring priority areas which are identified in the IDEA 2004 at section 616(a)(3). The first priority is the provision of a free appropriate public education (FAPE) in the least restrictive environment (LRE) which includes standard diploma rate, dropout rate, participation and performance on statewide assessments, suspension and expulsion, LRE for both ages 6-21 and for ages 3-5, PK outcomes, and parent satisfaction. The second priority is general supervision by the state which includes child find, transition (Part C to Part B), secondary transition, and postsecondary outcomes. The third priority is disproportionate representation of racial and ethnic groups in special education and related services including all disabilities in general and specific disability categories. The IDEA 2004 can be viewed on the web at <http://www.ed.gov/policy/speced/guid/idea/idea2004.html>.

Data on all State Performance Plan (SPP) indicators used to determine the focus of this on-site visit was based on a review of data from the 2006 local educational agency (LEA) Profile that was submitted electronically to the Department of Education (DOE) Information Database for Surveys 2, 3, 5, 9, and from the assessment files for each school year. This data is compiled into an annual data profile for each district. The 2006 LEA Profiles for all Florida school districts are available on the web at <http://www.firn.edu/doe/commhome/datapage.htm>.

Background Information and Demographics

On February 22, 23, and 24, 2007, 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 Santa Rosa County Public Schools. Linda Novota, Exceptional Student Education Director, served as communication liaison and point of contact for the district during the monitoring visit. Santa Rosa County was monitored on the following indicators: least restrictive environment for students 6-21 with disabilities; dropout rate, suspension and expulsion, and disproportionate representation of racial and ethnic groups.

Based on the 2006 LEA profile, Santa Rosa County School District has a total school population (PK-12) of 25,187 with 16% of students being identified as students with disabilities and 4% identified as gifted. Santa Rosa County is considered a middle sized district and is comprised of

16 elementary schools, 7 middle schools, 10 high schools, one charter school, one combination school and two adult education schools.

Santa Rosa County is a community with 32% of students on free or reduced lunch and <1% of students identified as limited English proficient. Of the students with disabilities who exited from the district during the 2004-05 school year, 50% met all requirements for a standard diploma, 9% met the requirements through a waiver of a passing score on the Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test (FCAT), and 2% graduated through the GED exit option (i.e., under-credited students who have passed the FCAT and who pass the GED examination). The district has a dropout rate of 4% according to the LEA Profile. Two percent of the population of students with disabilities had received out-of-school suspensions totaling ten or more days.

A parent survey was sent to parents of 3,621 students (PK-12) with disabilities in Santa Rosa County District Schools for whom complete addresses were provided by the district. A total of 327 parents, representing 9% of the sample, returned the survey. When applying the standard of measure indicating their perception of schools' facilitation of parental involvement, 31.5% of parents of children ages 3-21 reported their perceived level of satisfaction at or above the standard.

In the review of student records within your district, an item must be found noncompliant in at least 25% of the records reviewed to be determined systemic in nature. There were no systemic findings in the Santa Rosa School district.

Monitoring Activities

The Bureau conducted the on-site focused monitoring visit on February 22-24, 2007. Five Bureau staff members and five peer monitors conducted site-visits to the following seven schools, including one charter school.

- East Milton Elementary
- W.H. Rhodes Elementary
- Martin Luther King Middle
- R. Hobbs Middle
- Pace High
- Milton High
- Learning Academy of Santa Rosa

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 Bureau staff and peer monitors who conducted the monitoring activities for this visit is included as appendix A.

The monitoring process includes interviews with administrators, teachers, and other service delivery providers, focus group interviews with students, case studies, classroom observations, record reviews, and surveys of parents of students with disabilities. A summary of the monitoring activities conducted in Santa Rosa County is included in the following table:

Activity	Source	Number
Interviews	District staff	4
	School staff	
	▪ School administrators/non-instructional support	19
	▪ ESE teachers—disabilities	19
	▪ ESE teachers—gifted	3
	▪ General education teachers	<u>10</u>
	Total	55
Focus Groups	▪ Gulf Breeze High-special and standard diploma students	18
	▪ Milton High-special and standard diploma students	<u>16</u>
		Total
Case studies	Individual student case studies	24
Classroom Visits	ESE and general education classrooms	42
Record Reviews	IEPs	
	▪ Targeted on-site review	77
	▪ Matrix of services documents	9
	EPs	
	▪ Targeted on-site review	<u>19</u>
	Total	105
Surveys	Parents of students with disabilities	
	▪ Number sent	3,621
	▪ Number returned (%)	327 (9%)
	▪ School facilitates parent involvement	103 (31.57%)

Reporting of Information

Findings based on data generated through record reviews; focus group interviews; individual interviews; case studies; classroom visits; parent surveys; and, the review of district forms are summarized in the reporting table that follows. This report provides conclusions with regard to each key data indicator and specifically addresses related areas that may contribute to or impact the indicator. In addition, information related to services provided to ESE students in charter schools, and services for gifted students are reported.

To the extent possible, this report focuses on systemic issues rather than on isolated instances of noncompliance or need for improvement. In accordance with established Bureau monitoring procedures, a finding of a systemic violation will be made if evidence of such a violation is found in 25% or more of the pertinent data sources.

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

In response to the specific findings included in the reporting table, the district is required to develop a system improvement plan. This plan is developed in consultation with the Bureau, and must include activities and strategies intended to address specific findings, as well as measurable evidence of change.

**Santa Rosa County School District
Focused Monitoring**

Reporting Table

Citation	Findings	Supporting Evidence	Concerns
State Performance Plan (SPP) Indicator 5: Least Restrictive Environment, Ages 6-21 – Percent of children with IEPs aged 6-21 who are provided a free appropriate public education in the least restrictive environment			
Related Factor: General			
No findings of noncompliance in this area.			
Related Factor: IEP Requirements/Implementation			
Section 614(d)(1)(A)(i)(II) §300.347(a)(2)(i) 6A-6.03028(7)(b)	Annual goals and short-term objectives/benchmarks must relate to the needs resulting from the disability and focus on enabling the student to be involved and make progress in the general curriculum.	Seven of ten student records reviewed had 50% of goals not measurable. (W.H. Rhodes Elementary)	
SPP Indicator 10: Disproportionality – Gifted – Percent of districts with disproportionate representation of racial and ethnic groups in special education and related services that is the result of inappropriate identification			
Related Factor: Evaluation			
Section 614(b)(3)(A)(i) §300.532(a)(1)(i) 6A-6.0331(4)(e)	Assessment instruments must not be racially or culturally discriminatory.	At one school, 14 of 16 gifted referrals for 2005-06 resulted in further testing. Two students were subsequently staffed into the gifted program. It was noted that the WISC IV was used in all testing instances. (East Milton Elementary)	

Citation	Findings	Supporting Evidence	Concerns
Matrix of Services	Two findings of noncompliance in this area.	A detailed description of the matrix review was provided to the district in a letter dated March 13, 2007.	
Student Record Reviews	Annual goals and short term objectives/benchmarks must relate to the needs resulting from the disability and focus on enabling the student to be involved and make progress in the general curriculum.	7 of 77 IEP's had 50% of goals not measurable.	
Review of District Forms	34 CFR §300. Rule 6A-6.03028, FAC	One form requires the district to make corrections.	8 forms were reviewed.

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 targeted technical assistance needs identified through the State Performance Plan Indicator teams. The promising practices, recommendations, and technical assistance resources included below should be considered when developing strategies and/or interventions targeting the critical issues identified by the Bureau as most significantly in need of improvement.

Promising Practices, Recommendations and Technical Assistance

Promising Practices

During the visit numerous promising practices were noted by district and school staff and by Bureau and peer monitors. Some of the reported promising practices were school specific, some were grade specific, and others were the results of district-wide initiatives. The District is encouraged to continue to promote an atmosphere where teachers and staff can share these practices. Some of the reported promising practices are listed below.

- The *Task Force* that was developed to support 18-22 year old students and the continuing services that have been set in place for those special diploma graduates.
- The use and function of planners for students at the high school level to facilitate on-going communication between teachers and parents.
- The gifted educational plans reviewed at Rhodes Elementary were concise and well-written.
- There was strong evidence of varying transition activities were noted at Milton High.
- There was evidence of formal *planning notes* and *IEP progress reports* used throughout each school visited.

Recommendations

The following are recommendations for the district to consider while determining future strategies that are most likely to continue advancing the provisions for exceptional students. The list is not all-inclusive, and is intended only as a starting point for discussion. A partial list of technical assistance resources is also provided. In addition, Bureau staff are available for assistance on a variety of topics. They may be contacted for assistance in the development and/or implementation of the system improvement plan.

- Establish a routine procedure for communication and collaboration between charter schools and the district
- Begin to explore ways to implement co-teaching as a service delivery model to support students with disabilities in general education classrooms

- Consider increasing the use of FDLRS and FIN to address staff’s need for additional training on inclusion and instructional accommodations
- Enlist the support of the Student Support Services and Shared Network, for assistance in exploring other assessment options for gifted referrals since a variety of assessments should be utilized to ensure that testing instruments are not racially or culturally discriminatory.

Technical Assistance

Florida Inclusion Network

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

Florida’s Positive Behavioral Supports Project

Website: <http://www.fmhi.usf.edu/cfs/dares/flpbs/>

Student Support Services and Shared Services Network

Website: <http://sss.usf.edu>

Project CENTRAL

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

Bureau staff are available for assistance on a variety of topics. Staff may be contacted for assistance in the development and/or implementation of the system improvement plan. Following is a partial list of contacts:

ESE Program Administration and Quality Assurance—Monitoring

(850) 245-0476

Eileen L. Amy, Administrator

Eileen.Amy@fldoe.org

Ginny Chance, Program Director

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Laura Harrison, Program Specialist

Laura.Harrison@fldoe.org

ESE Program Development and Services

(850) 245-0478

Cathy Bishop, Administrator

Cathy.Bishop@fldoe.org

Special Programs Information, Clearinghouse, and Evaluation

(850) 245-0475

Karen Denbroeder, Administrator

Karen.Denbroeder@fldoe.org

Clearinghouse Information Center

cicbiscs@FLDOE.org

Kathy Dejoie, Program Director

Kathy.Dejoie@fldoe.org

**Santa Rosa County School District
 Focused Monitoring
 System Improvement Strategies**

The district is required to provide system improvement strategies to address identified findings of noncompliance, 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. In addition to findings of noncompliance, the report includes areas of concern that the district is encouraged to address, either through this system improvement plan or through other avenues. Resources, suggestions and/or recommended actions are provided following this plan format.

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Findings of Noncompliance	Improvement Strategies/Interventions	Outcome Measures and Timeline
State Performance Plan (SPP) Indicator 5: Least Restrictive Environment		
Related Factor: General		
No findings of noncompliance in this area.	<i>The district is encouraged to include strategies to address the concerns noted in the body of this report.</i>	
Related Factor: IEP Requirements/Implementation		
	<p>The IEP teams for the identified students will reconvene to address identified findings as indicated in letter to the district dated March 13, 2007.</p> <p>The identified noncompliant elements will be targeted in the district's IEP training.</p> <p>Using protocols developed by the Bureau, school and/or district staff will conduct semi-annual compliance reviews to include a random sample of 15 IEPs.</p>	<p>April 2007</p> <p>September 2007</p> <p>District report of self-assessment reveals compliance with targeted elements for 100% of IEPs reviewed. September 2007</p>

Findings of Noncompliance	Improvement Strategies/Interventions	Outcome Measures and Timeline
SPP Indicator 10: Disproportionality - Gifted		
Related Factor: General		
	<p>It is recommended that the district enlist the assistance of the Student Support Services and Shared Services Network in order to better equip schools with gifted testing instruments geared towards testing a lower socioeconomic population of students.</p> <p>School and/or district staff will conduct a compliance review of 10 evaluation reports.</p>	September 2007
Matrix of Services		
Two matrix of service documents require review following review/revision of the corresponding IEPs.	District will submit both new IEPs and new matrixes for identified students to the Bureau for review and if needed, an amendment to the Automated Student Information System database will be made.	April 2007
Student Record Reviews		
Seven IEP teams must reconvene to address identified findings (writing measurable goals on IEPs).	<p>The IEP teams for the identified students will reconvene to address findings.</p> <p>The identified noncompliant elements will be targeted in the district's IEP training.</p> <p>Using protocols developed by the Bureau, school and/or district staff will conduct semi-annual compliance reviews to include a random sample of 15 IEPs.</p>	<p>April 2007</p> <p>September 2007</p> <p>District report of self-assessment reveals compliance with targeted elements for 100% of IEPs reviewed. (September 2007 and March 2008)</p>
Review of District Forms		
One form requires revisions to meet compliance.	The district will revise the form as required and submit it to the Bureau for review.	January 2008

Appendix A:
ESE Monitoring Team Members

**Florida Department of Education
Bureau of Exceptional Education and Student Services
2006-07 Focused Monitoring
Santa Rosa County School District**

Department of Education Staff

Bambi J. Lockman, Chief, Bureau of Exceptional Education and Student Services
Eileen L. Amy, Administrator, ESE Program Administration and Quality Assurance
Ginny Chance, Program Director, ESE Program Administration and Quality Assurance

ESE Monitoring Team Members

Laura Harrison, Program Specialist, Team Leader
Eileen L. Amy, Administrator
Marilyn Hibbard, Program Specialist
Ken Johnson, Program Specialist
Annette Oliver, Program Specialist

Peer Reviewers

Maureen Guarino – Bay County School District
Amy Hansen – Flagler County School District
Lesley Messier – Monroe County School District
Lisa Rowland – Gilchrist County School District
Martha Scott – Gadsden County School District