

FINAL REPORT OF FOCUSED MONITORING OF
EXCEPTIONAL STUDENT EDUCATION PROGRAMS IN

TAYLOR COUNTY

APRIL 16 - 19, 2001



FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
BUREAU OF INSTRUCTIONAL SUPPORT AND COMMUNITY SERVICES



FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

CHARLIE CRIST
COMMISSIONER

SHAN GOFF, CHIEF
BUREAU OF INSTRUCTIONAL SUPPORT
AND COMMUNITY SERVICES

August 9, 2002

Mr. Oscar Howard, Jr., Superintendent
Taylor County Public Schools
318 N. Clark Street
Administrative Complex
Perry, Florida 32347

Dear Superintendent Howard:

We are pleased to provide you with the final copy of your monitoring report from our visit during the week of April 16, 2001. This report reflects revisions made after the preliminary report, based upon written correspondence from and telephone conversations with your staff, and your district's system improvement measures to address each topical area reviewed.

Please note the following:

- Any forms the district develops to respond to findings of noncompliance must be submitted to the Bureau for review within 30 days of development.
- Quarterly summaries of the district's activities related to the implementation of the system improvement measures, as stated in this report, beginning September 1, 2002 and extending until the end of the 2002-03 school year unless otherwise noted, must be submitted to the Bureau.
- The district's progress related to system improvement measures via the continuous improvement monitoring process will be reviewed.

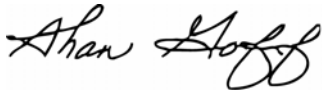
Copies of this report are also being sent to the chairperson of the Taylor County School Board and the principals of the schools visited.

If my staff can be of any assistance as you continue to implement the system improvement measures, please contact me or Eileen Amy, Program Administration and Evaluation Administrator at 850-488-1570 or via electronic mail at shan.goff@fldoe.org or eileen.amy@fldoe.org.

Oscar Howard, Jr.
August 9, 2002
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Thank you for your continuing commitment to improve services for exceptional education students in Taylor County.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Shan Goff".

Shan Goff, Chief
Bureau of Instructional Support and Community Services

Enclosure

cc: Sammy Agner, School Board President, Taylor County
George Clayton, Principal
John Davies, Principal
Paul Dyal, Principal
Ruben Lewis, Principal
Sylvia Ivey, Principal
Shona Murphy, District ESE Director
Betty Coxe, Deputy Commissioner

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INTRODUCTION

The Florida Department of Education, through the Bureau of Instructional Support and Community Services, in carrying out its role of leadership, resource allocation, technical assistance, monitoring, and evaluation is required to: examine and evaluate procedures, records, and programs in each school district of the state to determine compliance with state law and State Board of Education Rules; provide information and assistance to the superintendents and other district personnel in correcting deficiencies; and otherwise assist the districts in operating effectively and efficiently (Section 229.565, Florida Statutes, and Rule 6A-1.0453, Florida Administrative Code). Additionally, the Florida Department of Education, as the State Educational Agency, is required to supervise school district implementation of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and its implementing regulations in Part 300 of Title 34 of the Code of Federal Regulations.

METHOD

With guidance from a work group charged with the responsibility of recommending revisions to the Bureau's monitoring system, substantial revisions to Bureau monitoring practices are being initiated during the 2000-2001 school year. Three types of monitoring processes have been established as part of a comprehensive system of monitoring and oversight including Focused Monitoring; Continuous Improvement/Self Assessment Monitoring; and Random Monitoring. Focused monitoring is the first type to be piloted by the Bureau and is the foundation for the activities and outcomes described in this report.

The revised monitoring system reflects the Department's commitment to providing assistance and service 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 and state laws, rules, and regulations. In addition, the 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 other quality assurance activities of the Department.

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 ("triggers") that are identified as having significance in terms of educational outcomes for students. Through this process the Bureau uses such data to inform the monitoring process, thereby implementing a strategic approach to subsequent intervention and commitment of resources.

The monitoring restructuring work group recommended four "triggers" or data elements to examine for the 2000-2001 pilot year and for the next several years. Those data elements included percentage of students with disabilities

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participating in regular education classes (i.e., spending at least 80% of the school day with their non-disabled peers); dropout rate for students with disabilities; percentage of students with disabilities exiting with a standard diploma; and participation of students with disabilities in statewide assessments. The Bureau analyzed data related to these triggers and districts were selected to be monitored based on the results. Each district selected for monitoring was examined based on one selected trigger and eight topical areas. These topical areas are used to organize this report and are discussed in further detail on page 3.

Taylor County School District was selected as one of four pilot sites to be monitored based on the results of a review of data from all the districts submitted electronically to the Department of Education Information Database in surveys 2, 3, 5, and 9 and from the assessment files. The trigger identified for Taylor County School District as a result of this review was the percentage of students with disabilities participating in regular education classes. In addition to the data related to the trigger, the following information for the school years 1997-98 through 1999-00 was also examined in preparation for the monitoring visit: participation rate and student performance on state assessments; retention rate; separate class placements for students identified as educable mentally handicapped; discipline rates; and, prevalence data.

A profile containing data indicators that describe measures of educational benefit, the status of Taylor County School District with respect to placement of students with disabilities in the least restrictive environment, and student membership in programs for students with disabilities and identified as gifted was developed and is included as Appendix A. The information is presented for Taylor County School District, districts of comparable enrollment size, and the state. Where appropriate and available, comparative data for non-disabled students are included. The intent of the profile is to provide a tool that will help target areas that hold potential for the greatest improvement, thereby improving outcomes for exceptional students in the district.

Parent Survey

In order to provide maximum opportunity for input from parents, a survey was mailed on February 14, 2001, to the parents of 612 students with disabilities and 102 gifted students currently enrolled in Taylor County's programs. The survey has been used for the past two years in 26 school districts as part of the ongoing monitoring of Exceptional Student Education (ESE) programs. The survey was designed for the Bureau by the University of Miami research staff to capture parent perceptions on a number of factors. Responses were received from 65 parents of students with disabilities (two pre-k; 39 grades k-5; ten grades 6-8; and 14 grades 9-12); and 25 parents of gifted students (three grades k-5; 13 grades 6-8; and nine grades 9-12). Results of the survey will be discussed, as appropriate, in the body of this report. Data from the survey responses are included as Appendix B.

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On-Site Monitoring Activities

The on-site visit in Taylor County was conducted during the week of April 16, 2001. Persons conducting the on-site activities included five Department of Education (DOE) staff, three peer monitors, and two consultants from the University of Miami (see Appendix C). Peer monitors are ESE personnel from other districts who have been trained to assist with the DOE's monitoring of school districts. Each of the persons who served as a peer monitor during this review previously participated in a minimum of two other monitoring visits during prior years.

On-site monitoring activities consisted of: student record reviews; interviews with school and district staff; a parent focus group interview; student focus group interviews; and student case studies. These activities were used to inform the following topical areas, which are defined as:

Least Restrictive Environment (Trigger) (34 CFR 300.130 and 300.500 – 300.556)

- Children with disabilities are educated and participate in activities and services with their nondisabled peers.

General Supervision (34 CFR 300.600)

- Effective general supervision is ensured through the district's development and utilization of mechanisms and activities, in a coordinated system, that results in all eligible exceptional education students having an opportunity to receive a free appropriate public education in the least restrictive environment.

Parent Participation (34 CFR 300.345)

- Provision of a free appropriate public education to children and youth with disabilities is facilitated through parent involvement in special education services.

Gifted Services

- Students identified as gifted receive exceptional student education services and are afforded rights under state law.

Child Find (34 CFR 300.125 and 300.530)

- Children with disabilities are identified and their needs are determined based on information from an appropriate evaluation.

-

Part C to Part B (34 CFR 300.132)

- Transition planning results in needed supports and services, available and provided, as appropriate, to a child and the child's family when the child exits the Part C program.

Secondary Transition (34 CFR 300.29 and 300.347(b)(1)(2))

- The transition services needs of students with disabilities, beginning at 16 and younger when appropriate, are considered by the IEP team through an

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outcome-oriented process which promotes movement from school to post-school activities. Beginning at 14, a course of study statement is included in the IEP development process.

Access to General Curriculum (34 CFR 300.138(a) and 300.247(a)(3))

- Students with disabilities are provided access to the general curriculum with modifications, accommodations, supplementary aids and supports in order to make satisfactory progress.

System Improvement

Following the provision of the preliminary report, the district was charged with the responsibility of designing system improvement measures. The system improvement measures address each of the topical areas. Action steps will be identified by the district with corresponding target completion dates and measures that will be used to assess the effectiveness of the action steps.

Sample

DOE provided a list of 75 students with disabilities and requested that district personnel secure the records of the first 30 students on the list who were still enrolled in the district. This group of student names was identified as the "core sample." In addition, a "supplemental sample" of additional student records was identified. DOE provided a list of 15 random student names for the supplemental sample in each of the following categories: students who were identified as gifted; children served in the prekindergarten program for children with disabilities; students determined eligible for low incidence programs; African-American students who were identified as EMH (Educable Mentally Handicapped); and, students who were enrolled in a center school for students with disabilities. District personnel secured the records for the first five active names in each of those supplemental categories.

DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

As reported for the 1999-00 school year, Taylor County School District has a total school population (PK-12) of 3,805 with 671 (18%) being identified as students with disabilities and 98 (3%) as gifted. Of the total Taylor school population: 74% are white; 24% are black; and less than 1% are Hispanic. Of the students with disabilities: 69% are white; 30% are black; and less than 1% are Hispanic. Racial/ethnic data for students with a primary exceptionality of specific learning disabled (SLD), emotionally handicapped (EH), severely emotionally disturbed (SED), and educable mentally handicapped (EMH) are presented in Appendix A.

DATA PROFILE

Taylor County was selected to be monitored based on the results of the review of the data that indicated a low percentage of students with disabilities participating in regular education classes (i.e., spending at least 80% of the school day with their nondisabled peers). According to the 1999-00 data (survey 9), 29% of Taylor's students between the ages of 6-21 spend 80% or more of their school

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week in regular education classes. The average percentage of the districts with similar enrollment is 44% while the statewide average is 49%. It is reported that 72% of students (ages 6-21) identified as EMH in Taylor County spend less than 40% of their school day with nondisabled peers. This percentage is higher than similar enrollment group and statewide data (60% and 61%, respectively).

A review of Taylor's data also indicates a lower percentage of students with disabilities graduating with a standard diploma (41%) when compared to its similar enrollment group and the state (47% and 56%, respectively).

RECENT MONITORING ACTIVITIES AND RESULTS

Taylor County was part of the Office for Civil Rights (OCR) sample compliance review for "over-representation" of minority students in EMH and SED, conducted in Florida during the 1996-1997 school year. The district conducted a self-evaluation (1997-98) and identified needed improvement related to transition, confidentiality policy, reevaluation notice, and evaluation criteria. In 1998, the Department of Education Office of Multicultural Student Language Education monitored Taylor County School District and reported no findings. In 2000, the Auditor General made ESE funding adjustments for failing to follow required procedures related to out-of-field teachers and transportation services not specified on the Individual Education Plan, but claimed.

HISTORY OF COMPLAINT RESOLUTION

Since 1990, there have been no requests for due process hearings filed by, or against, Taylor County. There have been no complaints filed and no requests for mediation.

ORGANIZATION OF THE REPORT

This report is organized by the topical areas identified on page three of the report. For each of the topical areas, this report will provide information regarding background information, strengths identified in the district, concerns, findings of noncompliance, and plans for system improvement. Included in Appendix D is a glossary of acronyms used in this report.

This report focuses, to the extent possible, on systemic issues rather than on isolated instances of noncompliance. Systemic issues are those areas of noncompliance and concern that occur at a sufficient enough frequency that the review team could reasonably infer a systemic problem.

FINDINGS

The results of the on-site monitoring activities (student record reviews, interviews with school and district staff, a parent focus group interview, two student focus group interviews, and case studies) are provided in this section of the report.

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Student focus group interviews were held separately with 15 students preparing for a special diploma in grades nine through twelve and 10 twelfth grade students preparing for a standard diploma.

The parent focus group interview included 8 family members representing 9 students with disabilities. The students ranged in grade levels from prekindergarten to high school graduate, and were identified as students with specific learning disabilities, ADHD, speech impairments, and autism.

The following types of school and district level staff were interviewed and the results of those interviews are incorporated into this report:

- District director
- District staffing specialists
- Child study representatives
- Regular education teachers
- Special education teachers
- Gifted education teachers
- Curriculum specialist
- Prekindergarten specialist
- School psychologist

The following school sites were visited in order to conduct the case studies that involved the review of student records, observations, and interviews with service providers: Taylor High School; Perry Primary; Taylor Education Academy; Taylor Elementary West; and Taylor Middle School.

Least Restrictive Environment

Background Information

District staff reported the following information related to the extent to which ESE students participate in activities and services with their non-disabled peers:

ESE students are included and become involved in nonacademic and extracurricular activities with non-disabled peers including assemblies, field trips, clubs, and eating lunch in the cafeteria.

Child Study Teams suggest strategies for teachers to use to maintain students who are exhibiting academic and social/behavior problems in the regular classroom before and after identification as an ESE student.

The influence of block scheduling at the high school was brought up in several instances. It was of general consensus of district staff that scheduling may present an inaccurate accounting of ESE services for each student. The amount of time students are scheduled to receive services may change from semester to semester, and student data may be transmitted in a way that does not reflect the annual picture of the student's placement.

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Strengths

Based on interviews with district staff, student focus groups, and case studies, the following strengths are identified related to LRE.

- The ESE students participating in the focus group interviews did not express specific concerns about placement or about interaction with regular students. Students said that they felt as though they “fit in.” Most ESE students reported being involved with regular students in extra-curricular activities outside of class as well. Several students in the special diploma group were involved in sports after school. Students in the standard diploma group participated in the following extra-curricular activities: basketball, track, art shows, pottery, Little Women (a senior girl’s group), and FHA.
- The district’s curriculum specialist cited Steinhatchee School as implementing effective inclusion practices that could be replicated at other sites.
- The case studies, which are more in-depth examinations of the implementation of IEPs, provided additional information. One case study, in particular, exemplified the willingness of teachers to implement accommodations and modifications that enable a student with a physical disability to participate with his non-disabled peers in ROTC. Even though the student is in a wheel chair, he is able to compete with the drill team.

Concerns

Interviews with staff yielded the following concerns related to LRE requirements.

- There was not a consistent understanding that regular class placement with supplementary aids and services needs to be considered first by the IEP team.
- At one school, students in self-contained ESE classes attend unified arts (nonacademic) and physical education. However, there were no general education students in the same unified arts and physical education classes.
- For the schools visited, the continuum of services was limited in scope. No co-teaching model was in place that can serve as an option for students receiving services in the regular classroom.
- At one school site, decisions about students in self-contained classrooms having lunch with their non-disabled peers are made by the teacher rather than by the IEP team.
- Decisions about eating lunch with non-disabled peers and riding an ESE bus appeared to be based on a student’s class placement.

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- There is limited interaction between students with disabilities and their non-disabled peers at lunch since they are assigned to tables with their respective classmates.
- At one school, in specific grade levels, students with disabilities do not receive science, social studies, and physical education, because of teacher scheduling issues.
- It should be noted that some staff members who were interviewed held the belief that the high percentage of students being served in self-contained classes may be due to placement of high school students in ESE classes. Staff indicated that high school students are placed in more restrictive environments.
- During the focus group interview, one parent expressed concern about the child's placement. According to the parent, the child was placed in a self-contained setting with children who had behavior problems. The parent is worried that their child is not learning in this classroom setting. Several parents expressed additional concerns about the way their children are grouped. Parents felt that their children do not receive the help they need when they are grouped with students of varying exceptionalities.
- Parents who were interviewed did not express concerns about their children being in overly restrictive environments. However, the participation of their children with regular education students was not always positive. Parents indicated that regular education students often taunted their children to the point at which their children were afraid to go to school, or were punished because they reacted physically to the taunting. Parents felt that school personnel need to be more attentive and intervene to stop non-disabled students from teasing and provoking children with disabilities.

Findings of Noncompliance

None were noted.

System Improvement: LRE

| Action Steps | Contact Person | Target Completion Date | Measurable Results Indicating Effective Correction |
|---|----------------|------------------------|--|
| 1. After surveying ESE and regular education teachers and administrators to determine where the decision-making process is in need of improvement, the district will provide additional training to improve the decision-making process | Shona Murphy | June 2003 | Random review of IEPs, student schedules, and selected case studies to determine implementation of LRE training. |

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| regarding placement in the least restrictive environment and to increase access to LRE for students. | | | |
| 2. The district will review and revise scheduling processes to ensure that schools provide access to all appropriate classes, including PE, science and social studies. | Shona Murphy | June 2003 | Random review of IEPs, student schedules, and selected case studies to ensure access to classes. |
| 3. District will work with FIN to implement additional service models to better promote inclusion, including sensitivity training. | Shona Murphy | Beginning August 2002 | Yearly comparison of data from Survey 9 in 2002 and 2003 to determine the increase of the number of students served in inclusive settings. |

General Supervision

Background Information

All of the district's SAI funds are used to support a six-week summer school program. The program provides instruction to all children who score in the bottom quartile, including students with disabilities.

Both regular and special education teachers attend inservice training sessions that focus on standards and curriculum including the district-wide SRA reading initiative. In addition, training on extended school year (ESY) services and re-evaluation procedures was also provided this past year.

Paraprofessionals are encouraged to participate in training sessions. The district has a new initiative to help paraprofessionals pursue a college degree in special education.

The ESE Director shares information with ESE teachers through the staffing specialists and electronic mail.

Most schools have an in-school suspension (ISS) program in place and classwork is provided for suspended students. There is an alternative school as an option.

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Psychological services are contracted through Florida State University Multi-Disciplinary Center (FSUMDC). The district's primary psychologist from FSUMDC is aware of OCR issues related to the over-identification of African Americans in Educable Mentally Handicapped/Emotionally Handicapped (EMH/EH) classes.

The case studies, which allow for a more in-depth examination of the implementation of IEPs, provided additional information. It is noted that goals and objectives are individualized, an extensive list of modifications are listed on the IEP, student progress is reported to parents at least every nine weeks, and extended school year (ESY) services are considered.

Strengths

The following strengths were identified for the area of general supervision during interviews with district staff and in examination of the district's data.

- Regular and special education teachers have opportunities to attend the same inservice training opportunities.
- The district is generally able to work through disagreements with parents without formal interventions.
- Implementation of activities that were identified through the OCR agreement has resulted in a decrease in the number of African-American students identified as Educable Mentally Handicapped/Emotionally Handicapped (EMH/EH).
- The district developed a brochure for parents on diploma options and the ramifications of selecting each option.
- FSUMDC has a variety of evaluators, so the individual characteristics of a child can often be matched with an evaluator (e.g., Spanish speaking evaluator can be matched with a Spanish speaking child).
- The percentage of students with disabilities who participate in state assessments has steadily increased at all grade levels between the 97-98, 98-99, and the 99-00 school years. The participation rate for Taylor County is higher than both the state and the enrollment group participation rates in all reported areas except for 5th grade math, which was within 4% of the state average and 2% of the enrollment group average in 99-00. (See Appendix A)

Concerns

Interviews with staff, parent focus groups, case studies, and record reviews yielded concerns related to the General Supervision requirements.

- Although the district provided training on reevaluation and ESY, staff remained unclear on the procedures.

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- Staff members were not familiar with functional behavioral assessments.
- Students expelled from the academy are sent to the director's office as an alternative to suspension.
- No procedures are implemented for provision of notice to parents in their native language.
- Some teachers were unable to describe how to track progress toward mastery of IEP goals.
- It is not apparent who serves in the capacity of the LEA representative. The staffing specialist was reported to have served in this capacity, but it is not clearly noted on the IEP.
- The strengths of the student addressed in the Present Level of Performance statements are vague and do not have direct bearing on the goals and short-term objectives.
Example: "Student enjoys reading in class."
- The range of time used to describe the frequency of service did not provide a sufficient description of the individual needs of students.
- The case studies reflected similar weaknesses as those found during the record reviews with deficiencies noted in the present level of performance statements and annual goals and short term objectives not written in observable and measurable terms.
- During the parent focus group interview, concerns were expressed about the training of aides, teachers teaching out-of-field and regular education teachers who have not received training about students with disabilities. Several parents were concerned that the training of ESE teachers is too general, such that they do not know how best to teach children with specific disabilities. "Sometimes the teachers know how to help child 'x', but no idea how to help child 'y.' If they can't get training, there's no help for the child or the teacher."

Findings of Noncompliance

A review of the student records also yielded non-compliance items related to general supervision. None of the items listed below are isolated cases; rather they represent multiple records. For each compliance item, an example or explanation is provided.

- The LEA representative, special education teacher, general education teacher, and interpreter of instructional implications of testing did not sign some IEPs.
Explanation: There was a lack of evidence that appropriate IEP Team members were present at the IEP meeting.

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- The person serving as the interpreter of instructional implications of testing is not identified on IEPs.
Explanation: There was a lack of evidence indicating the person serving in the role of interpreter of instructional implications of testing.
- Some IEPs were missing statements indicating how the student's disability affects the student's involvement and progress in the general curriculum.
Explanation: Statements indicating how the student's disability affects involvement and progress in the general curriculum need to be detailed. Words like "moderate" and "mild" do not provide sufficient detail.
- Some annual goals were not written in measurable terms.
Examples:
"Student will learn strategies to help her deal with her anger."
"Student will learn strategies to complete assignments."
- Some short-term objectives were either not written in measurable terms or are not listed on IEP.
- There was a lack of understanding of the requirements for change of FAPE.
Examples:
There was no notice of "Change of FAPE" when physical therapy was added to one IEP. Another record did not contain a prior written notice of change of FAPE. The parent consent was used as the notification.
- The IEP form does not provide a section where modifications, supplementary aids and services or supports for school personnel can be identified.
- The initiation dates, duration dates, frequency and location of modifications were not identified on IEPs.
- The IEP form does not provide for adequate identification of the location of services.
- The IEP form and progress reports do not allow for a description of the extent to which progress is sufficient to enable the student to achieve the goal by the end of the year.
- The IEP team's consideration of the results of the initial evaluation or most recent evaluation of the student was not documented on the IEP.
- The IEP team's consideration of the results of the student's performance on any state or district-wide assessment was not documented on the IEP.

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The following non-compliance item was identified on a specific student record.

- One student record was noted to have a prereferral observation date subsequent to the referral for evaluation.

System Improvement: General Supervision

| Action Steps | Contact Person | Target Completion Date | Measurable Results Indicating Effective Correction |
|---|-----------------------|--|--|
| 1. District will implement new IEP form which contains required elements. | Shona Murphy | Submit to DOE for review by December 2002 Form implemented in August 2003 | Review and implementation of new IEP forms. |
| 2. District will provide training that will cover directions for new IEP form and items of noncompliance. | Shona Murphy | August 2003 | Review a random sampling of IEPs completed after implementation for compliance with all identified elements. |
| 3. District will provide training on the use of functional behavioral assessments (FBA) and behavior improvement plans (BIP). | Shona Murphy | August 2003 | Random review of selected case studies reveals effective use of FBA/BIP process. |

Parent Participation

Background Information

Prior to referring children to the child study team (CST), teachers are required to conduct at least two conferences with parents to discuss their child. Those conferences are documented and the information is later used at the CST meetings, if necessary. Parents are routinely invited to CST meetings and their active participation is solicited.

Strengths

The results of the parent survey identified the following areas of strength (measured at or above the 95th percentile compared to statewide responses):

1. Teachers set appropriate goals for my child.
2. Teachers expect my child to succeed.

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3. My child is learning independent living skills that will be useful later on in life.
4. My child participates in state and district-wide assessments.
5. My child is usually happy at school.

Staff identified practices in specific schools and the district that have positive impact on the participation of parents.

- At one school there is a volunteer coordinator who encourages parent involvement and there are two parents of ESE students on the School Advisory Council.
- At one school it is noted that staff make extensive efforts to include parents in meetings by offering transportation.
- The district office hired a parent specialist.
- The district conducted its own parent survey.

Concerns

The parent survey, focus group, review of student records, and interviews with staff revealed the following concerns related to parent participation.

- The results of the parent survey identified only one area of significant concern (measured below the 5th percentile): "My child spends most of the school day involved in productive activities."
- The psychologist reported that some parents are unaware that they can get a copy of the evaluation report prior to the meeting.
- Parents who participated in the focus interview stated they received information from the district regarding their rights and responsibilities. However, some said they did not understand what they were given and were not instructed on what it means. As one parent said, "You get the paperwork, but no one explains it to you." Other parents concurred: "You have to go out on your own and get the information." "You have to push early because it gets harder as they get older...They don't tell you what your rights are, so you don't know what to ask for."
- During the focus group interview, parents suggested that the school district could help parents by sending them a letter with information on where they can get help. Parents also recommended that they be invited to share what they think about ESE services and to talk about those strategies that are working in one school that could be implemented in other schools. As one parent said, "I think there are a lot of improvements the school system can make. The school system needs to support all of our children's dreams."
- A varying degree of overall parent satisfaction with ESE services that Taylor County provides was expressed during the focus group interviews. One parent stated that improvements have been made at the school level. Several parents stated that they were very satisfied with the support that

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teachers provide and that teachers are available to meet with parents who request a meeting. One parent reported that her experience was very positive. "The school had the principal and the dean involved in the IEP meeting. They do anything they can to make sure the students will succeed. This was the first time that anyone higher in the school system had been involved. There are a lot of areas they definitely need to improve on, but this school is doing a good job. At this school every person, even the janitors, welcome my son. I don't have any problem contacting the teachers, and we work as a group to fix things." Other parents, however, expressed concerns about whether ESE services were adequate to meet their children's needs. Parents felt that they had to actively search out information on what services were offered and what resources are available, and that the quality of services their child received depended largely on the quality of individual teachers. Parents were also concerned about the lack of availability of district personnel, and listed communication as a major problem.

Findings of Noncompliance

A review of the student records and interviews with staff yielded the following non-compliance items related to parent participation. None of the items listed below are isolated cases; rather they represent multiple instances.

- The notice of the IEP meeting did not include documentation that the parents received a copy of the procedural safeguards.
- Concerns of the parents for enhancing the education of their child were not among the factors documented during the development of the IEP. The interviews with staff supported the results of the record review which indicated that although IEPs do document whether or not parents are in attendance at the meetings, the extent of that parent participation is not documented. Parents provide extensive information and a unique perspective about their child that needs to be considered and documented in the development of the IEP. There is no place on the IEP form where parent concerns can be documented.

System Improvement: Parent Participation

| Action Steps | Contact Person | Target Completion Date | Measurable Results Indicating Effective Correction |
|---|-----------------------|---|---|
| 1. Notice of IEP meeting will be revised to include documentation regarding the receipt of the procedural safeguards. | Shona Murphy | Form submitted to DOE by Dec. 2002 Implementation by May 2003. | Revised IEP meeting notice approved by DOE and implemented by district. |

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| Action Steps | Contact Person | Target Completion Date | Measurable Results Indicating Effective Correction |
|--|----------------|------------------------|---|
| 2. IEP will be revised to include parent concerns for enhancing their child's education. | Shona Murphy | Aug. 2003 | Random review of IEPs reveals documentation of parental concerns for their child's education. |

Gifted Services

Background Information

The child study team is responsible for recommending students for gifted evaluations. The students who are recommended are pre-tested and if they score high enough, they are formally tested and the parent/teacher checklist is completed. Parents are notified about the staffing meeting and invited to attend. Eligibility is determined at a school-site meeting. Parents are invited to educational plan (EP) meetings. The EP meetings are held in a group; however, parents can request an individual meeting.

The only option for gifted students at the elementary level is a pullout program two afternoons a week. Elementary children are bused weekly to the gifted program at the middle school for part of one day per week. For middle school students, the only option includes one social studies class per day with enhanced content taught by the gifted teacher. At the high school level, gifted students may take one class for one semester during the year.

Strengths

None were noted.

Concerns

The interviews with the teacher of gifted students and the district's representative of the gifted program yielded concerns related to providing services to gifted students.

- The continuum of services for gifted children is limited. The size of the district and small number of students makes it challenging to provide a program with more options.
- Parent input and concerns expressed during the EP meeting are not documented.

A case study of a gifted student was conducted. A review of the EP in connection with the case study indicated additional deficiencies.

- Some present level of performance statement was vague.
Example: "needs skills in being an information manager"

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- Some student outcomes lacked specificity.
Example: “will choose one decade for an in depth study” and “will exhibit understanding of various form of fine arts”
- Some evaluation procedures were not appropriate.
Example: “create and share information with peers with a criteria of mastery of 80% and a peer evaluation”

Findings of Noncompliance

A review of student records yielded the following non-compliance items related specifically to gifted students.

- Present level of performance statements were not detailed sufficiently.
Example: Student is “performing at an advanced academic level” does not provide sufficient information.

System Improvement: Gifted

| Action Steps | Contact Person | Target Completion Date | Measurable Results Indicating Effective Correction |
|---|-----------------------|-------------------------------|--|
| 1. District will explore the expansion of gifted service delivery models to better meet individual needs at the elementary, middle, and high school levels. | Shona Murphy | Ongoing beginning August 2003 | Review of plans to expand model of gifted service delivery to elementary and middle school gifted students. The district will choose a model to implement in 2003-04. |
| 2. District will begin to implement chosen delivery model. | Shona Murphy | Beginning 2003-2004 | The district will provide a narrative summary of changes resulting from the implementation of the new service delivery model. |
| 3. EP forms will be revised to include parent input and concerns. | Shona Murphy | December 2002 | Review of revised EP form submitted to DOE. |
| 4. District will provide additional training in regard to the development of | Shona Murphy | June 2003 | Review of random sampling of EP's to determine the |

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| | | | |
|--|--|--|--|
| present level of performance statements. | | | compliance of the present level of performance statements. |
|--|--|--|--|

Child Find

Background Information

The primary mission of the child study team (CST) implemented at each school is to propose new instructional and behavioral strategies that can be used with specific students exhibiting academic and social behavior problems. The teacher requesting assistance collects information about the student's academic performance and social behavior to determine the success of the suggested intervention strategies that are implemented. If students continue not to make progress, then appropriate referrals for additional assistance and testing are made to the district office. If the CST decides that additional testing is needed, consent for evaluation is obtained from the parents and speech and hearing screenings are administered with the remainder of the paperwork to be completed by the district office.

Strengths

- Schools conduct CST meetings on a regular basis in order to ensure that all students' needs are addressed and that appropriate referrals are made.
- The testing battery is individualized in that the selection of tests is based on the referral issue and the results of a general battery of tests.

Concerns

Based on the interviews with district staff and parent focus group interviews regarding child find procedures, the following concerns have been identified.

- The student services specialists who facilitate the CST meetings do not know what happens to student referrals after they are sent to the district office. The specialists may or may not be part of the eligibility meeting and do not necessarily have the opportunity to see the evaluation results until after the eligibility meetings are held. In other words, there seems to be a period of time when the school staff members feel they are unaware of progress or events that have taken place.
- During the focus group interview, several parents reported that they had paid out of their own pockets, some up to several thousand dollars, to have their children evaluated by independent professionals. Parents had gone to this expense either because the schools did not provide timely evaluation services or because the parents perceived that the evaluations were inadequate.

Findings of Noncompliance

None were noted.

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System Improvement: Child Find

| Action Steps | Contact Person | Target Completion Date | Measurable Indicating Correction | Results Effective |
|--|----------------|------------------------|---|---|
| 1. Student Services Specialists will be notified of and invited to all IEP/EP meetings. | Shona Murphy | August 2003 | Notification lists provided by Staffing Specialists | |
| 2a. District will track length of time from completed referral date to evaluation date. 2b. District will establish benchmarks to reduce time lapse if data indicates a need. | Shona Murphy | August 2003 | Data collected indicates that the length of time from referral to evaluation decreases. | District meets 60 day evaluation timeline for students with disabilities, and evaluates within a reasonable time for students identified as gifted. |

Transition from Part C to Part B Programs

Background Information

On a monthly basis a meeting is held following the Shared Services Network meeting. In attendance at this meeting is the family service coordinator from the Part C Early Intervention Program (Children’s Home Society), the school district representative, and a representative from FDLRS. At this meeting, they discuss children who are approaching age three and will be transitioning. This is not, however, the meeting with the family where the transition component of the family support plan is discussed. In terms of services for preschool children with disabilities, the child development center houses the district operated Head Start Program, pre-kindergarten early intervention, and two pre-kindergarten classes for children with disabilities. Children with disabilities have opportunities to be with their nondisabled peers during lunch and on field trips.

Strengths

Based on staff interviews, the following strengths have been identified with regard to C to B transition.

- There appears to be considerable ongoing formal and informal contact among agencies to ensure that the school district is aware of children approaching age three.

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- The school district has an interagency agreement in place for the provision of ESE services with the Early Intervention Program (EIP).

Concerns

Based on staff interviews, the following concerns have been noted with regard to C to B transition.

- Structuring more opportunities for time with nondisabled peers should be explored for pre-kindergarten children with disabilities.

Findings of Noncompliance

- It does not appear that a LEA representative is in attendance at the transition planning meeting convened by the EIP with the parent to plan for transition. This meeting is required at least 90 days prior to the child's third birthday. The school district staff members that were interviewed were unclear about this aspect of the transition process and staff did not know if another school district representative is in attendance at the transition meeting with the family. The interagency agreement was reviewed as part of the monitoring. While the agreement notes the EIP's obligation to use the transition page of the Family Support Plan and discuss the transition page with the family, it does not reference the requirement to invite the LEA to this meeting.

System Improvement: Transition Part C to Part B Programs

| Action Steps | Contact Person | Target Completion Date | Measurable Results Indicating Effective Correction |
|--|-----------------------|-------------------------------|--|
| 1. District will work with EIP personnel to revise agreement and procedures to include LEA in the invitation to the transition planning meeting. | Shona Murphy | Dec. 2002 | Revised agreement and procedures documentation Random review of transition planning meeting documentation indicates that the LEA was invited to and in attendance at the meeting. |

Secondary Transition

Background Information

Linkages with vocational rehabilitation are improving. Taylor Association for Retarded Citizens (TARC) and Easter Seals have provided some assistance for transitioning students.

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Students in the special diploma group who were interviewed had various plans for the future including going to college, playing football, going to modeling college and becoming a designer. Students in the standard diploma group also shared their plans, including going to college, becoming a registered nurse, and going into the military. Several students had thought about which colleges they might want to attend. Students in the special diploma group agreed that their school helps them find a job. Several students were participating in job preparation programs offered at the school, such as janitorial work at the primary school. In the standard diploma group, students stated that all seniors were invited to attend a career fair at Madison College, where they were able to get information on different schools. Two students said they were participating in job preparation programs as part of their daily schedules: one student worked in the Primary Pre-K program and the other in the lunchroom. Students were participating in vocational courses such as welding. One student mentioned that the welding class would provide training required for getting a job at the mill. Students in the standard diploma group stated that they had been asked if they wanted to go for a regular or special diploma.

Although students in the standard diploma group did not recognize the term "transition meeting," most students recalled having attended such meetings even if their parents could not attend. Students felt that they had a good opportunity to say what they wanted at the transition meetings and that they were on track with their plans. The students recalled that their ESE and regular teachers had participated in the meetings, but guidance counselors had not.

Strengths

None were noted.

Concerns

- The ESE Director reported that agency representatives frequently do not attend IEP meetings. The transition specialist is relied upon to follow up on services, if necessary.

Findings of Noncompliance

A review of the student records yielded one systemic non-compliance item related to transition.

- Transition IEPs do not contain a course of study statement, beginning at age 14.

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System Improvement: Secondary Transition

| Action Steps | Contact Person | Target Completion Date | Measurable Results Indicating Effective Correction |
|--|----------------|--|--|
| 1. The IEP form will be revised to include a course of study statement for students age 14 or older. | Shona Murphy | Form submitted by December 2002 Review of random samples in August 2003 | Revised IEP form submitted to DOE for review and approval. Random review of IEPs to verify course of study identified for students age 14 or older. |
| 2. A Transition Fair will be held to promote communication with and knowledge of agencies and their representatives. | Shona Murphy | December 2002 | Summary report of the outcome of the transition fair, including the number of attendees, number of agencies represented, and activities which occurred. |

Access to General Curriculum

Background Information

Interviews with staff provided much insight into how students with disabilities are provided access to the general curriculum. There is not a separate curriculum for students with disabilities. The curriculum used for all students in the district follows the Sunshine State Standards. Students with disabilities are reported as being provided with supplemental materials and instructional supports in order to ensure access to the general curriculum. A countywide reading initiative using the Science Research Associates methodology and including students with disabilities is underway. Students with disabilities are routinely participating in the FCAT with accommodations. All students have access to FCAT preparation classes, a countywide reading program called Read 180, and computer labs.

Students who were interviewed expressed knowledge about their course requirements and curriculum. Some students in the special diploma group reported participating in regular education courses as well as ESE courses, while others participate only in ESE courses. Students stated that their ESE teachers offered them a great deal of help. Students said that they follow the same curriculum in their ESE classes that other students follow in regular education classes. "I had trouble in math, I went to an ESE class and I learned a lot more

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there. It was the same topic, the same books as in the regular class.” Students appreciated the more deliberate pace of the ESE classes: “We do the same work in math class. We don’t speed through like everyone else does. In the regular classes, they speed through three chapters, in ESE we do one.”

Students in the standard diploma group stated they attend regular education classes. Students indicated that they could go to their ESE teachers for help when their regular education teachers were unable to provide assistance. Students reported participating in the FCAT and understood that they are required to pass it in order to get the standard diploma: “We took the test for a standard diploma- all of us took it, some passed it, some didn’t. Some have taken it more than one time. We have one more chance to take it.” Students stated that they received the following accommodations during the FCAT: extended time, extra breaks, and, taking the test in the ESE classroom. Students also shared that they get extended time during the HSCT as well.

Parents who participated in the focus group interview did not express specific concerns about the curriculum their children are receiving. One parent of a high school student was aware that their child was following a modified version of the general curriculum. Another parent stated that their child was in regular classes and that this was helping to prepare the child for college.

Most parents stated that their children had participated in the FCAT and had received appropriate accommodations, for example, extended time and alternate settings. One parent stated that their child had taken the FCAT without accommodations although they were needed.

Strengths

The results of the staff interviews and case studies indicated the following related to access to the general curriculum:

- Students are encouraged by all staff to join in on any activities that are available at the schools.
- Elective teachers are willing to implement accommodations and modifications to enable student to participate.
- In some settings there appear to be strong collaborative relationships between regular and special education teachers.

Concerns

The following concerns in the area of access to the general curriculum were identified through student focus groups, parent focus groups, and interviews with staff.

- Several students during the focus group interview indicated they felt frustrated with some of their regular education teachers: “Some teachers help, some

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don't, teacher by teacher...The regular teachers, they put it on the board and tell you to do it...All teachers won't give you extra time, but some will."

- Parents had varying perceptions about whether their children were receiving appropriate instructional adaptations and accommodations. One parent reported that their child was receiving appropriate accommodations. Another parent said that their child was receiving accommodations, but only as a result of the parent insistence. Several parents stated that whether or not their children received appropriate accommodations varied from teacher to teacher. Some teachers, according to parents, adapted the material to meet the needs of individual students; others did not, and were not responsive to parents' concerns. Another concern was that teachers do not use different teaching strategies for children who have different learning styles
- One parent expressed concern over the school's failure to provide an accommodation that was specified on the child's IEP. "They were supposed to get him a CD-ROM so that he could listen . . . while he reads along, but nothing happens (sic). That was all on the IEP... We've seen on the IEP that our son would get tutoring. If he didn't get it, they were supposed to make it up. He's so far behind, and there's no guarantee that he'll make it up this year."
- One parent reported that the school just passed their child along without ensuring that he acquired real skills. "My son never had any homework. The teacher said as long as he sits in class and doesn't cause any trouble that she would pass him. He was well behaved and passed every grade. I don't think it's right. They have so many other students that are capable of learning the way they are teaching, so they don't have to change." Another parent concurred. "He's getting passing grades, but he has no idea what is going on. He's going to graduate . . .but he isn't going to know anything."
- The results of the interviews with school staff indicated concerns about participation of students with disabilities in statewide assessments. One ESE teacher reported not being able to interpret statewide assessment results. Another ESE teacher reported that the decision about whether or not to include a student with a disability in a statewide assessment is based on the "IQ Score" and that only SLD students are participating. That same teacher noted that it was primarily the parent who decided if the student would participate.

Findings of Noncompliance

None were noted.

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System Improvement: Access to General Curriculum

| Action Steps | Contact Person | Target Completion Date | Measurable Results Indicating Effective Correction |
|---|-----------------------|-------------------------------|--|
| 1. District will provide training in regard to the use of assistive technology. | Shona Murphy | December 2002 | Documentation of training and demonstrations provided. Verification of appropriate use of assistive technology. |
| 2. District will provide training on accommodating students with disabilities in the regular education classroom. | Shona Murphy | May 2003 | Documentation of training and demonstrations provided. District will conduct a random survey of general education teachers to verify increased or improved use of accommodations. |
| 3. District will provide training on FCAT accommodations and student preparation as indicated on the IEP. | Shona Murphy | May 2003 | Documentation of training and demonstrations provided. Verification of appropriate provision of FCAT accommodations and student preparation. |

SUMMARY

The purpose of the focused monitoring implemented in Taylor County School District was to examine educational benefits and desired outcomes for students with disabilities and gifted students. As described earlier in this report, the process was designed to provide a mechanism that would subsequently result in improved educational benefits and outcomes. The DOE and its work group identified key data indicators that describe measures of educational benefit. Those would be the focus of the monitoring activities. The challenge for the Department was to customize a monitoring process that would not only continue

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to address areas of non-compliance, but would provide information about the performance of and outcomes for exceptional education students.

Following release of the preliminary report, the district was required to develop system improvement measures for each topical area of the report. The Bureau will monitor the implementation of these system improvement measures over time and provide technical support as needed and requested by the district.

It is expected that the results and findings from this monitoring will help the district address the extent to which desired outcomes for exceptional education students are considered and provide a framework for planning for the future.

APPENDIX A – LEA PROFILE



Florida Department of Education
Division of Public Schools and Community Education
Bureau of Instructional Support and Community Services
LEA Profile

| | |
|-----------------------------|--------------------------------|
| District: Taylor | PK-12 Population: 3,805 |
| School Year: 1999-00 | Percent Disabled: 18% |
| | Percent Gifted: 3% |

Introduction

This 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, districts of comparable size (enrollment group), and the state. Where appropriate and available, comparative data for general education students are included.

Data presented as indicators of educational benefit

- Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test (FCAT) Participation and Performance
- Standard diploma rate
- Dropout rate
- Retention rate

Data presented as indicators of educational environment

- Regular class placement
- Separate class placement
- Discipline rates

Data presented as indicators of prevalence

- Student membership by race/ethnicity
- Gifted membership by free/reduced lunch and Limited English Proficiency (LEP) status
- Student membership in selected exceptionalities by race/ethnicity

Four of the indicators included in the profile, Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test (FCAT) participation, graduation rate, dropout rate, and regular class placement, are also used in the selection of districts for focused monitoring. Indicators describing the prevalence and special class placement of students identified as educable mentally handicapped (EMH) are included to correspond with provisions of the Department's resolution agreement with the Office for Civil Rights. In districts where the data reveal a significant disproportionality of minority students in EMH programs or a high percentage of EMH students served in special classes, the district may be required to conduct a school level analysis of prevalence data for EMH students.

The LEA profile is intended to provide districts with a tool for use in planning for systemic improvement. Districts are asked to thoroughly review the data and select indicators that hold potential for the greatest program improvement. Once indicators have been selected, districts will develop a plan to conduct a local in-depth analysis that will be submitted with the district's entitlement grant application.

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 from the assessment files. Data are included from school years **1997-98** through **1999-00**.

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 indications of consumer satisfaction. This section of the profile provides data on indicators of student performance and school completion.

Participation Rate in Statewide Assessments

The number of students with disabilities taking the Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test (FCAT) divided by the number enrolled during survey 3 (February) of the same year. (Note: Only students with valid scores are included in the calculation of participation rates). The resulting percentages are reported for the three-year period from **1997-98** through **1999-2000**.

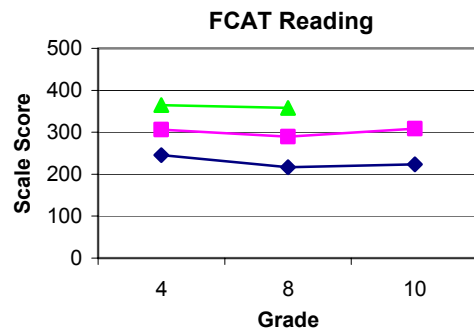
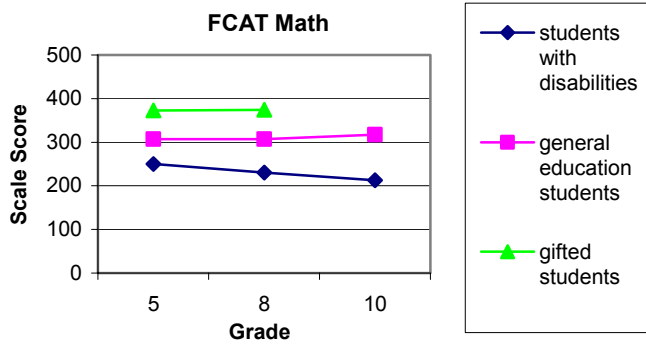
| Grade 4 Participation FCAT - Reading | | | Taylor Enrollment Group State | Grade 5 Participation FCAT - Math | | |
|---|---------|---------|-------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|---------|---------|
| 1997-98 | 1998-99 | 1999-00 | | 1997-98 | 1998-99 | 1999-00 |
| 83% | 72% | 91% | | 51% | 81% | 79% |
| 73% | 75% | 82% | | 74% | 78% | 81% |
| 74% | 76% | 82% | 77% | 79% | 84% | |

| Grade 8 Participation FCAT - Reading | | | Taylor Enrollment Group State | Grade 8 Participation FCAT - Math | | |
|---|---------|---------|-------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|---------|---------|
| 1997-98 | 1998-99 | 1999-00 | | 1997-98 | 1998-99 | 1999-00 |
| 49% | 67% | 84% | | 59% | 65% | 82% |
| 71% | 73% | 79% | | 70% | 74% | 79% |
| 69% | 70% | 76% | 69% | 70% | 76% | |

| Grade 10 Participation FCAT - Reading | | | Taylor Enrollment Group State | Grade 10 Participation FCAT - Math | | |
|--|---------|---------|-------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|---------|---------|
| 1997-98 | 1998-99 | 1999-00 | | 1997-98 | 1998-99 | 1999-00 |
| 65% | 56% | 81% | | 69% | 61% | 78% |
| 49% | 62% | 83% | | 50% | 58% | 84% |
| 50% | 66% | 60% | 51% | 51% | 59% | |

Performance on Statewide Assessments

The following chart and table display the district's average scale score of all students with a valid score taking the FCAT in **1999-2000**. The averages are reported for students with disabilities, general education students, and gifted students. (Note: Tenth grade performance of gifted students may not be included due to small numbers.)



| FCAT Math | | |
|---------------------|-------|-------|
| Average Scale Score | | |
| Grade | Grade | Grade |
| 5 | 8 | 10 |
| 250 | 230 | 212 |
| 307 | 307 | 317 |
| 372 | 375 | |

students with disabilities
 general education students
 gifted students

| FCAT Reading | | |
|---------------------|-------|-------|
| Average Scale Score | | |
| Grade | Grade | Grade |
| 4 | 8 | 10 |
| 246 | 217 | 224 |
| 306 | 290 | 309 |
| 365 | 358 | |

The percent of students with disabilities at each achievement level on the **1999-2000** FCAT. For the calculation of school grades, high performing FCAT criteria are met when 50 percent or more students (included in the school grade) score at level 3 or above.

| Grade 4 Achievement Level FCAT - Reading | | | | |
|---|-----|-----|----|-----|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 63% | 20% | 14% | 4% | 0% |
| 65% | 13% | 15% | 6% | <1% |
| 65% | 13% | 15% | 6% | <1% |

Taylor
 Enrollment Group
 State

| Grade 5 Achievement Level FCAT - Math | | | | |
|--|-----|-----|----|-----|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 71% | 20% | 7% | 2% | 0% |
| 62% | 23% | 10% | 4% | <1% |
| 58% | 25% | 11% | 5% | <1% |

| Grade 8 Achievement Level FCAT - Reading | | | | |
|---|-----|----|-----|-----|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 79% | 17% | 5% | 0% | 0% |
| 75% | 22% | 2% | 1% | 0% |
| 72% | 24% | 3% | <1% | <1% |

Taylor
 Enrollment Group
 State

| Grade 8 Achievement Level FCAT - Math | | | | |
|--|-----|-----|----|-----|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 83% | 10% | 8% | 0% | 0% |
| 74% | 15% | 9% | 2% | <1% |
| 69% | 16% | 11% | 2% | <1% |

| Grade 10 Achievement Level FCAT - Reading | | | | |
|--|-----|-----|----|----|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 82% | 14% | 0% | 5% | 0% |
| 81% | 15% | <1% | 3% | 0% |
| 76% | 19% | <1% | 3% | 0% |

Taylor
 Enrollment Group
 State

| Grade 10 Achievement Level FCAT - Math | | | | |
|---|-----|-----|----|-----|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 90% | 0% | 10% | 0% | 0% |
| 72% | 17% | 8% | 2% | 0% |
| 65% | 19% | 11% | 4% | <1% |

Standard Diploma Graduation Rate for Students with Disabilities

The number of students with disabilities graduating with a standard diploma (withdrawal code W06) divided by the total number of students with disabilities who completed their education (withdrawal codes W06-10, W27). The resulting percentages are reported for the three-year period from **1997-98** through **1999-2000**.

| | | 1997-98 | 1998-99 | 1999-00 |
|--------|------------------|---------|---------|---------|
| Taylor | Enrollment Group | 27% | 71% | 41% |
| | State | 54% | 55% | 47% |
| | State | 59% | 66% | 56% |

Retention Rate

The number of students retained divided by the survey 2 (October) enrollment. The results are reported for students with disabilities and all PK-12 students for **1999-2000**.

| | | 1999-00 | |
|--------|------------------|----------------------------|--------------|
| | | Students with Disabilities | All Students |
| Taylor | Enrollment Group | <1% | 8.9% |
| | State | <1% | 7.4% |
| | State | <1% | 6.8% |

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). Total enrollment is the count of all students who attended school at any time during the school year. The resulting percentages are reported for students with disabilities, gifted students, and all PK-12 students for the years **1998-99** through **1999-2000**.

| | | 1998-99 | | | 1999-00 | | |
|--------|------------------|----------------------------|--------------|-----------------|----------------------------|--------------|-----------------|
| | | Students with Disabilities | All Students | Gifted Students | Students with Disabilities | All Students | Gifted Students |
| Taylor | Enrollment Group | 6% | 4% | 0% | 7% | 5% | 0% |
| | State | 6% | not avail. | <1% | 5% | 4% | <1% |
| | State | 7% | 5% | 1% | 6% | 5% | <1% |

Educational Environment

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

Regular Class Placement of Students with Disabilities

The number of students with disabilities ages 6-21 who spend 80 percent or more of their school week in regular classes divided by the total number of students with disabilities reported in survey 9 (December). The resulting percentages are reported for the three years from **1997-98** through **1999-2000**.

| | 1997-98 | 1998-99 | 1999-00 * | |
|------------------|----------|----------|-----------|----------|
| | Age 3-21 | Age 3-21 | Age 3-5 | Age 6-21 |
| | Taylor | 41% | 37% | <1% |
| Enrollment Group | 52% | 51% | 11% | 44% |
| State | 53% | 51% | 7% | 49% |

* 1999-00 percentages are separated due to change in placement categories for 3-5.

Separate Class Placement of EMH Students

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 survey 9 (December). The resulting percentages are reported for **1999-2000**.

| | 1999-00 |
|------------------|---------|
| Taylor | 72% |
| Enrollment Group | 60% |
| State | 61% |

Discipline Rates

The number of students who served in-school or out-of-school suspension, were expelled, or moved to alternative placement at any time during the school year divided by the survey 2 (October) enrollment. The resulting percentages are reported for students with disabilities and nondisabled students for **1999-2000**.

| | | 1999-2000 | | | | | | | |
|------------------|--|----------------------------|----------------------|----------------------------|----------------------|----------------------------|----------------------|----------------------------|----------------------|
| | | In-School Suspensions | | Out-of-School Suspensions | | Expulsions | | Alternative Placement * | |
| | | Students with Disabilities | Nondisabled Students | Students with Disabilities | Nondisabled Students | Students with Disabilities | Nondisabled Students | Students with Disabilities | Nondisabled Students |
| Taylor | | 35% | 26% | 23% | 11% | <1% | <1% | <1% | <1% |
| Enrollment Group | | 16% | 13% | 13% | 7% | <1% | <1% | <1% | <1% |
| State | | 14% | 9% | 15% | 7% | <1% | <1% | <1% | <1% |

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

Prevalence

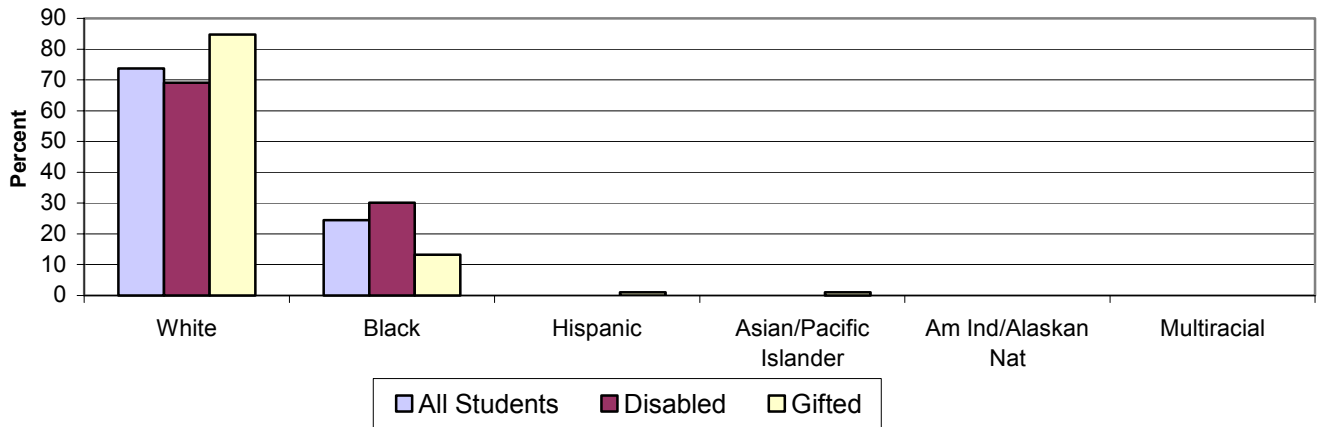
Prevalence refers to the proportion of the PK-12 population identified as exceptional at any given point in time. This section of the profile provides prevalence data by demographic characteristics.

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 1999. White students make up 54 percent of both the total population and the disabled population and 68 percent of the gifted population. Statewide, there is a larger percentage of black students in the disabled population than in the total PK-12 population (29 percent vs. 25 percent) and a smaller percentage of black students in the gifted population (10 percent vs. 25 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 | 54% | 54% | 68% | 74% | 69% | 85% |
| Black | 25% | 29% | 10% | 24% | 30% | 13% |
| Hispanic | 18% | 14% | 16% | <1% | <1% | 1% |
| Asian/Pacific Islander | 2% | <1% | 4% | <1% | 0% | 1% |
| Am Ind/Alaskan Nat | <1% | <1% | <1% | <1% | <1% | 0% |
| Multiracial | 1% | <1% | 1% | <1% | <1% | 0% |

District Student Membership by Racial/Ethnic Category



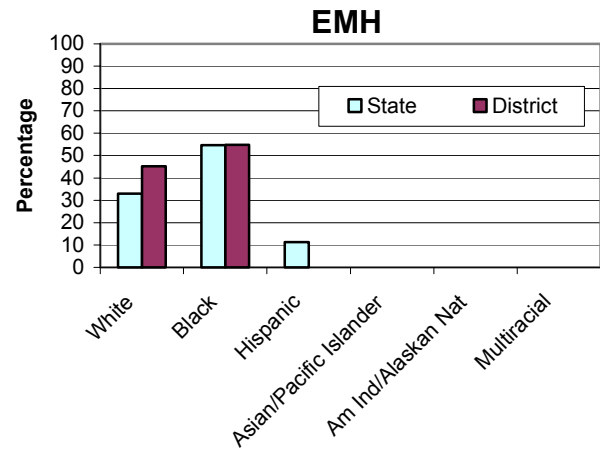
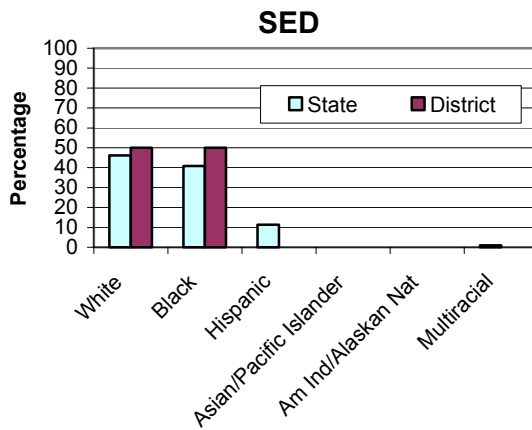
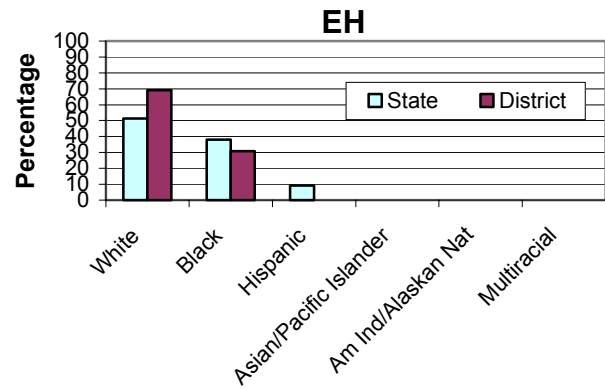
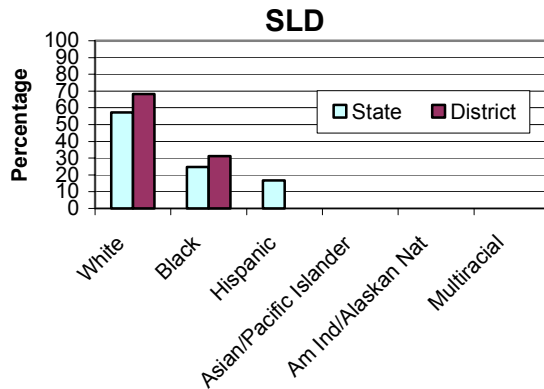
Free/Reduced Lunch and LEP

The percent of all students and all students who are gifted in the district and the State on free/reduced lunch. The percent of all students and all students who are gifted in the district and the state who are identified as Limited English Proficient (LEP). These percentages are based on data reported in Survey 2 (October 1999).

| | State | | District | |
|----------------------|--------------|-----------------|--------------|-----------------|
| | All Students | Gifted Students | All Students | Gifted Students |
| Free / Reduced Lunch | 43% | 19% | 45% | 6% |
| LEP | 10% | 2% | <1% | 0% |

Selected Exceptionalities by Racial/Ethnic Category

Racial/ethnic data for students with a primary exceptionality of specific learning disabled (SLD), emotionally handicapped (EH), severely emotionally disturbed (SED), and educable mentally handicapped (EMH) programs are presented below as reported in December 1999. Statewide, 57 percent of students identified as specific learning disabled are white, 25 percent are black, 17 percent are Hispanic, and less than one percent are reported in each of the other racial/ethnic categories. Data in the "Total" row show the percent of the total disabled population identified as SLD, EH, SED, and EMH for the state and district. Statewide, 45 percent of the students with disabilities are identified as specific learning disabled.



| | SLD | | EH | | SED | | EMH | |
|------------------------|------------|------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|---------------|-----------|-----------|
| | State | District | State | District | State | District | State | District |
| White | 57% | 68% | 51% | 69% | 46% | 50% | 33% | 45% |
| Black | 25% | 31% | 38% | 31% | 41% | 50% | 55% | 55% |
| Hispanic | 17% | 0% | 9% | 0% | 11% | 0% | 11% | 0% |
| Asian/Pacific Islander | <1% | 0% | <1% | 0% | <1% | 0% | <1% | 0% |
| Am Ind/Alaskan Nat | <1% | <1% | <1% | 0% | <1% | 0% | <1% | 0% |
| Multiracial | <1% | <1% | <1% | 0% | 1% | 0% | <1% | 0% |
| Total | 45% | 50% | 8% | 6% | 2% | <1% | 8% | 8% |

APPENDIX B – PARENT SURVEY RESPONSES

Taylor Parent Survey Report Students with Disabilities

The Parent Survey was sent to parents of the 612 students with disabilities for whom complete addresses were provided by the district. A total of 65 parents, representing 11% of the sample, returned the survey.

Item(s) for which the district response was high (≥ 75 percentile) compared to other FL districts

- Overall, I am satisfied with the exceptional education services my child receives.*
- The exceptional education my child receives is effective.
- I am satisfied with my child's academic progress.
- Teachers set appropriate goals for my child.
- My child's special teacher(s) and regular teacher(s) work together.*
- The school wants to hear my ideas.
- I am comfortable talking about my child with school staff.*
- I receive progress notes and/or phone calls from my child's teacher(s).
- My child's teacher(s) is/are available to speak with me.*
- I attend School Advisory Committee meetings concerning school improvement.
- My child is learning independent living skills that will be useful later on in life.
- My child participates in state- and district-wide assessments (FCAT).
- The school helped my child adjust at the beginning of the school year.*
- My child is usually happy at school.
- My child participates in school clubs, sports, or other activities.
- My child has friends at school.
- Exceptional education services have had a positive effect on my child's self-esteem.

Item(s) for which the district response was low (≤ 25 percentile) compared to other FL districts

- The school provides my child with special services in a timely manner.
- The information the school sends me is written in a way I understand.
- The school/district offers parents training related to their child's needs and education.
- I am a member of the PTA/PTO.
- I belong to an organization for parents of exceptional students
- School is a safe place for my child.

Taylor Parent Survey Report Students Identified as Gifted

The Parent Survey was sent to parents of the 102 students identified as gifted for whom complete addresses were provided by the district. A total of 25 parents, representing 25% of the sample, returned the survey.

Item(s) for which the district response was very high (≥ 95 percentile) compared to other FL districts

- My child's teacher(s) is/are available to speak with me.
- My child participates in state- and district-wide assessments (FCAT).
- My child spends enough time with regular education students.

Item(s) for which the district response was very low (≤ 5 percentile) compared to other FL districts

- My child is learning independent living skills that will be useful later on in life.
- My child is usually happy at school.
- School is a safe place for my child.
- My child has friends at school.

APPENDIX C – TEAM MEMBERS

**Listing of ESE Monitoring Team Members
Taylor County School District**

Department of Education Staff:

Cathy Bishop, Program Supervisor, Program Administration and Evaluation
Tury Lewis, Program Specialist IV, Program Administration and Evaluation
Kelly Claude, Program Specialist IV, Program Administration and Evaluation
Paul Gallaher, Program Specialist IV, Program Development and Services
Michael Muldoon, Program Specialist IV, Program Development and Services

Peer Reviewers:

Deborah Johns, Polk County Schools
Cara Sipel, Indian River County Schools
Kathy Dooley, Seminole County Schools

Contracted Staff:

Batya Elbaum, Researcher, University of Miami
Allison Esenkova, Researcher, University of Miami

APPENDIX D – Glossary of Acronyms

GLOSSARY OF ACRONYMS

| | |
|-----------|---|
| BUREAU | Bureau of Instructional Support & Community Services |
| CFR | Code of Federal Regulations |
| DOE | Department of Education |
| DJJ | Department of Juvenile Justice |
| EMH | Educable Mentally Handicapped |
| EH | Emotionally Handicapped |
| EP | Educational Plan |
| ESE | Exceptional Student Education |
| ESOL | English for Speakers of Other Languages |
| FAPE | Free Appropriate Public Education |
| FCAT | Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test |
| GED | Graduate Equivalency Diploma |
| GPA | Grade Point Average |
| HSCT | High School Competency Test |
| IDEA | Individuals with Disabilities Education Act |
| IEP | Individual Educational Plan |
| IQ | Intelligence Quotient |
| LEP | Limited English Proficiency |
| OJT | On-the-Job Training |
| OSEP | Office of Special Education Programs |
| Part B | Federal regulations governing ESE programs under IDEA for ages 3-21 |
| Part C | Early Intervention Program, as regulated in IDEA, for ages birth to 3 |
| Pre-K(PK) | Prekindergarten |
| RCS | Resource Compliance Specialist |
| SAI | Supplemental Academic Instruction |
| SED | Severely Emotionally Disturbed |
| SLD | Specific Learning Disability |