

The School District of Lee County
*Paperwork Reduction Report
August 29, 2008

I, Martha Simmons, teacher representative for the paperwork reduction initiative in Lee County, formed a committee consisting of six representatives from different departments. The representatives consisted of people from the District ESE and Central Services Departments and teachers and support personnel from elementary, middle, high school and alternative schools in 2006. The District staff has continued to work on the recommendations that were made during the 2007-2008 school year.

The committee designed a survey regarding paperwork that sampled the entire district, not just teachers. It was sent to administrators, instructional, and support personnel. Since the questions were open-ended, it was decided to sample the District rather than survey the entire District.

Survey responses were received from employees in the following areas:

Number of Responses

| | |
|----------------------------|-----|
| Administrators | |
| School Administrator | 9 |
| District Administrator | 1 |
| Teachers | |
| General Education | 242 |
| Adult Education | 2 |
| ESE | 47 |
| Support Personnel | |
| School Support Personnel | 29 |
| District Support Personnel | 8 |

A further breakdown of teachers surveyed:

| | |
|-------------|-----|
| Pre-K | 7 |
| K-12 | 267 |
| Mixed/Other | 7 |

Participants were asked to list any paperwork requirements that they believed could be reduced and to provide suggestions on how to reduce the paperwork. Those suggestions have served as the guide to pursue ways to address their concerns and research alternative ways to accomplish tasks in a more efficient and time-saving way, if it was decided that the original paperwork was still needed.

We had 160 responses concerning the paperwork requirements that could possibly be reduced. Areas with high levels of concern were: cum folders, lesson plans, leave requests, reimbursement requests, attendance reports, progress monitoring reports,

assessments, and forms such as ESOL, ESE, IEP, and BIP and other miscellaneous forms.

Primary suggestions were to do more things electronically. This report contains an update on the status of each of the major areas of concern.

Cum Folders: Respondents indicated that a lot of recording of information is required to be done by hand especially at the elementary level. These teachers must put the folders together and maintain them in correct order. Some respondents indicated that color coding cum folders that are being scanned is a waste of time. Respondents indicated that people have difficulty following the directions.

Department Response: All cum folders of students who have left the District or have graduated from our schools have been scanned and are retained in an electronic format. The number of hard copy cum folders has been greatly reduced and hard copies are retained as required by law and auditor request. The color-coding of folders inside of the main cum folder is now common practice and the schools are in a maintenance mode of retaining records. The only hard copy folders that need to be created at the schools are for students in kindergarten and new to the District.

Assessments: Teachers are asking that more of these be done on computer as the record keeping and time required to individually assess students for interims and quarterly reports consumes more and more of their teaching time.

Another suggestion was for the District to develop a paper test that could be given to the entire group like we do the standardized testing instead of the individual screening for data folders. This particularly affects Pre-K, Kindergarten and lower grade levels. In Kindergarten this year numerous changes literally days before interims and report cards were to go home were made. This needs to be finalized before the start of the school year to avoid unnecessary headaches. A suggestion was made to cut down on the number of assessments done in Kindergarten. Some noted that many are repeated and could possibly be combined into one instead of doing several assessments that are required all assessing the same skills in different ways.

One person felt that the Galileo assessment used in the Pre-K program is not used the next year by the Kindergarten program and requires valuable time that could better be used working with students. For 18 students the Galileo requires 6,570 entries. This person suggested that a simple checklist of skills would provide needed information for Kindergarten placement and could be done electronically.

Department Response: The Department of Accountability, Research, and Continuous Improvement in partnership with the Curriculum and Staff Development Center have implemented the new computerized system for pre, formative, and post assessments that includes scanning, scoring, electronic reporting and eventually online assessment administration.

The kindergarten assessment system, revised for the 2007-2008 school year, was well received by the kindergarten teachers. The Galileo assessment system is being phased out of the Pre-K program and is being replaced with an assessment system similar to the K-12 program.

Lesson Plans and Hard Copy of Grade Books: It was suggested that lesson plans could be kept on computer and since grades are kept electronically, there should be no reason to keep a hard copy grade book. In some schools lesson plans are required to be handed in and teachers do not get them back in time to use them on Monday. This requires paper copies to be made so that the teacher is ready for class. Perhaps these could be submitted electronically to the administrator.

District Response: Electronic lesson plan templates are currently being researched by the Curriculum and Staff Development Center. The Department will work with principals and teachers to develop a system for the 2008-2009 school year.

Report Cards: Since elementary teachers do report cards and interims on Pinnacle, a selection of “general comments” to choose from would save much time.

Department Response: The Department of Accountability, Research, and Continuous Improvement will work with teachers to develop standard comments that could be added to the elementary report card similar to what is done at the middle and high school level.

ESOL: The ESOL Department uses the old Child Study Team process and paperwork. It is recommended that members of the ESOL department devise an electronic Progress Monitoring Plan (PMP) process to track their students similar to that used by the general population. It was also suggested that a spreadsheet could be devised to track accommodations for ESOL and ESE students. The comment was made that all responsible and professional teachers make accommodations for all students, not just LY. Strategies should be part of lesson plans and should not require additional documentation.

Department Response: The Progress Monitoring Plan (PMP) is available to all schools in an electronic format.

Attendance: Classroom attendance is done by the teachers on Pinnacle, but it appears that hard copies must be run and signed a minimum time of once a week and more frequently in some schools. A large number of responses questioned this.

District Response: The District requirement to run hard copies of the weekly student attendance reports has been eliminated.

Staff Attendance: Records were also mentioned as a concern. It is recommended leave requests, reimbursement forms, NCR personnel, finance and mileage forms, and bubble sheets be replaced by PDF files and forms and the information be forwarded electronically to the departments concerned.

Department Response: The electronic leave management system is now fully operational.

ESE, IEP's, BIP and Psychological Referral Forms: People responding to the survey indicate that a lot of the information on these forms may be redundant and recommended that they be condensed, if possible. One suggestion was that schools with ESE programs have a secretary to schedule meetings, complete forms and do the organizational work that meetings typically require. Another comment recommended allowing regular education teachers have access to Excent so copies of the IEP would not need to be made and distributed to so many people. It was also suggested that ESE bus requests could better be handled more quickly online.

ESE teachers indicated they do not believe the pay supplement they receive begins to cover the extra paperwork and record keeping they have to do for their students. Apparently, many of them have to do this outside of the workday on their own time.

Department Response: The suggestions have been shared with schools and ESE personnel. All IEP's are now in an electronic format. Transportation requests for ESE students utilize an electronic format which has streamlined the entire process.

Child Study forms: Have an online form with boxes to check. Reduce the number of forms that require duplicate information.

Department Response: The electronic Progress Monitoring Plan now serves that purpose.

Discipline referrals and clinic referrals: These could be sent and tracked online instead of carbon copies.

Department Response: An electronic discipline referral and clinic referral system continues to be refined.

Some people interpreted this survey as a way to actually save paper. The suggestions included were to send newsletters and flyers that are sent home to parents with only one student in each family, print PMP documents back to back, etc.

Other Paperwork Reduction Efforts include:

- Expansion of the district website as well as the websites at the individual schools.
- All cum folders requested by other districts are sent on CDs rather than hard copies.
- The Student Code of Conduct and Parent Guides that are sent home with every student were combined and printed on lighter-weight paper which not only provided parents with a single document to use throughout the year but it also served as a cost-savings.
- Reports are sent electronically to schools rather than hard copies through the interoffice mail system.

- The District has begun implementation of Navigator, a major project that will provide use of on-line processing methods that will reduce the need for paper forms and provide a much more efficient workflow. As example, on-line assessments will replace paper assessment documents saving 10,000 sheets of paper per year.

A new survey will be developed and sent out this fall along with a survey to determine the level of satisfaction regarding paperwork reduction efforts to-date. We will continue to work on the past suggestions along with future suggestions throughout the year to consider the feasibility of implementing recommendations made.

*Pending Board Approval September 23, 2008