

# **Paperwork and Data Collection Reduction Survey Educator Results**

**A Report To The  
Okaloosa County Superintendent of Schools  
Okaloosa County School Board  
Florida Department of Education**



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August, 2008

## **Dedication**

This report is dedicated to the educators of the Okaloosa County School District.

We have a voice

“Paperwork would not stop me from professionally performing my job but compromises my time that could be used for activities that would more directly impact students.”

Anonymous Teacher

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## **Executive Summary**

The Okaloosa County School District employs educators working in general, special and vocational education capacities. Educators responding to the online survey identified themselves as Teacher – Regular Education, ESE or Special Area.

Additionally nineteen administrators and thirteen support personnel participated in the survey. The 'open response' survey was e-mailed to all Okaloosa County School District personnel per direction from the Okaloosa County Education Association and the Director of Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment.

## **Methodology**

A web-based survey, created using the American Federation of Teachers (AFT) survey creator included four Likert scale multiple-choice questions, a comment section and a drop-down employment position indicator.

The survey link was e-mailed to all Okaloosa County School District teachers, administrators and support staff on Monday, August 11 and remained open through Thursday, August 14, 2008.

There were four hundred seventy-five posted responses.

## **Legislated Paperwork Reduction**

In accordance with Florida HB 7087, this report addresses the following mandate:

### **1001.42(22) REDUCE PAPERWORK AND DATA COLLECTION AND REPORTING REQUIREMENTS.--Beginning with the 2006-2007 school year:**

- (a) Each district school board shall designate a classroom teacher to serve as the teacher representative to speak on behalf of the district's teachers regarding paperwork and data collection reduction.
- (b) Each district school board must provide the school community with an efficient method for the school community to communicate with the classroom teacher designee regarding possible paperwork and data collection burdens and potential solutions.
- (c) The teacher designee shall annually report his or her findings and potential solutions to the school board.
- (d) Each district school board must submit its findings and potential solutions to the State Board of Education by September 1 of each year.
- (e) The State Board of Education shall prepare a report of the statewide paperwork and data collection findings and potential solutions and submit the report to the Governor, the President of the Senate, and the Speaker of the House of Representatives by October 1 of each year.

## **Findings**

### Question 1

**Paperwork is an issue that keeps me from meeting performance expectations.**

Responses	Percent	Indicator
122	26%	Strongly Agree
235	49%	Somewhat Agree
46	10%	Somewhat Disagree
56	12%	Disagree
16	3%	No opinion

## Question 2

**Attempts have been made at my worksite to reduce paperwork.**

Responses	Percent	Indicator
55	12%	Strongly Agree
253	53%	Somewhat Agree
72	15%	Somewhat Disagree
77	16%	Disagree
18	4%	No opinion

### Question 3

**Attempts to reduce paperwork have led to improved time on task.**

Responses	Percent	Indicator
59	12%	Strongly Agree
199	42%	Somewhat Agree
75	16%	Somewhat Disagree
79	17%	Disagree
63	13%	No opinion

**Question 4**

**Are there paperwork items you believe could be revised, reduced, or eliminated that are NOT federal- or state-mandated? If yes, please list specific examples below:**

Responses	Percent	Indicator
132	28%	*See Qualitative Comments Section

## Question 5

Select the position that best describes you in the drop-down menu.

Responses	Percent	Indicator
343	72%	Teacher, Regular Ed
57	12%	Teacher, ESE
43	9%	Teacher, Special Area
13	3%	Ed Support
14	3%	Administration, School Level
5	1%	Administration, District Level
0	0%	Parent

## **Qualitative Comments**

The short answer section of question 4 generated some 167 responses covering a variety of topics relative to daily communication, data, reporting and accountability. Respondents shared specific complaints and suggestions which have been grouped by category as follows.

**Progress Monitoring Plans (PMPs), Academic Improvement Plans (AIPs), Limited English Proficiency (LEP), Progress Monitoring System (PMS), Plan of Care (POC)**

Comment Sampling:

PMP's and PMS's are a horrible waste of time. No ONE looks at them except for the teachers. They are based on the premise that teachers are incapable of helping students who are struggling without doing about 5 pages worth of paperwork first. Parents do not even care if their students have these. Last year in 7th grade we probably sent out over 75 letters and maybe 7 parents actually showed interest. I think it would be better if a letter were generated for students who qualify for them and then the parent can initiate a plan if they so desire. I don't think that the paperwork dictates in any fashion how the student receives instruction but is only helpful if the parent is on-board because it gives helpful ideas. (That teachers have long been familiar with).

PMPs - if this is not mandated, then why are we doing it?

Repetitive plans, IEP, LEP, PMP, AIP

Progress monitoring plans (PMP)

Writing PMP's for subjects that are not retention criteria in elementary grades. Nothing ever comes of them.

AIP/PMP These take forever and take away important instructional time.

PMPs don't seem to be a help for classroom instruction at all.

It is on the computer but I think PMS is a waste of time.

Eliminate PMP's and PMS's

Progress Monitoring Plans with all the specific details could be consolidated.

When we put PMPs, LEP plans, and other items on a computer based program it does not result in a decrease in paperwork. I think some districts pride themselves on reducing paperwork, when they really just transferred it to a computer task that does not necessarily have to be printed out.

PMPs - update only at semester and end of the school year

Too many reports. Though state mandated, PMP's are ridiculous and just a waste of time. I spent much more time with parents before the reporting. I don't have time now...too many reports to type (that are barely read). They are filed because of requirements...they don't do any good.

PMPs are very time consuming and should be mid-year instead of every nine weeks.

PMS was a new type of paperwork we had to start last year if we had any level 2 reading students. It only added to the amount of time so I just put all my intensive reading students on a PMP. It was easier to keep up with them.

Does the AIP have to be so long?

## **Lesson Plans, Individual Professional Development Plan (IPDP), Pacing Guides**

### Comment Sampling:

Having to make out duplicate lesson plans to document all of the standards is a time-consuming exercise. It is a lot of paper usage that is then returned to us, we keep for that year, and then dispose of. I wouldn't think of teaching any class without my lesson plans...but, I need them to reflect my own needs to make them efficient for me in my work.

A pacing guide in addition to monthly lesson plans. This pacing guide is a duplication of effort and time consuming.

The HUGE (5" thick) Teacher Handbook & Supplement our principal REQUIRES us all to have and carry around. The Lesson Plan Feedback sheets which require us to file.

Weekly lesson plan submissions. If the administrators wish to spot check my work ... that is OK

Electronic IPDP forms for Cat II teacher evaluations.

Employee Evaluation Forms Could be more efficient if they were electronic forms.

Give me a checklist of Standards, objectives or GLEs. Then instead of writing them on lesson plans and posting them daily in the classroom, I can check 'em and maybe even teach 'em.

Lesson plans with extensive information

Rewriting lesson plans to turn in-however this year we have a new principal who has a new plan

No opinion is because I am not sure. We still have to turn lesson plans, which takes about 2 hours each time we turn in, at least it is by the month.

Writing out objectives for the students is questionable, as some don't understand. I have put what we are doing for the week on the board for the past 10 years and students still come in and ask what we are doing.

Lesson plans are demanding more and more to be included to "prove" what is being taught.

There could be a reduction on lesson plan items that need to be turned in. Some principals are worse then others in what they require.

Get rid of IPDPs.

Having to document SSS covered in my courses in three different places...lesson plans...school paperwork required by the principal...daily postings in the classroom

Extensive lesson plans, running off own copies.

Posting Standards on board for every lesson,

All lesson plans submitted weekly with standards listed for every lesson

Long, lengthy lesson plans!

I'm not sure if matching benchmarks to activities is mandated by the state or the U.S. Government but that is one activity I would like to see eliminated. It is something I do but don't see the logic behind submitting a copy to administration

Veteran teachers that have filed lesson plans for 4 years or more should not have to provide weekly and daily lesson plans to administrators. To put it in the format they ask for takes about 2 hours out of every weekend.

We are told every year our paperwork will lessen; but it is added to every year. Added details are demanded on our lesson plans. My lesson plan pages are almost 6 pages long for one week. Most of the information being required by our principal is unnecessary and takes more than 2 hours of my personal time to complete.

Documenting benchmarks covered in weekly lesson plans, when the same is documented in the textbooks that we are required to teach from.

Mid 9-weeks reports as grades are on computer.

The paperwork that keeps me from focusing more on tasks that are crucial in my classroom is the ECHOS assessment form for Kindergarten students. It is SO time consuming and does not benefit us as teachers.

Letters home to parents about grades- should be their responsibility to look up grades

**Exceptional Student Education (ESE), Individual Education Plan (IEP), English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL), Pupil Progression Plan (PPP), Homebound, Referral Process**

Comment Sampling:

IEP's - we were supposed to get one from the state that would be uniform across the state - why do we still do matrix for 251 students?

The ESOL documentation should definitely be handled by ONE individual.

Keeping a portfolio for lower performing students requiring 5 examples for each Benchmark/GLE. Hundreds of pieces of papers for each child.

The ESE paperwork requirements are excessive.

ESOL paperwork: initial placement, forms, letters to be mailed out, etc

4 week ESE progress reports

IEP's could be reduced in size, yet still meet mandates and serve purpose. Number of copies that need to be distributed should be able to be reduced as the IEP is online. Follow-up paperwork (ESE progress reports every 4.5 weeks) seems to be too much.

In some counties, one person is in charge of writing IEPs at each site or group of sites. This provides consistency, reduces costly human errors at audit time, ensures that the IEPs are up to date with the latest requirements, and frees up teachers to TEACH!

Printing of the PPP every quarter for parent signatures. As well as placing them in the cumulative folder. They are archived every year and it is a waste of paper.

Spreadsheet information that could be obtained from the county database. ESE and Speech progress reports should be limited to 1 each nine weeks. Once in a nine week period would convey to the parents a more realistic view of their child's progress.

Professional educators should NOT be required to complete a (another!!) school-based form (NOT federal or state mandated), then submit that form to a guidance secretary, and expect or hope that the requested records be pulled NO EARLIER THAN A DAY AFTER the form has been completed in full and submitted to that secretary--in order for that teacher to be able to access students' records (such as ESE records/folders). Precious time is lost in waiting for records to be pulled, so necessary work cannot be conducted by the teachers in a timely manner-- all on behalf of the students. Professional discretion must be respectfully afforded the teachers.

Homebound paperwork is too much. Example: Having to list travel each way rather than round trip.

All of my paperwork is state, county, or federally mandated; however, the ESE progress report should not have to be sent home every 4.5 weeks unless the goals are other than what is being reported on a regular ed. progress report. Why send a report that duplicates what the other report says? Also, at our school, the gen ed teachers do not have to print their own reports, which takes me a lot of time.

Having to print mid terms and progress reports for ESE students - a bit redundant.

Survey for this and that at the school level and then again for district. Same for ESE - there are different departments asking for the exact same information and the teacher is expected to fill out yet another form on the same information for a different person

If IEPs or other student data forms are on-line. We should not have to print them out for guidance, office or principals. They should be able to access the info from their computers.

Yes, a better ESE computer software program and data base. Use computers for attendance and provide on-line teacher manuals. ALL correspondence should be through email as much as possible.

ESE bi-quarterly paper work is the first thought,

ESE paperwork is excessive - no way to get it all done in a workday; not even close!

Homebound paperwork is redundant and could be streamlined.

Referral paperwork for "Child Study Team" and "Guidance Committee"

**Inservice, Forms, Data Collection, Surveys, Spreadsheets, Logs, Memos, Action Research, Inventories, E-mail, Teacher Handbook, Supplemental Handbook, Agendas & Handouts, School Performance Plan (SPP)**

Comment Sampling:

Inservice paper work should be drastically reduced.

Not having more than a few minutes, at a time, in order to prepare paperwork. Safety issues come before paperwork but then there is no time to take care of paperwork within the work day.

Telephone call logs

Inventories and lists

Paperwork for advising students - SOAR, PAWS, etc.

Maybe not necessarily "items"...but appointing an Elementary Resource Teacher to complete the paperwork would reduce CRT workload SIGNIFICANTLY!!!!

E-mails are wonderful. Easy to send, no paper to use. But, I get lots more messages to read than I ever received before e-mails. From state, local, school, everyone. Lots of e-mails require a reply. I guess this is paperwork without the paper. With all this said, please don't take my email away because the flip side of this complaint is that e-mails are handy and nice for me to use too!

Everything should be looked at. Extra form for TDE form...why two? Even things electronically available doesn't mean it is not paperwork....electronically or paperwise, we do too much documentation

Surveys

Staff development homework

All school or district memos need to be sent via email. There are so many papers in our boxes that do not require signatures.

We receive a great deal of hardcopy memos in our mailbox. I recommend that these be sent via e-mail -- probably with an electronic signature or read receipt to verify that teachers have seen them.

Interest inventories

Action research/ classroom observations

All correspondence not mandated by the state or federal level should be by email. All documents being sent to multiple teachers, copies of items, should be electronic. Even legal documents can be scanned into the computer and sent.

Excessive meetings monthly, bi-weekly, etc. that all have agendas & handouts (we have committees & meetings for every little thing).

Micro-management & paper is a principal's dream!

Our new principal has greatly reduced the amount of paperwork thru emails. Each teacher may print forms for various hardcopy items. This helps.

Agendas and minutes for meetings

Surveys that are not online

Today I received 11 pieces of paper in my 'welcome back' package that could have easily been emailed...plus the 4 or 5 items that are mandated for us to hang and fill out every year....that took a whole morning to go through...I believe it was completely unnecessary.

Pretty much everything, I've yet to see a time in which paperwork contributed anything positive to any situation.

District mandates and initiatives greatly reduce my time available to spend working on students' performance, including, but not limited to, lesson planning and improving student performance.

Too many checklists AND surveys that lead to nothing

Too many spreadsheet with information that can be obtained from county's database

SPP should only be required for schools that are not rated A+ by the state of Florida

Super-sized teacher handbook & supplement to cart around. Truly - are all those pages necessary or required? We hauled a 4 or 5 inch binder to every meeting last year. Isn't most of that on the district website (i.e. Pupil Progression, SSS, etc.).

Meetings that had tons of agendas & handouts. I guess that means we had too many meetings altogether - 5-6 per month.

TDE forms do not seem necessary for teachers to take their students on field trips.

Our principal likes to print some reading articles and put them in our boxes. Sending e-mails to us would be more efficient and can also save some papers.

Now is it computer work. My administrator has asked teachers to check their email three times a day. Many of the emails require a response. I can spend up to an hour a day responding to emails.

Now is not a time to address this part. Maybe after 2 or 3 month later examples can be provided.

Yes, I'm sure attempts have been made at my worksite to reduce paperwork. However, we need attempts to be made away from my worksite. For example, the district needs to limit the paperwork they put on us. Maybe I'm dumb, but I need somebody to let me know when an attempt to reduce paperwork has been made so I can express my appreciation. I would also like to know if this attempt came from my local worksite or did it come from the district. I'm getting ready to use 'Action Research' to help develop a teaching strategy to implement for my administrator to see. This is how I will be observed this year. From this moment on, the paperwork will grow.

Documentation required at our elementary school to prove we are using materials and techniques from early release professional development

TDE forms for Early Release Days could be eliminated.

It doesn't matter if it is state or federally mandated. It is too much paper work and it isn't a matter of keeping me from meeting performance expectations. It just means that we use more of our personal time to complete what should only be expected during our professional time.

None specific, but the more "forms" we can fill out and submit by computer, the less paper we use...for instance, approval for fundraisers, TDE, etc.

We are demanded to put in data, data, data, on our own time for the school and district.

Staff development homework for teachers to show that they are doing what they say they are doing in their classroom is ridiculous, especially the summaries or write-ups. Student samples ought to be enough and those ought to be on your IPDP only, not in Staff Development.

## **Report Cards, Interim Reports, Grades, Gradebook, Attendance Records, Tardies**

### Comment Sampling:

Having to fill out the same form every nine weeks if there haven't been any changes.

Why do we have to do 4 1/2 and 9 week reports when students get grades that show if they are making progress on goals or not? The paperwork is very time consuming and some of it is very repetitive.

Kindergarten report card should be looked at closely.

Hardcopying attendance and grades.

Attendance paperwork

Printing attendance records at the end of the year is a GIGANTIC waste of paper, ink and time. What makes it even worse is that nothing but attendance codes appears on EVERY OTHER PAGE.

Is there a better more efficient way to take and keep record of attendance? Having individual attendance cards for each student seems antiquated to me. Keeping up with each card and all of the codes is time consuming.

Yes, at the end of the year we are required to print and sign hundreds of pages of GRADE BOOK relating to grades as well as attendance. This information is already stored in GRADE BOOK so there is no need to make a paper duplicate. Thanks...

We went to 9 week report cards and have grades available on-line for parents. Eliminate the Progress reports. Progress reports just added more paper work for teachers. They are NOT necessary.

The need to print multitudes of items at the end of the year from Gradebook is not merely a redundancy, but it is a waste of valuable time. Every item entered onto Gradebook is password protected. Why, then should we have to print, initial and sign every attendance page when it is already in the computer under an individual login code?

Keeping track of changes on attendance cards and seeing that they are correct.

Keeping track of absences and sending attendance/truancy warning letters home.

Also absence paperwork for middle and high school on the 5th 9th and 15th absences.

Tardie referrals.

Progress reports for speech, OT, and PT should not have to be done every 4 1/2 weeks because we do not see our students every day. Usually students are seen once or twice a week.

Report cards go home every 9 weeks. It is ridiculous to send a progress report for 4 to 8 therapy sessions, and when you do anywhere from 60 to over 100 every 4 1/2 weeks, that's a lot of paperwork!!

Our principal requires many, many test scores, copies of a lot of stuff (hard copies) all through the year.

Progress monitoring forms should not be required if student folders are kept.

The kindergarten report card needs to be revised to be more parent friendly and it needs to be put on gradebook!

Printing nine week grades and attendance for all classes as that is in the computer-couldn't that be saved to a disc and used later if needed?

Keeping a separate attendance record other than the attendance cards and the semester review with the attendance secretary to "verify" our attendance cards

Do we really need paper grade books?

The paperwork that keeps me from focusing more on tasks that are crucial in my classroom is the ECHOS assessment form for Kindergarten students. It is SO time consuming and does not benefit us as teachers.

Requirement to print hardcopy grades for each grade period and attendance for each grade period although they can be easily found on the server.

Attendance - We are being asked this year to keep 2 hard copies of attendance in our classroom. This is in case we lose the attendance cards and/or the computers go "down".

Attendance cards, lesson plans need to be emailed

Daily attendance should be taken via Gradebook, not the old fashioned way in a paper book. Why aren't all schools in Okaloosa on the same page with this? This would reduce the paperwork greatly. Use Gradebook's potential!

## Conclusions

Educators in the Okaloosa County School District are professionals with the qualification of holding at a minimum a bachelor's degree. This degree indicates participation in rigorous coursework study and practice in subject matter. Additionally, the State of Florida requires all educators to demonstrate those traits and competencies that are designated as 'Highly Qualified'. Educators spent contract and personal time maintaining their certificates and learning new skills, techniques and information relevant to the changing needs of students throughout the year. Educators are professionals who have a voice and want to be heard.

The comment samplings included in this report give the local district and the Florida Department of Education qualitative information regarding the daily routines of educators and the amount of paperwork currently required. Additionally, educators gave suggestions for further consideration for improvement or elimination of some paperwork.

To reduce the number and kind of paperwork currently generated participants suggested elimination of interim reports, duplication of adding benchmarks and standards to lesson plans, reduction in copies and submission of lesson plans and the revision of required forms for ESE, ESOL, grade reporting and struggling students.

The Florida Department of Education and the Okaloosa County School District administration are now tasked with a review of these findings and possible implementation of suggested courses of action.