

**Annual Report on
Paperwork and Data
Collection Reduction in
Florida School Districts**

**Presented to the
State Board of Education**

October 22, 2009

Introduction

The 2006 Florida Legislature, acting on the recommendations of the Paperwork Reduction Task Force created by Chapter 2005-31, Laws of Florida, codified in statute that the following activities occur annually, beginning in the 2006-07 school year [§ 1001.42(24), Florida Statutes]:

1001.42 Powers and duties of district school board.--The district school board, acting as a board, shall exercise all powers and perform all duties listed below:

(24) **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 Florida Senate, and the Speaker of the Florida House of Representatives by October 1 of each year.

Generally speaking, Florida law requires school districts to designate a teacher representative, facilitate the efforts of that teacher representative to communicate with and speak on behalf of district teachers regarding possible paperwork and data collection burdens and potential solutions, and communicate those findings and recommendations to the local school board. School boards are required by law to submit findings and potential solutions to the State Board of Education by September 1 of each year, and the State Board of Education is required to submit a report of these findings and solutions to the Governor, the President of the Florida Senate, and the Speaker of the Florida House of Representatives by October 1 of each year. This report summarizes local and state findings pursuant to this law.

Districts have the option of providing information in letter or chart form or to complete an electronic template developed by the Department. Although many of the issues reported can be and are being alleviated at the district level, annual reporting is a good

reflection exercise for districts. District leadership seems to take a sincere interest in reducing the paperwork burden for teachers and some districts have made great strides in this direction based on teacher input. The Department of Education is interested in district findings as a means to explore simplifying paperwork burdens across the state.

Background

Paperwork reduction initiatives are not new to the Department of Education (DOE). From consolidating data entry systems and reducing duplication, to the most recent efforts that began with the passage of legislation creating the statewide Paperwork Reduction Task Force, paperwork reduction has been a concern of the DOE. Specifically, the department endeavors to decrease the amount of time a teacher needs to complete paperwork burdens as part of the instructional day, as part of its statutorily-mandated goal to improve “quality efficient services” (§ 1008.31, Florida Statutes).

The statewide Paperwork Reduction Task Force was formed in 2005, as directed by the Florida Legislature, to recommend ways to reduce burdens placed on teachers, principals, and district staff. Its findings included evidence that a majority of the paperwork and data collection burdens placed on classroom teachers originate locally.

The following recommendations of the task force evolved into the statutory provisions addressed in this report:

1. School boards are not to exceed paperwork and reporting requirements mandated by the state without extensive public hearings, input from local paper reduction task forces, and detailed analysis of “burden hours” needed to complete the paperwork (hard copy and electronic) for the proposed mandate.
2. Each district school board must create a task force, comprised predominantly of teachers, to reduce the paper and electronic reporting requirements in their district and to report their actions to the Department of Education.

See § 1001.42(24), Florida Statutes, for the incorporation of these recommendations.

District Reports – Statewide Findings and Best Practices

District actions to reduce paperwork and data collection burdens resulting from this legislation vary greatly. From appointing a district designee to convening district task forces or work groups, it is evident that there is not a one-size-fits-all solution to this issue. The goal is clear, though, that teachers need to have the time to teach and should not be burdened with unnecessary requirements.

The majority of the districts indicated that they are working to solicit input from teachers, principals, and other staff through either forming a committee or task force, a Web-based survey, or a combination of efforts.

All districts are working toward a process for paperwork reduction or evaluating paperwork requirements, and reported evidence that they had been using this process to reduce the paperwork burden.

Many districts have made a conscious move to Web-based reporting on various topics.

Paperwork burdens related to the following issues were most frequently noted: Exceptional Student Education (ESE), English Language Learners (ELL), Response to Intervention (RtI), Staff Development, Student Attendance, Report Cards, Interims, and Progress Monitoring.

Districts are working to alleviate these issues by consolidating forms and making them electronic, participating in the statewide electronic Individual Educational Plan (IEP) for ESE students, changing to electronic grade books, creating teacher Web sites to communicate with parents, reporting progress monitoring online, and other innovative and successful initiatives. There is a lot of interest in creating sophisticated front-end systems for students and parents to access information.

Although many districts are employing similar strategies, specific examples from districts with a variety of student populations include the following:

Alachua

- Teacher Web sites with class documents
- Online calendaring system

Brevard

- Electronic classroom materials and academic progress management system

Clay

- New archive system for IEP records

Collier

- Students are able to monitor class grades online
- Third grade portfolio is completed online
- All ESE and ELL forms are completed online; the number of ELL forms was reduced
- Lesson plans are posted electronically

Dade

- Working on a Web-based IEP

Escambia

- Certification office is streamlining documentation
- Working toward an electronic IEP
- Working on electronic conversion of student cumulative files
- Enhanced front-end portals

Flagler

- Online Kindergarten report card
- Staff development management system
- Online grade book with attendance component

Gilchrist

- Reduced frequency of school attendance reports
- Reduced number of professional development forms
- Automated IEP drafts
- Online progress monitoring and scoring
- Electronic lesson plan submission

Hardee

- Electronic attendance reporting in secondary schools

Hamilton

- IPDP (Individualized Professional Development Plan) created and accessed online
- ESE behavior data now included in district-wide system

Hillsborough

- Ongoing reviews of district forms by Data Collection and Forms Committee (number of forms reduced by 9 percent last year)

Indian River

- Parents can access student assignments, attendance, and grades online
- Online pacing guides for all grades levels and disciplines
- Online progress monitoring and data reporting
- IPDP online
- Online progress reports and report cards
- Electronic attendance program
- Referral and student support services now electronic; many pre-populated as applicable
- Paperwork Reduction Committee developed teacher survey for input

Lake

- New hires are required to use direct deposit
- Staff training in online communication

Lee

- ESE forms electronic
- Personnel paperwork reduced

Leon

- Online posting of documents for principal meetings
- Personnel forms electronic
- Online calendar for schools and parents
- New teacher paperwork and information online
- Considering Web-based professional development management system
- Parent portal up and running
- Paper Reduction Committee and Web site established to submit paperwork reduction ideas

Manatee

- Each department reviews forms to streamline
- School-based forms have an appeal process.

Martin

- Web-based school improvement plan
- Electronic survey tool now used
- Parent Internet Viewer in place to review grades

Okaloosa

- Electronic Progress Monitoring Plan

Okeechobee

- Online grading and discipline referrals
- ESE meetings calendared electronically

Orange

- ESOL paperwork reduced by 50 percent
- Implementing personnel paperwork online
- Online testing explored and is a district goal
- Plans for math and science online benchmark lessons
- Some elementary schools have “paperless weeks” where inquiry-based lessons take place
- Standardization of electronic lesson plan format has begun

Osceola

- Bright Ideas Employee Suggestion Program online
- Online benefits enrollment system

Palm Beach

- Curriculum management system
- Superintendent’s Technology Committee
- District forms available online

- Online teacher surveys
- Student attendance taken online in grade 6-12; exploring expansion to grades K-5
- Parents can view student grades and assignments online
- Online professional development available
- Online payment portal piloted and now fully implemented
- Human Resources paperwork online
- Plans to implement online facilities management system

Pasco

- Student performance portfolios no longer required for students meeting performance standards

Pinellas

- Converting to electronic IEP
- Podcasts for all ESOL Handbook topics

Polk

- ESE tracking software continually improved
- Online professional development system
- Parents are able to view grades online
- Online Academic Success Plans
- Student data more readily available for teacher use

Putnam

- Convened a forms committee

St. Johns

- Student information system available to parents online including requests for conferences
- Data on student performance available to teachers online
- Paperwork Committee will do a county-wide survey for more ideas

Santa Rosa

- Online discipline referral tool

Seminole

- Information Services looking for ways to streamline ESE paperwork
- Paperwork Reduction Task Force

Sumter

- Parent viewer for student grades available for all schools this Fall

University of Florida Lab School

- Increased technology for traditional paperwork tasks
- Researching the concept of “paperless classrooms”
- Developing a program for online 504 plans

Volusia

- Online attendance
- Interactive modules for personnel training
- Electronic system for teachers to access student data
- Superintendent's Select Committee on ESE Paperwork

Washington

- Using a Web-based system to develop IEPs

State Progress on Reducing Paperwork and Data Collection Requirements

At the state level, specific accomplishments during the 2008-09 fiscal year include:

- Increased information on Web sites and online submission, review, and communication opportunities
- Combined ESOL District Plan with District Intervention and Assistance Plan
- Efforts to combine school-based professional development plan with School Improvement Plan
- Combined school-based RtI plan with School Improvement Plan
- Combined Reading Plan and the Reading Endorsement Add-on Plans
- Launched CPALMS (Curriculum Planning and Learning Management System) for teachers to access lesson plans and information on Florida's Next Generation Sunshine State Standards in science and mathematics
- Offered more reading professional development via video conferencing
- With the new Florida Assessments for Instruction in Reading (FAIR) progress monitoring system, it will no longer be necessary for teachers to duplicate the Florida Oral Reading Fluency (FORF)/Maze progress monitoring tools. All of this will be done electronically through the FAIR computer-based system and reported automatically to the Progress Monitoring and Reporting Network (PMRN)
- Eliminated the *FCAT Answer Document Return Summary* as a requirement, beginning with the Fall 2009 FCAT administration

Plan for Distribution of Report Findings

As required by statute, this report will be submitted to the Governor, President of the Florida Senate, and Speaker of the Florida House of Representatives. In addition, this report will be posted on the Department's Paperwork Reduction Web site (www.fldoe.org/PaperReduction). Please contact Holly Edenfield in the Division of Public Schools, Chancellor's Office, at (850) 245-0509 if you have any questions.