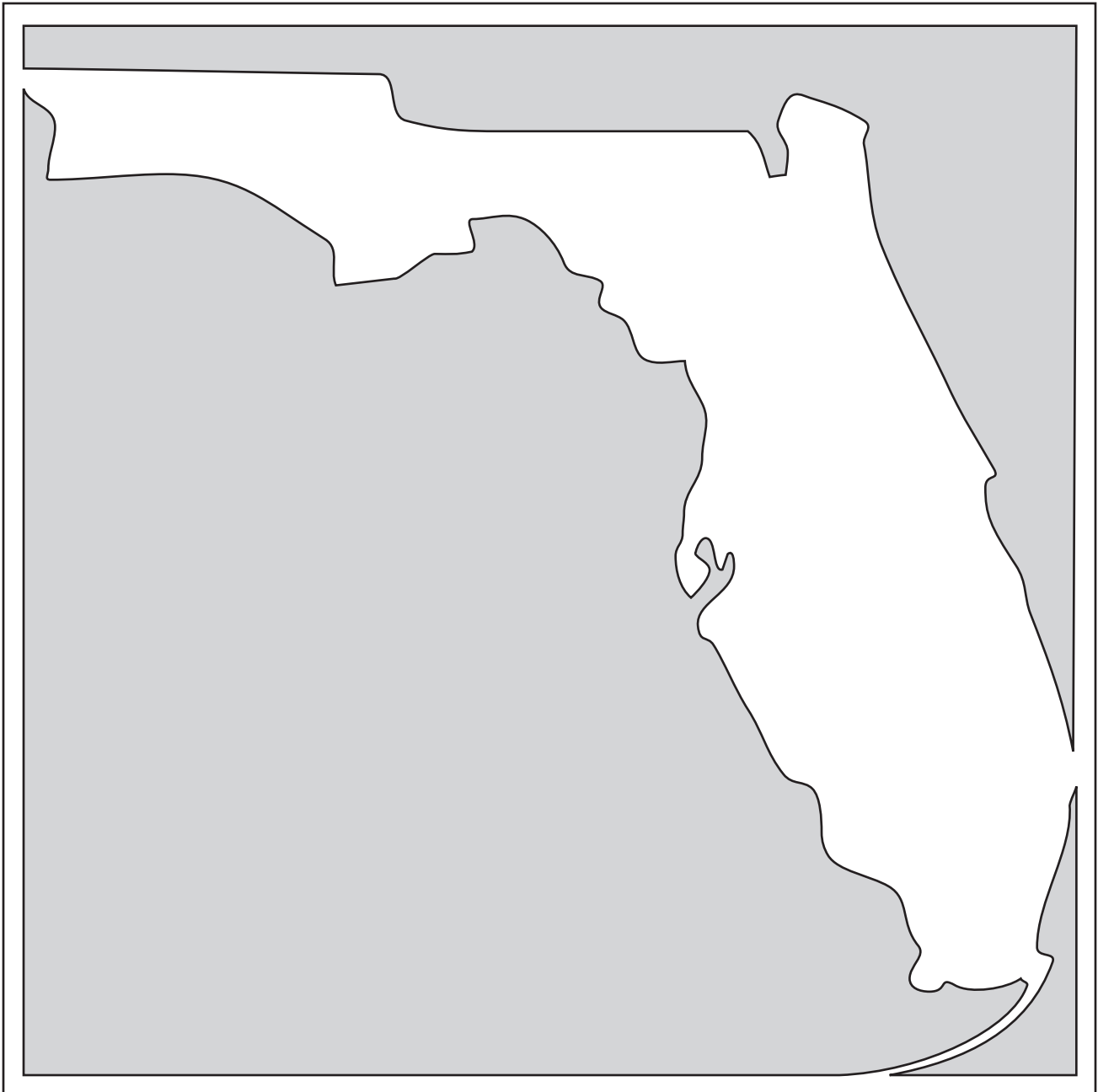


FINAL REPORT: FOCUSED MONITORING
EXCEPTIONAL STUDENT EDUCATION PROGRAMS

ALACHUA COUNTY

AUGUST 29 - SEPTEMBER 1, 2005



FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
BUREAU OF EXCEPTIONAL EDUCATION AND STUDENT SERVICES

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**Alachua County School District
 Focused Monitoring
 Standard Diploma Rate for Students with Disabilities**

Monitoring Reporting Table

Standard/Citation	Findings	Supporting Evidence	Concerns
Access to General Curriculum			
34 CFR 300.26(a)(3) Special education 34 CFR 300.347(a)(4) Content of IEP 34 CFR §300.550(b) General LRE requirements 34 CFR §300.552 Placements 34 CFR 300.553 Nonacademic settings Rule 6A-0311(1), FAC, Eligible Special Programs for Exceptional Students	That removal from the general education environment occurs only when the nature or severity of the disability is such that education in regular classes with the use of supplementary aids and services cannot be achieved satisfactorily is not evident from students' IEPs.	<i>Records:</i> For 15 of 40 IEPs the explanation of the extent to which the student will not participate with nondisabled peers was inadequate; explanations did not address the reason the student's IEP could not be implemented in the general education setting. For 25 of 40 IEPs the present level of educational performance statement was inadequate or incomplete. For 7 of 40 IEPs the present level of performance and annual goals and short term objectives or benchmarks did not support the services on the IEP. For 7 of 40 IEPs there was a lack of correspondence between the annual goals and short-term objectives or benchmarks and needs identified on the present level of educational performance statement Two IEP teams for preK students	Some general education teachers reported they were unclear of their role on the IEP team, and indicated that they did not routinely contribute to discussions and decisions regarding the supports a student may need in order to be supported satisfactorily in the general education setting. Focus group students at Eastside H.S. indicated that for some ESE courses that allow for repeated reenrollment (e.g., math for 9-12) cover the same content each year, despite some students having mastered the skills during previous years; teacher interviews supported these

Standard/Citation	Findings	Supporting Evidence	Concerns
		<p>transitioning into a general education kindergarten class for all or part of the day did not have a general education teacher in attendance.</p> <p><i>Interviews:</i></p> <p>Some general education teachers reported that their attendance is required at IEP team meetings but that they generally do not participate in the discussion or placement decisions.</p> <p><i>Case Studies:</i></p> <p>8 of 27 IEPs for SLD students reviewed for general education participation included core content general education teachers as participants; 6 included nonacademic teachers (e.g., PE, art) and 13 did not include a general education teacher for students served at the separate class level.</p>	concerns.
Accommodations, Modifications, Supplementary Aids and Services and Supports to School Personnel			
<p>34 CFR 300.342 When IEPs must be in effect.</p> <p>34 CFR 300.347(a) Content of IEP.</p> <p>34 CFR 300.342.350(a) IEP—accountability.</p>	No findings of noncompliance in this area.		IEPs include a statement that ESE training is provided to all teachers under this requirement rather than reflecting supports for school personnel that are based on the unique needs or

Standard/Citation	Findings	Supporting Evidence	Concerns
Rule 6A-6.03028(7), FAC, Development of Individual Educational Plans for Exceptional Students			characteristics of the individual student in question.
Discipline and Positive Behavior Supports			
34 CFR §300.520 Authority of school personnel. 34 CFR §300.523(a) Manifestation determination review. 34 CFR §300.346(a) (2) Development, review, and revision of the IEP. Rule 6A-6.03028 (6)(d), FAC, Development of Individual Educational Plans for Exceptional Students Rule 6A-6.03312(4), FAC, Discipline Procedures for Students with Disabilities	No findings of noncompliance in this area.		
FCAT Preparation			
Rule 6A-6.03028(7) (a), FAC, Development of Individual Educational	No findings of noncompliance in this area.		Staff and students reported that students who do not have transportation or

Standard/Citation	Findings	Supporting Evidence	Concerns
Plans for Exceptional Students S. 1003.43(11)(b) General requirements for high school graduation.			access to a computer at home have limited access to FCAT remediation and credit recoupment activities provided outside the traditional school day.
Student Course of Study and Diploma Option Decisions			
34 CFR 300.347(b) Content of IEP. Rule 6A-6.03028(7), FAC, Development of Individual Educational Plans for Exceptional Students Rule 6-1.0996(13), FAC, Graduation Requirements for Certain Students with Disabilities.	At Westwood M.S. some IEP teams do not base diploma decisions on the students' course of study but on the students' placement instead (i.e., ESE or general education).	<i>Case Studies</i> The IEPs for 2 of 3 case study students at Westwood M.S. (8 th grade; SLD) had the students being instructed in the general Sunshine State Standards in ESE classes, with "possible frustration" as the justification for removal from general education. Teachers reported that both students were receiving As and Bs in their classes, but that the diploma option for the students was special diploma as they had "always been in ESE classes and likely would continue to be."	
Staff Development			
34 CFR 300.382 Improvement strategies.	No findings of noncompliance in this area.		
Counseling Services			
34 CFR §300.24 Related services. Rule 6A-6.03016(4) (d), FAC, Special Programs	Counseling as a related service is not included on the IEPs of all students served as severely emotionally disturbed.	<i>Records</i> 6 of 16 IEPs (38%) for SED students did not include counseling as a related service.	It is unclear that all students with disabilities who need counseling as a related service in order to benefit from specially designed

Standard/Citation	Findings	Supporting Evidence	Concerns
for Students Who Are Emotionally Handicapped			instruction are provided that service.
Communication Services			
34 CFR §300.346(a)(2)(iv) Development, review, and revision of the IEP. Rule 6A-6.03028(6), FAC, Development of Individual Educational Plans for Students with Disabilities	There were no findings of noncompliance in this area.		
School to Post-School Transition Services			
34 CFR §300.344(b) IEP team. Rule 6A-6.03028(3)-(4), FAC, Development of Individual Educational Plans for Exceptional Students	Transition is not included on IEP team meeting notice for all students ages 14 and older. Representatives of agencies are not invited to the IEP team meetings for all students ages 16 and over when appropriate.	<p><i>Records:</i></p> <p>Transition was not included as a purpose on the meeting notices for 8 of 12 IEP meetings (67%) for students ages 14 and older.</p> <p>The statement of desired post-school outcomes was inadequate on 3 of 12 transition IEPs (25%), making it difficult to determine the appropriateness of the services provided.</p> <p>Transition IEPs for 5 students with significant disabilities, ages 19-22, were reviewed on-site. There was evidence of agency participation in the provision of transition services with 3 of the 5</p>	

Standard/Citation	Findings	Supporting Evidence	Concerns
		students, although transition agency representatives were not invited to the IEP team meetings.	
Gifted Services			
Section 1003.57, F.S. Exceptional Student Instruction Section 1003.01(3)(a), F.S. Definitions. Rule 6A-6.030191(5)(a), FAC, Development of Educational Plans for Exceptional Students Who Are Gifted	No findings of noncompliance in this area.		Consultation is the primary gifted service available to students at high schools that offer other types of advanced curriculum or programs (e.g., Cambridge).
Charter Schools			
34 CFR §300.241(a) Treatment of charter schools and their students. 34 CFR §300.312(a) Children with disabilities in public charter schools.	No findings of noncompliance in this area.		
DJJ Services			
34 CFR 300.2(b) Applicability of this part to State, local, and private agencies. Rule 6A-6.05281(1)(c),	IEPs are not reviewed and revised as needed within 10 days of enrollment at the facility as required under DJJ quality assurance standards.	<i>Records:</i> 1 of 10 IEPs was not current on the day of review. 2 of 10 IEPs were not available for review; assumed not current.	

Standard/Citation	Findings	Supporting Evidence	Concerns
FAC, Educational Programs for Youth in Department of Juvenile Justice Detention, Commitment, Day Treatment, or Early Delinquency Intervention Programs.		2 of 10 IEPs did not reflect changes in services subsequent to enrollment at the facility.	
Matrix of Services			
S. 1011.62(1)(e), F.S. Funding model for exceptional student education programs.	Two matrix of service documents require correction due to inaccurate reporting.	<i>Records:</i> 2 of 10 IEPs/matrix of services documents for students reported at the 254 or 255 level were not reported accurately.	Some staff at Gainesville H.S. were using an older version of the matrix of services document that did not include extra point calculations; this could result in students being reported at a lower level than might be warranted.
Review of Student Records			
34 CFR §300.340-300.350 Individualized Educational Programs Rule 6A-6.03028, FAC, Development of Individual Educational Plans for Exceptional Students. Rule 6A-6.030191, FAC, Development of	7 findings of noncompliance resulted in funding adjustments (4 lack of prior written notice of change of placement; 3 lack of current IEP). 34 IEP teams must reconvene to address identified findings.	150 IEPs were reviewed, in part or in whole 23 EPs were reviewed, in part or in whole A detailed description of the findings related to student records can be found in Appendix E, page 65.	

Standard/Citation	Findings	Supporting Evidence	Concerns
Educational Plans for Exceptional Students who are Gifted.			
Review of District Forms			
<p>34 CFR §300.503 Prior written notice by the public agency; content of notice.</p> <p>34 CFR §300.347 Content of the IEP</p> <p>Rule 6A-6.03028, FAC, Development of Individual Educational Plans for Exceptional Students</p>	14 forms require revisions to meet compliance.	A detailed description of the forms reviews was provided to the district in a letter dated July 29, 2005.	

System Improvement Plan

In response to these findings, the district is required to develop a system improvement plan for submission to the Bureau. This plan must include activities and strategies intended to address specific findings, as well as measurable evidence of change. In developing the system improvement plan, every effort should be made to link the system improvement activities resulting from this focused monitoring report to the district's continuous improvement plan. Following is the format for the system improvement plan, including a listing of the critical issues identified by the Bureau as most significantly in need of improvement.

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

Promising Practices, Recommendations, and Technical Assistance

As a result of the focused monitoring activities, the Bureau has identified specific findings related to the number of ESE students graduating with a standard diploma. In addition, during this visit numerous promising practices were noted by district and school staff and by Bureau and peer monitors. Recommendations have been proposed for the district to consider when developing the system improvement plan and determining strategies that are most likely to effect change. A partial listing of technical assistance resources also is provided. This information may be of assistance in the development and/or implementation of the system improvement plan.

Promising Practices

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

- Staff at C.W. Norton E.S. and Abraham Lincoln M.S. reported that the range of delivery models available, including support facilitation, consultation, co-teaching, and the Learning Strategies Course (for middle school) have been very effective in supporting ESE students in general education classrooms.
- Staff at F.W. Buchholz H.S. reported using a wide variety of accommodations and supports, including such things as headphones for students to decrease distractions.
- Staff at the middle schools visited described a comprehensive system of behavioral supports used to maintain students in the general education environment.
- Staff at the high schools visited reported extensive individualized transition planning for students with the most significant needs.
- A wide range of advanced classes, including honors, International Baccalaureate, Cambridge, and Lyceum, are available across the district.

- Staff reported strong agency partnerships and participation in transition planning for students who require assistance with post-secondary transitioning.

Recommendations

The list is not all-inclusive, and is intended only as a starting point for discussion among the parties responsible for the development of the system improvement plan (SIP).

- Develop and implement procedures to ensure DJJ facilities adhere to state and federal regulations regarding ESE services.
- Conduct periodic self-assessments of ESE programs across schools to ensure that IEPs are being implemented and that all information (e.g., time with nondisabled) is reported accurately.
- Develop parent and teacher training modules to address options and decision-making for diploma selection. Include strategies for increasing district, school, and parent expectations for academic achievement for students with disabilities.
- Develop training module to address the appropriate use of the FCAT Waiver.
- Establish working relationship with the community college and develop a method for tracking how many students who graduate with a special diploma take GED classes, take the GED and how many pass the test.
- Review data related to use of the FCAT waiver to determine if it is being reported accurately.
- Develop training modules that addresses the importance of general education and special education teacher collaboration in the development of IEPs in IEP training.

Technical Assistance

The following are some of the resources available through the Florida Department of Education. If there are additional topics or areas of concern that are not included, please contact the Bureau for assistance.

Florida Inclusion Network

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

The project provides learning opportunities, consultation, information, and support to educators, families, and community members, resulting in the inclusion of all students. Technical assistance on literacy strategies, curriculum adaptations, suggestions for resource allocations, and expanding models of service delivery, positive behavioral supports, ideas on differentiating instruction, and suggestions for building and maintaining effective school teams is available.

Project CENTRAL

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

This comprehensive, statewide project is designed to identify and disseminate information about resources, training, and research related to current and emerging effective instructional practices.

The ultimate goals are to provide information leading to appropriate training, products, and other resources that provide benefits and appropriate outcomes for all students.

Student Support Services Project

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

The project purpose is to provide technical assistance, training and resources to Florida school districts and state agencies in matters related to student support (school psychology, social work, nursing, counseling, and school-to-work).

Bureau of Exceptional Education and Student Services

In addition to the special projects described above, Bureau staff are available for assistance on a variety of topics. Following is a partial list of contacts:

ESE Program Administration and Quality Assurance—Monitoring (850) 245-0476

Eileen Amy, Administrator
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Assistive Technology Karen Morris, Program Specialist Karen.Morris@fldoe.org

Speech/Language

Lezlie Cline, Program Director

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Gifted

Donnajo Smith, Program Specialist

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**Alachua County School District
Focused Monitoring
System Improvement Strategies**

The district is required to provide system improvement strategies to address identified findings of noncompliance, which may include an explanation of specific activities the district has committed to implementing, or it may consist of a broader statement describing planned strategies. For each issue, the plan also must define the measurable evidence of whether or not the desired outcome has been achieved. Target dates that extend for more than one year should include benchmarks in order to track interim progress. In addition to findings of noncompliance, the report includes areas of concern that the district is encouraged to address, either through this system improvement plan or through other avenues. Resources, suggestions and/or recommended actions are provided following this plan format.

Findings of Noncompliance	Improvement Strategies/Interventions	Outcome Measures and Timeline
Access to the General Curriculum		
<p>That removal from the general education environment occurs only when the nature or severity of the disability is such that education in regular classes with the use of supplementary aids and services cannot be achieved satisfactorily is not evident from students' IEPs.</p> <p>Areas of concern are noted in the body of the report.</p>	<p>Training and/or technical assistance regarding requirements for placement decisions will be incorporated into the general staff development activities for ESE staff.</p> <p>District and/or school staff will conduct periodic reviews of a sampling of IEPs (≥ 20 records) of students who are removed from the general education setting for part of the day to evaluate:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • sufficiency of explanations justifying removal • extent to which the present level of educational performance addresses all the needs related to the disability • correspondence among identified needs, goals and short-term objectives 	<p>District report of self-assessment reveals compliance with targeted elements for 100% of IEPs reviewed.</p> <p>May 2006</p> <p>November 2006</p>

Findings of Noncompliance	Improvement Strategies/Interventions	Outcome Measures and Timeline
	<p>or benchmarks, and services provided.</p> <p>The district is encouraged to include strategies to address concerns noted in the body of this report.</p>	
Accommodations, Modifications, Supplemental Aids and Services, and Supports to School Personnel		
<p>No findings of noncompliance in this area.</p> <p>Areas of concern are noted in the body of the report.</p>	<p>The district is encouraged to include strategies to address concerns noted in the body of this report.</p>	
Discipline and Positive Behavior Supports		
<p>No findings of noncompliance in this area.</p>		
FCAT Preparation		
<p>No findings of noncompliance in this area.</p> <p>Areas of concern are noted in the body of the report.</p>	<p>The district is encouraged to include strategies to address concerns noted in the body of this report.</p>	
Student Course of Study and Diploma Option Decisions		
<p>At Westwood M.S. some IEP teams do not base diploma decisions on the students' course of study but on the students' placement instead (i.e., ESE or general education).</p>	<p>District staff will review a sample of transition IEPs (5-10) of SLD students served at the separate class level at each middle school in the district to determine if diploma decisions are unduly restrictive. Training and/or technical assistance regarding diploma options will be provided to staff at Westwood M.S. and any other schools identified during the above review.</p>	

Findings of Noncompliance	Improvement Strategies/Interventions	Outcome Measures and Timeline
Staff Development		
No findings of noncompliance in this area.		
Counseling as a Related Service		
<p>Counseling as a related service is not included on the IEPs of all students served as severely emotionally disturbed.</p> <p>Areas of concern are noted in the body of the report.</p>	<p>The IEP teams for the identified students will reconvene to determine if reevaluation of the student is warranted and to ensure that all required services are documented and provided on the IEP.</p> <p>District and/or school staff will review the IEPs of all students identified as SED; the IEP teams for any SED students whose IEPs do not include counseling as a related service must reconvene to address this need.</p> <p>The district is encouraged to include strategies to address concerns noted in the body of this report.</p>	<p>Documentation was submitted to the Bureau within the prescribed timeline.</p> <p>District report of self-assessment reveals compliance with targeted elements for 100% of IEPs reviewed.</p> <p>May 2006</p> <p>November 2006</p>
Communication		
There were no findings of noncompliance in this area.		
School to Post-school Transition		
<p>Transition is not included on IEP team meeting notice for all students ages 14 and older.</p> <p>Representatives of agencies are not invited to the IEP team meetings for all students ages 16 and over when appropriate.</p>	<p>Training and/or technical assistance regarding transition planning procedures (e.g., including transition as a purpose of the meeting on meeting notices; inviting transition agencies to participate in transition IEP team meetings whenever</p>	<p>District report of self-assessment reveals compliance with targeted elements for 100% of IEPs reviewed.</p> <p>May 2006</p> <p>November 2006</p>

Findings of Noncompliance	Improvement Strategies/Interventions	Outcome Measures and Timeline
	<p>they may be expected to provide or pay for transition services) will be incorporated into the general staff development activities for ESE staff.</p> <p>District and/or school staff will conduct periodic reviews of a sampling of IEPs (≥ 10 records) of students ages 14 or older to ensure that all transition requirements are addressed.</p>	
Services to Gifted Students		
<p>No findings of noncompliance in this area. Areas of concern are noted in the body of the report.</p>	<p>The district is encouraged to include strategies to address concerns noted in the body of this report.</p>	
Services to ESE Students in Charter Schools		
<p>No findings of noncompliance in this area.</p>		
Services to ESE Students in Department of Juvenile Justice Facilities		
<p>IEPs are not reviewed and revised as needed within 10 days of enrollment at the facility as required under DJJ quality assurance standards.</p>	<p>IEP teams for the identified students will convene to develop appropriate IEPs.</p> <p>The district will review the process at the DJJ facility for identification and verification of special education services and timely development and implementation of IEPs. Based on that review, a procedure will be developed and implemented to ensure that students are identified and verified and an IEP developed and implemented within the required DJJ Quality Assurance Standard</p>	<p>Documentation was submitted to the Bureau within the prescribed timeline.</p> <p>District report of self-assessment reveals compliance with targeted elements for 100% of IEPs reviewed.</p> <p>May 2006 November 2006</p>

Findings of Noncompliance	Improvement Strategies/Interventions	Outcome Measures and Timeline
	<p>of 10 business days.</p> <p>Facility and/or district staff will conduct quarterly compliance reviews to ensure timely identification and services.</p> <p>The district is encouraged to include strategies to address concerns noted in the body of this report.</p>	
Matrix of Services		
Two matrix of service documents require correction due to inaccurate reporting.	An amendment was submitted to the Automated Student Information System database for the identified students.	Documentation was submitted to the Bureau within the prescribed timeline.
Review of Student Records		
<p>7 findings of noncompliance resulted in funding adjustments (4 lack of prior written notice of change of placement; 3 lack of current IEP).</p> <p>34 IEP teams must reconvene to address identified findings.</p>	<p>The IEP teams for the identified students reconvened to address identified findings.</p> <p>The identified noncompliant elements will be targeted in the district's IEP and EP training.</p> <p>Using protocols developed by the Bureau, school and/or district staff will conduct semi-annual compliance reviews of a random sample of 15 IEPs and five EPs.</p>	<p>Documentation was submitted to the Bureau within the prescribed timeline.</p> <p>District report of self-assessment reveals compliance with targeted elements for 100% of IEPs reviewed.</p> <p>May 2006</p> <p>November 2006</p>
Review of District Forms		
14 forms require revisions to meet compliance.	The district will revise forms as required and submit them to the Bureau for review.	February 2006

Appendix A:

District Data

