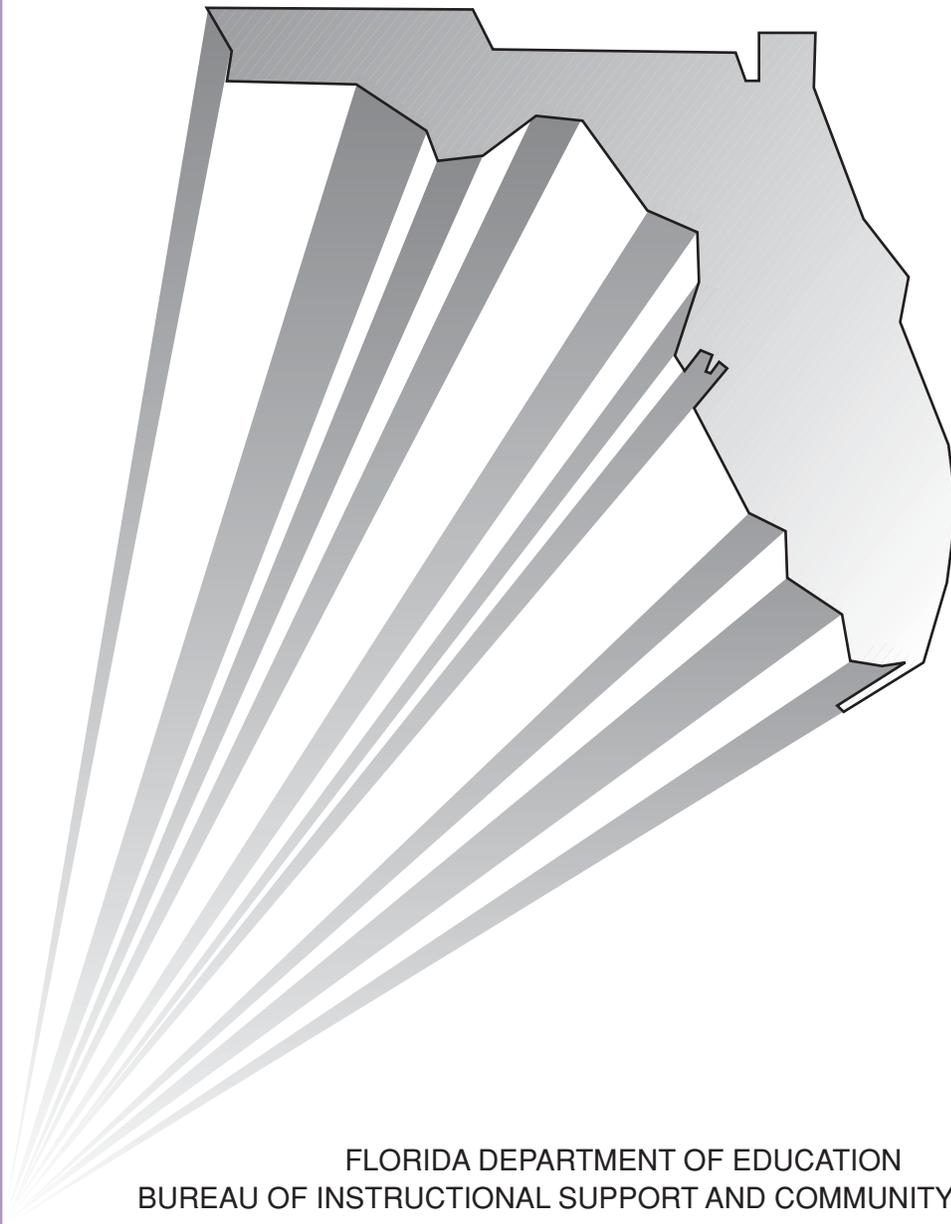


FINAL REPORT OF FOCUSED MONITORING OF
EXCEPTIONAL STUDENT EDUCATION PROGRAMS IN

BAKER COUNTY

MARCH 31 - APRIL 2, 2003



FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
BUREAU OF INSTRUCTIONAL SUPPORT AND COMMUNITY SERVICES

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November 3, 2003

Ms. Paula Barton, Superintendent
Baker County School District
392 S. Boulevard East
Macclenny, Florida 32063-2799

Dear Superintendent Barton:

We are pleased to provide you with the Final Report of Focused Monitoring of Exceptional Student Education Programs in Baker County. This report was developed by integrating multiple sources of information including student record reviews; interviews with school and district staff; information from focus groups; and parent, teacher, and student survey data from our visit on March 31-April 2, 2003. The report includes a System Improvement Plan outlining the findings of the monitoring team. The final report will be placed on the Bureau of Instructional Support and Community Services' website and may be viewed at www.firn.edu/doe/commhome/mon-home.htm.

The Bureau has sent Wanda Walker, ESE Director, an electronic copy of the System Improvement Plan for development. Within 30 days of the receipt of this electronic copy, the district is required to submit the completed System Improvement Plan for review by our office. Bureau staff will work with Wanda Walker and her staff to develop the required system improvement measures, including strategies and activities to address the areas of concern and noncompliance identified in the report. We anticipate that some of the action steps that will be implemented will be long term in duration, and will require time to assess the measure of effectiveness. In addition, as appropriate, plans related to the district's continuous improvement monitoring may also relate to action steps proposed in response to this report. After the System Improvement Plan has been approved, it will also be placed on the Bureau's website.

SHAN GOFF

K-12 Deputy Chancellor for Student Achievement

Ms. Paula Barton
November 3, 2003
Page 2

An update of outcomes achieved and/or a summary of related activities, as identified in your district's plan, must be submitted by June 30 and December 30 of each school year for the next two years, unless otherwise noted on the plan. A follow-up monitoring visit to your district will take place two years after your original monitoring visit.

If my staff can be of any assistance as you implement the system improvement plan, please contact Eileen L. Amy, ESE Program Administration and Quality Assurance Administrator. Mrs. Amy may be reached at 850/245-0476, or via electronic mail at Eileen.Amy@fldoe.org.

Thank you for your continuing commitment to improve services for exceptional education students in Baker County.

Sincerely,



Shan Goff
K-12 Deputy Chancellor for Student Achievement

Enclosure

**Baker County Final Monitoring Report
 Focused Monitoring Visit
 March 31-April 2, 2003**

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**Baker County School District
Focused Monitoring Visit
March 31-April 2, 2003**

Executive Summary

The Florida Department of Education, Bureau of Instructional Support and Community Services, in carrying out its roles of leadership, resource allocation, technical assistance, monitoring, and evaluation is required to oversee the performance of district school boards in the enforcement of all laws and rules (Sections 1001.03(8) and 1008.32, Florida Statutes (F.S.)). In fulfilling this requirement, the Bureau conducts monitoring activities of the exceptional student education (ESE) programs provided by district school boards in accordance with Sections 1001.42 and 1003.57, F.S. Through these monitoring activities, the Bureau examines and evaluates procedures, records, and programs of exceptional student education (ESE); provides information and assistance to school districts; and otherwise assists school districts in operating effectively and efficiently. One purpose of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) is to assess and ensure the effectiveness of efforts to educate children with disabilities (Section 300.1(d) of the Title 34, Code of Federal Regulations (CFR)), and districts are required to make a good faith effort to assist children with disabilities to achieve their stated goals and objectives in the least restrictive environment (34 CFR Sections 300.350(a)(2) and 300.556). In accordance with the IDEA the Department is responsible for ensuring that the requirements of IDEA are carried out and that each educational program for children with disabilities administered in the state meets the educational requirements of the state (34 CFR Section 300.600(a)(1) and (2)).

During the week of March 31, 2003, the Florida Department of Education, Bureau of Instructional Support and Community Services, conducted an on-site review of the exceptional student education programs in Baker County Public Schools. Wanda Walker, Director, Exceptional Student Education, served as the coordinator and point of contact for the district during the monitoring visit. In its continuing efforts to focus the monitoring process on student educational outcomes, the Bureau has identified four key data indicators: percentage of students with disabilities participating in regular classes (i.e., spending at least 80% of the school day with their nondisabled peers); dropout rate for students with disabilities; percentage of students with disabilities exiting with a standard diploma; and, participation in statewide assessments by students with disabilities. Baker County was selected for monitoring on the basis of its dropout rate for students with disabilities. The results of the monitoring process are reported under six categories or topical issues that are considered to impact or contribute to the key data indicator. In addition, information related to services for gifted students and the results of records and forms reviews are reported.

Summary of Findings

General Information

The majority of students with disabilities in Baker County who have recently dropped out of school are eligible for programs for students who have specific learning disabilities (SLD) or who are emotionally handicapped or seriously emotionally disturbed (EH/SED), and were

pursuing a standard diploma at the time that they dropped out. Not enrolling in a school at the beginning of the school year as expected (DNE) was the most common reason given for students with disabilities dropping out of high school, and the number leaving high school to enroll in adult education has increased during the current year.

Administration and Policy

No formal dropout retrieval activities or data collection procedures related to dropout prevention were reported to be used routinely by the district. The adoption of a single district-wide student code of conduct has been a positive development for the district, but the policies included in the code have the effect, at times, of excluding students from school for repeated minor infractions. Not all policies and procedures, particularly those related to attendance and discipline, are fully understood by all staff or consistently implemented across the district. Child study teams do not appear to be utilized adequately for the development of effective interventions for at-risk students. While there are several effective initiatives in place at individual schools to address attendance and behavior, there is a need for expansion of these programs, and for transition assistance or continued support as students in the alternative programs move to middle school or return to their home school. Lastly, a data quality review is needed to ensure that data reported by the district is accurate.

Curriculum and Instruction

Lack of academic achievement is seen by many to be a significant contributor to the dropout rate for students with disabilities in Baker County. Instruction was consistently judged to be appropriate in the classrooms observed. The lack of a coordinated curriculum plan across schools and grade levels may contribute to the problem of low achievement. Additional areas of concern include: the lack of alternative educational programs for at-risk students in the middle and high school; the stringent reading requirement for participation in vocational programs; and, the use of ESE teachers to teach general curriculum courses in lieu of serving as consultants or facilitators in order for students with disabilities to be enrolled in regular education courses with nondisabled peers.

Discipline and Classroom Management

While effective classroom management was noted by the monitoring team in almost all classrooms observed, interviews with administrative staff and school-level data on student suspensions indicate that disciplinary policies and procedures are an area of concern that may be affecting the dropout rate. It does not appear that student- or school-level data are used routinely by child study teams or classroom teachers in the development and implementation of behavior management strategies for individual students or school-wide discipline plans, and there are limited options for interventions other than suspension.

Staff Development

Ample opportunities for staff development are available through the ESE department, although additional in-service training in reading instruction is seen as a need, especially in the higher grade levels. District-, school-, and classroom-level behavior management and/or discipline policy are areas of concern that call for further evaluation. Steps should be taken to ensure that all teachers who evidence need in a specific area are provided access to appropriate staff

development. Need should be determined through a review of the available data related to disciplinary referrals and student achievement as well as through self report.

Parental Involvement

While the district provides a substantial number and range of activities designed to encourage parental involvement in their children's education and provides resources for transportation and stipends to support these activities, parental participation is seen as an area of concern by staff and parents alike.

Stakeholder Opinions Related to the Dropout Rate for Students with Disabilities

In general, possible causes for, or contributing factors to, the dropout rate for students with disabilities cited by district and school staff fall into the following categories: ineffective disciplinary policies; curricular issues related to a lack of coordination across schools; and, limited access to appropriate vocational programs. In addition, despite demographic data to the contrary, several respondents noted that the level of poverty and the rural nature of the district do not support students remaining in school.

Gifted

Baker County provides services to gifted students in elementary, middle, and high school, through enrollment in special classes. The district has targeted dropout rate for gifted students in its continuous improvement plan.

Record Reviews

During the formal record reviews carried out as a part of the focused monitoring procedures, 19 individual educational plans (IEPs) were reviewed for compliance. There were no findings of noncompliance that resulted in a funding adjustment. Five of the IEPs must be reconvened due to a lack of a majority of measurable annual goals. Two educational plans (EPs) for gifted students were reviewed for compliance. One exceeded its duration date, and must be reviewed and revised as needed. Additional information, including identification of the specific student records in question, has been provided to the district under separate cover.

Forms Reviews

Forms representing the following actions were found to require modification or revision:

- Consent for Initial Placement
- Documentation of Staffing/Eligibility
- Informed Notice of Ineligibility
- Annual Written Notice of Confidentiality of Student Records

The district has addressed these findings; the forms were submitted to the Bureau for review and have been approved.

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 monitoring plan. 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, is provided with this executive summary.

During the process 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 also are included as part of this report.

**Baker County School District
 Focused Monitoring
 System Improvement Plan**

This section includes the issues identified by the Bureau as most significantly in need of improvement. The district is required to provide system improvement strategies to address identified findings, 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. Findings identified as “ESE” are those findings that reflect issues specific to ESE students. Findings identified as “All” are those findings that reflect issues related to the student population as a whole, including ESE students.

Category	Findings	ESE	All	System Improvement Strategy	Evidence of Change and Target Date
5 Administration and Policy	A data quality review is needed to ensure that data reported by the district is accurate.		X		
	Students are often excluded from class for repeated minor infractions.		X		
	Child study teams are not utilized adequately for the development of effective interventions for at-risk students.		X		
	Not all policies and procedures, particularly those related to attendance and discipline, are fully understood by all staff or consistently implemented across the district.		X		

Category	Findings	ESE	All	System Improvement Strategy	Evidence of Change and Target Date
	There is a need for alternative educational (AE) programs or supports for students transitioning from the AE program at Keller Intermediate School to Baker Middle School.		X		
	There is a need for alternative educational programs or supports for students transitioning back to their home school from the Alternative School.		X		
Curriculum and Instruction	There is not a coordinated curriculum plan across schools and grade levels.		X		
	Access to vocational programs is limited for some students with disabilities who read below grade level.	X			
	The system in place for ESE teachers to serve as consultants or facilitators in order for students with disabilities to be enrolled in regular education classes needs to be expanded.		X		
Discipline and Classroom Management	Student-level data are not routinely used by child study teams and classroom teachers in the development of behavior management strategies for	X			

Category	Findings	ESE	All	System Improvement Strategy	Evidence of Change and Target Date
	individual students.				
	School-level data are not routinely used in the development of school-wide discipline plans.		X		
Staff Development	The district must ensure that staff participate in appropriate training opportunities.		X		
Parental Involvement	Despite significant efforts by the district to encourage parental involvement, parental participation continues to be seen as an area of concern by staff and parents alike, particularly at the middle and high school level.				
Gifted Services	No significant findings.				
Records Reviews	Five IEPs for students with disabilities are required to be reconvened.	X			By the time of the issuance of this report the IEP teams had reconvened; revised IEPs were reviewed and approved by Bureau staff.
	One EP for a gifted student is required to be reviewed.	X			
	Findings of noncompliance on IEPs primarily were related to	X			

Category	Findings	ESE	All	System Improvement Strategy	Evidence of Change and Target Date
	the content of the present level of educational performance statements, annual goals, and short-term objective or benchmarks.				
Forms Reviews	Forms used to document the following activities must be revised: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consent for Initial Placement • Documentation of Staffing/ Eligibility • Informed Notice of Ineligibility • Annual Written Notice of Confidentiality of Student Records 	X			By the time of the issuance of this report, all required forms were revised, submitted for review, and approved by the Bureau.

Monitoring Process

Authority

The Florida Department of Education, Bureau of Instructional Support and Community Services, in carrying out its roles of leadership, resource allocation, technical assistance, monitoring, and evaluation is required to oversee the performance of district school boards in the enforcement of all laws and rules (Sections 1001.03(8) and 1008.32, Florida Statutes (F.S.)). In fulfilling this requirement, the Bureau conducts monitoring activities of the exceptional student education (ESE) programs provided by district school boards in accordance with Sections 1001.42 and 1003.57, F.S. Through these monitoring activities, the Bureau examines and evaluates procedures, records, and programs of exceptional student education (ESE); provides information and assistance to school districts; and otherwise assists school districts in operating effectively and efficiently. One purpose of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) is to assess and ensure the effectiveness of efforts to educate children with disabilities (Section 300.1(d) of the Title 34, Code of Federal Regulations (CFR), and districts are required to make a good faith effort to assist children with disabilities to achieve their stated goals and objectives in the least restrictive environment (34 CFR §§300.350(a)(2) and §300.556). In accordance with the IDEA the Department is responsible for ensuring that the requirements of IDEA are carried out and that each educational program for children with disabilities administered in the state meets the educational requirements of the state (34 CFR §300.600(a)(1) and (2)).

The monitoring system established to oversee exceptional student education (ESE) programs reflects the Department's commitment to provide assistance and service to school districts. The system is designed to emphasize improved outcomes and educational benefits for students while continuing to conduct those activities necessary to ensure compliance with applicable federal and state laws, rules, and regulations. The system provides consistency with other state efforts, including the State Improvement Plan required by the IDEA. A description of the development of the current monitoring system in Florida is provided in appendix A.

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 that were identified as significant for educational outcomes for students. Through this process, the Bureau will use such data to inform the monitoring process, thereby implementing a strategic approach to intervention and commitment of resources that will improve student outcomes.

Key Data Indicators

Four key data indicators were recommended by the monitoring stakeholders' workgroup and were adopted for implementation by the Bureau. The key data indicators for the 2003 school year and their sources of data are as follows:

- percentage of students with disabilities participating in regular classes (i.e., spending at least 80% of the school day with their nondisabled peers) [Data source: Survey 9]

- dropout rate for students with disabilities [Data source: Survey 5]
- percentage of students with disabilities exiting with a standard diploma [Data source: Survey 5]
- participation in statewide assessments by students with disabilities [Data sources: performance data from the assessment files and Survey 3 enrollment data]

District Selection

Districts were selected to be monitored based on a review of data from the 2001-02 school year that was submitted electronically to the Department of Education (DOE) Information Database for Surveys 2, 3, 5, 9, and from the assessment files. This data is compiled into an annual data profile for each district (LEA Profile). The 2003 LEA profiles for all Florida school districts are available on the web at <http://www.firn.edu/doe/commhome/datapage.htm>.

In making the decision to include Baker County in this year's focused monitoring visits, Bureau staff reviewed data related to the dropout rate for students with disabilities from survey 5. This review indicated that Baker County's rate of 8.8% approached the highest dropout rate for students with disabilities for all districts in the state. Baker County School District's LEA profile and the listing of districts rank-ordered on dropout rate for students with disabilities is included in this report as appendix B.

Sources of Information

On-Site Monitoring Activities

The Bureau conducted the on-site focused monitoring visit from March 31 through April 2, 2003. Five Bureau staff members, one contracted staff member, and three peer monitors conducted site-visits to the following four schools:

- J. Franklin Keller Intermediate School
- Baker County Middle School
- Baker County High School
- Baker County Alternative School

Peer monitors are exceptional student education personnel from other school districts who are trained to assist with the DOE's monitoring activities. In addition, four University of Miami research staff conducted focus group interviews. A listing of all participating monitors is provided as appendix C.

Interviews

Interviews with selected district- and school-level personnel are conducted using interview protocols developed specifically to address the key data indicator. In addition to the protocol developed specifically to examine dropout rate for students with disabilities, separate protocols are used to address services to gifted students, services provided in charter schools, and services to students served in DJJ facilities. In Baker County, interviews were conducted with 47 people, including 8 district-level administrators or support staff, 14 school-level administrators or support staff, 10 ESE teachers, and 15 general education teachers. Currently, there are no charter schools or DJJ programs in the district.

Focus Group Interviews

Focus groups for parents, teachers, and students are conducted by the University of Miami to gather information related to the participation rate in statewide assessments. In order to provide maximum opportunity for input about the district's ESE services, a minimum of four separate focus group interviews are conducted. The participant groups include: parents of students with disabilities; teachers and other service providers (ESE and general education); students with disabilities who are pursuing a standard diploma, and students with disabilities who are pursuing a special diploma. Separate sessions are conducted for each participant group.

In conjunction with the 2003 Baker County monitoring activities, three parents participated in the parent focus group, representing four students with disabilities in elementary and middle school. Twelve ESE teachers (grades 3-8), a guidance counselor, and a media specialist participated in the teacher focus group. There were 14 participants in the standard diploma student focus group and 12 participants in the focus group for students pursuing a special diploma.

Student Case Studies

Student case studies are conducted for the purpose of performing an in-depth review of the services a student receives in accordance with his or her IEP. The on-site selection of students for the case studies at each school is based on criteria that have been identified as being characteristic of students at risk of dropping out. As part of this process, the student's records are reviewed, Bureau staff or peer monitors may observe the case study student in class, and teachers are interviewed regarding the implementation of the student's IEP. One in-depth case study was conducted in Baker County.

Classroom Visits

Classroom visits are conducted in both ESE and general education classrooms. Some visits are conducted in conjunction with individual student case studies, while others are conducted as general observations of classrooms that include exceptional students. Curriculum and instruction, classroom management and discipline, and classroom design and resources are observed during the general classroom visits. A total of 22 ESE and regular education classrooms were visited during the focused monitoring visit to Baker County.

Off-Site Monitoring Activities

Surveys are designed by the University of Miami research staff in order to provide maximum opportunity for input about the district's ESE services from parents of students with disabilities and students identified as gifted, ESE and regular education teachers, and students with disabilities in grades 9-12. Results of the surveys are discussed in the body of this report. Data from each of the surveys are included as appendix D.

Parent Surveys

The survey that is sent to parents is printed in English, Spanish, and Haitian Creole where applicable. It includes a cover letter and a postage paid reply envelope. In addition, the survey to parents of students with disabilities includes a notice regarding the opportunity to participate in a focus group.

In conjunction with the 2003 Baker County monitoring activities, the parent survey was sent to parents of 539 students with disabilities for whom complete addresses were provided by the district. A total of 36 parents (PK, n=5; K-5, n=16; 6-8, n=8; 9-12, n=7) representing 7% of the sample, returned the survey. Surveys from 189 families were returned as undeliverable, representing 35% of the sample for students with disabilities.

For gifted students, the survey was sent to parents of 76 students identified as gifted for whom complete addresses were provided by the district. A total of 15 parents (K-5, n=8; 6-8, n=5; 9-12, n=2) representing 20% of the sample, returned the survey. Surveys from 22 families were returned as undeliverable, representing 29% of the sample.

Teacher Surveys

Surveys developed for teachers and other service providers were mailed to each school, with a memo explaining the key data indicator and the monitoring process. All teachers, both general education and ESE, were provided an opportunity to respond. Surveys were returned from 154 teachers (59% of all teachers in the district), representing all six of the schools in Baker County.

Student Surveys

A sufficient number of surveys were provided to allow all students with disabilities, grades 9-12, to respond. Instructions for administration of the survey by classroom teachers, including a written script, were provided for each class or group of students. Since participation in this survey is not appropriate for some students whose disabilities might impair their understanding of the survey, professional judgment is used to determine appropriate participants. Surveys were received from 62 students with disabilities in grades 9-12 in the district, representing 44% of the sample. Data are from both of the district's two schools with students in grades 9-12.

Reviews of Student Records and District Forms

Prior to the on-site monitoring visit, Bureau staff conducts a compliance review of student records that are randomly selected from the population of exceptional students. The record of at least one student with a matrix rating of 254 or 255 may be reviewed at each school during the on-site visit, if available. In addition to the compliance reviews, selected student records are reviewed at the school site in conjunction with student case studies and classroom visits. In Baker County, 21 records were reviewed for compliance.

In addition, Bureau staff review selected district forms and notices to determine if the required components are included. The results of the review of student records and district forms are described in this report.

Reporting Process

Interim Reports

Daily debriefing sessions are conducted by the monitoring team members in order to review findings, as well as to determine if there is a need to address additional issues or visit additional sites. Preliminary findings and concerns are shared with the ESE director and/or designee through daily debriefings with the monitoring team leader during the monitoring visit. In

addition, the district ESE director is invited to attend the final team debriefing with Bureau staff and peer monitors. During the course of these activities, suggestions for interventions or strategies to be incorporated into the district's system improvement plan may be proposed. Within two weeks of the visit, Bureau administrative staff conduct a telephone conference with the ESE director to review major findings.

Preliminary Report

Subsequent to the on-site visit, Bureau staff prepare a written report. The report is developed to include the following elements: an executive summary, a description of the monitoring process, and the results section. A description of the development of the current monitoring system for exceptional student education is included as an appendix. Other appendices with data specific to the district also accompany each report. The report is sent to the district ESE director. The director will have the opportunity to discuss and clarify with Bureau staff any concerns regarding the report before it becomes final.

Final Report

Upon final review and revision by Bureau staff based on input from the ESE director, the final report is issued. The report is sent to the district, and is posted to the Bureau's website at www.firn.edu/doe/commhome/mon-home.htm.

Within 30 days of the district's receipt of the final report, the system improvement plan, including activities targeting specific findings, must be submitted to the Bureau for review. In developing this plan, every effort should be made to link the system improvement plan for focused monitoring to the district's continuous improvement monitoring plan. In collaboration with Bureau staff, the district is encouraged to develop methods that correlate activities in order to utilize resources, staff, and time in an efficient manner in order to improve outcomes for students with disabilities. Upon approval of the system improvement plan, the plan is posted on the website noted above.

Reporting of Information

The data generated through the surveys, focus group interviews, individual interviews, case studies, and classroom visits are summarized in this report. The results from the review of student records and district forms are also presented in this report. This report provides conclusions with regard to the key data indicator and specifically addresses topical issues that may contribute to or impact the indicator. For the dropout rate for students with disabilities, these include the following:

- administration and policy
- curriculum and instruction
- discipline and classroom management
- staff development
- parental involvement
- stakeholder opinion related to the indicator

In addition, information related to services for gifted students, the results of the records reviews, and the results of the forms reviews are reported.

To the extent possible, this report focuses on systemic issues rather than on isolated instances of noncompliance or need for improvement. Systemic issues are those that occur at a sufficient enough frequency that the monitoring team could reasonably infer a system-wide problem. Findings are presented in a preliminary report, and the district has the opportunity to clarify items of concern. In a collaborative effort between the district and Bureau staff, system improvement areas are identified. Findings are addressed through the development of strategies for improvement, and evidence of change will be identified as a joint effort between the district and the Bureau. Strategies that are identified as long-term approaches toward improving the district's issue related to the key data indicator are also addressed through the district's continuous improvement monitoring plan.

Results

General Information

This section provides demographic and background information specific to the district as well as information regarding the identification of students with disabilities who are most likely to dropout. Baker County School District has a total school population of 4,525 (PreK-12), with 13% identified as students with disabilities (including 5% identified eligible as speech impaired only), and 2% identified as gifted.

Baker County is considered a “small” district and is one of 25 districts in this enrollment group. It was reported that Baker County is essentially a rural community. Based on data reported to DOE, 40% of the students in Baker County are eligible for free or reduced lunch, compared to 44% across the state as a whole. The district is comprised of two primary schools, one intermediate school, one middle school, one high school, and one alternative school.

Data provided by the district reveals that 12 students with disabilities were withdrawn from Baker County High School during the 2001-02 school year, with 10 coded as dropouts and 2

coded as enrolled in an adult education program. Through May 12 of the 2002-03 school year 14 students with disabilities were withdrawn, with 6 reported as dropouts and 8 reported as enrolling in adult education. Of the 16 students with disabilities reported as dropouts during the past two years, 7 were identified as SLD, 5 as EH/SED, and 3 as educable mentally handicapped (EMH). The majority of the students (10) were pursuing a regular diploma. The most commonly recorded dropout withdrawal code was “did not enter at the beginning of the school year” (8 students).

In summary, the majority of students with disabilities in Baker County who have recently dropped out of school are eligible for SLD or EH/SED programs, and were pursuing a standard diploma at the time that they dropped out. Not enrolling in a school at the beginning of the school year as expected (DNE) was the most common reason given for students with disabilities dropping out of high school, and the number leaving high school to enroll in adult education has increased during the current year.

Administration and Policy

This category refers to school or district policies and procedures that may affect the dropout rate for students with disabilities. There was no procedure reported to be in place to track students who have left school, whether to verify their enrollment in adult education, to determine if they had enrolled in another school district, or to otherwise investigate their reason for leaving. In some cases, students coded as not enrolling at the start of the school year may have enrolled in another district, and should be re-coded to reflect this. While student withdrawal codes may be corrected at any time during the school year, data is disseminated to districts by the DOE twice during the school year, following Survey 2 and Survey 5, through the use of the Student Dropout Match Information Format (additional information is available through the Education and Accountability Services at www.firn.edu/doe/eias/home0050.htm). Districts are encouraged to review this dissemination of records to make corrections for any students who are reported as dropouts but who are actually enrolled in other districts or programs. It may be that data management policies or the lack of dropout retrieval activities have some effect on the reported dropout rate. A data quality review is needed to ensure that data reported by the district is accurate.

Several respondents referred to a newly-adopted district-wide student code of conduct. The use of a consistent plan across the districts’ five schools was considered by many to represent a positive development related to discipline for all students, although the student code of conduct was described by many respondents as a “zero-tolerance” policy that authorizes stringent procedures for in-school and out-of-school suspension (ISS and OSS). The result is often that students are excluded from school for repeated infractions of what might be considered a relatively minor nature. It was reported that this exclusion from school exacerbates the academic achievement difficulties of students with disabilities, with the result that the students become frustrated and gradually lose their feeling of connection to the school environment.

The majority of respondents indicated that attendance policies are effective, and only one teacher reported that attendance is a significant problem. These views are somewhat in conflict with data reported by the DOE in the Florida School Indicators Report (available on the web at <http://info.doe.state.fl.us/fsir/>), which revealed that 20.8% of the students at Baker Middle

School and 12.2% of the students at Baker High School were absent for 21 or more days during the 2001-02 school year. This absence data includes OSS, which may not be perceived by teachers as an attendance issue.

Only one respondent directly referred to the use of child study teams to assist in the development of intervention strategies for attendance or behavior, although referral to the school's child study team for a pattern of absenteeism is required under Section 1003.26, Florida Statutes. While several teachers reported that students are referred to the office for excessive absences, none indicated that they served on child study teams to address the problem or that they had been advised of prevention or intervention strategies that had been developed for implementation with individual students.

The alternative education (AE) program for at-risk students at Keller Intermediate School and the program at the Baker County Alternative School were reported to be effective programs that have had a positive impact on student performance and attendance. This view was supported by class visits to the two programs. However, several respondents indicated that students who are successful in these programs do not receive the amount of support or transition assistance they need as they move on to middle school, or as they transition back to their home school.

It is important to note that special policies such as the opportunity to reduce suspension time at Baker Middle School, the system of rewards for behavioral and academic performance at the middle school and at Keller Intermediate School, and the policy in effect in several schools related to attendance phone calls were cited as having a positive affect on dropout rate.

In summary, no formal dropout retrieval activities or data collection procedures related to dropout prevention were reported to be used routinely by the district. The adoption of a single district-wide student code of conduct has been a positive development for the district, but the policies included in the code have the effect, at times, of excluding students from school for repeated minor infractions. Not all policies and procedures, particularly those related to attendance and discipline, are fully understood by all staff or consistently implemented across the district. Child study teams do not appear to be utilized adequately for the development of effective interventions for at-risk students. While there are several effective initiatives in place at individual schools to address attendance and behavior, there is a need for expansion of these programs, and for transition assistance or continued support as students in the alternative programs move to middle school or return to their home school. Lastly, a data quality review is needed to ensure that data reported by the district is accurate.

Curriculum and Instruction

This category refers both to the specific curriculum used (content and/or specific publisher and program) and to the effectiveness or quality of instruction. Many respondents felt that the low level of academic achievement by many ESE students, especially those on standard diploma track, contributes to the dropout rate in Baker County. Students become frustrated with their own lack of progress, and subsequently give up.

It was reported in interviews that there is a stringent reading requirement for participation in general education vocational programs, and low achievement in the area of reading limits access

to vocational courses for some students with disabilities. Despite this, students who participated in the focus groups reported that vocational instruction in cooking, auto shop, nursing, woodshop, and agriculture is available for interested students, and they mentioned a specific staff member at the high school who is available to assist them in finding jobs. While teachers in the focus group reported that there are not sufficient vocational training opportunities available to students in Baker County, due to the rural nature of the community and the difficulties these students encounter with the reading requirement, they praised a grant program that helped provide salaries and transportation for students to work.

Many respondents felt that lack of student progress is due, in part, to the manner in which curricular decisions are made in the district. It was reported that there is not a coordinated curriculum plan in place to allow for a smooth instructional transition across schools; rather, principals make unilateral decisions about the curriculum for their schools, and some ESE teachers do the same for their individual classes. Representatives from the ESE department are not included in the decision-making process regarding curriculum. Because the district serves elementary-aged students in two primary schools that feed into an intermediate school, this lack of curricular coordination among schools is particularly significant, and may contribute to depressed levels of student achievement.

An area of concern noted by some respondents regarding ESE teachers at the high school, and to a lesser degree at the middle school, was the issue of their qualification to teach general curriculum content to ESE students. These respondents reported that the needs of students with disabilities who are pursuing a standard diploma can best be met through a consultation and facilitation model in which ESE teachers are available to provide supports to students and teachers in the general education setting, rather than through separate classes in which the ESE teacher provides instruction in the general curriculum. It was felt that the use of a more inclusive service delivery model would improve student achievement as well as decrease the likelihood of students with disabilities dropping out of school.

The monitors observed instruction in 22 classrooms (9 ESE and 13 general education) across the four schools visited. Teaching activities in all classrooms observed were found to be consistently or generally planned and implemented in ways that promote student learning and ensure access to the appropriate (general or modified) curriculum. It should be noted that staff from the district office and Keller Intermediate School reported that the district's participation in the Florida Reading Initiative (FRI) project has been very effective in improving reading instruction, and holds great promise for the district as a whole. In addition, the programs for at-risk or troubled students in place at the alternative school and the alternative education program at the intermediate school were seen to be effective in motivating students and discouraging them from dropping out.

In summary, lack of academic achievement is seen by many respondents to be a significant contributor to the dropout rate for students with disabilities in Baker County. Instruction was consistently judged to be appropriate in the classrooms observed. The lack of a coordinated curriculum plan across schools and grade levels may contribute to the problem of low achievement. Additional areas of concern include: the lack of alternative educational programs for at-risk students in the middle and high school; the stringent reading requirement for

participation in vocational programs; and, the use of ESE teachers to teach general curriculum courses in lieu of serving as consultants or facilitators in order for students with disabilities to be enrolled in regular education courses with nondisabled peers.

Discipline and Classroom Management

This category refers to classroom behavior management in general as well as to school or district policies related to discipline. There appeared to be inconsistent implementation of effective school-wide and classroom-based behavior management strategies among the schools visited. In schools where staff reported the collection and analysis of data related to discipline, interviews and classroom observations revealed effective behavior management (e.g., Baker County Alternative School; Keller Intermediate School; the SED classroom at Baker Middle School). In contrast, interviews and observations at other schools and/or programs revealed limited, if any, utilization of behavioral or disciplinary data in the development of effective classroom management or disciplinary procedures at either the school- or the individual-student-level.

The majority of school staff interviewed reported that they themselves have few disciplinary problems in their classrooms, although several noted that other “more traditional teachers” may encounter problems. In contrast, several district-level staff and administrators reported that discipline is a significant problem for students with disabilities at risk of dropping out, as the range and depth of available interventions and consequences is limited. This latter view is supported by a review of the LEA profile district-wide data for Baker County (see appendix A), which reveals that in-school suspension (ISS) rates, out-of-school suspension (OSS) rates, and the alternative placement rate for students with disabilities are at or above the state average. In addition, school-level data reported in the Florida School Indicators Report revealed that 20.2% of all students at Baker County Middle School and 10.6% of all students at Baker County High School received out-of-school suspensions during the 2001-02 school year.

It should be noted that, during the course of the 22 classroom observations conducted during this monitoring visit, all teachers consistently or generally implemented effective behavior management strategies. The only exceptions noted were four classrooms in which the teachers did not address the off-task behavior and lack of engagement of a limited number of students.

In summary, while effective classroom management was noted by the monitoring team in almost all classrooms observed, interviews with administrative staff and school-level data on student suspensions indicates that disciplinary policy and procedures are an area of concern that may be affecting the dropout rate. It does not appear that student- or school-level data are used routinely by child study teams or classroom teachers in the development and implementation of behavior management strategies for individual students or school-wide discipline plans, and there are limited options for interventions other than suspension.

Staff Development

This category refers to any staff development activities that directly target interventions to prevent students with disabilities from dropping out. Reflecting the view of many respondents regarding the correlation between low student academic achievement and dropout rate, staff development in the area of reading was cited as being a priority need, most particularly at the middle and high school levels. School staff did not cite a need for training related to discipline or

behavior management, although the disciplinary data reported above indicate that this is an area of concern.

Most respondents reported that the district provides ample opportunity and resources for staff development, including the provision of substitute teachers. Some staff reported that it is more difficult for general education teachers to obtain permission for release-time from instructional duties in order to attend training activities, due to pressure related to FCAT preparation. The ESE director encourages general education teachers to participate in any of the training activities designed for ESE teachers, since they also are responsible for the instruction of exceptional students.

In summary, ample opportunities for staff development are available through the ESE department, although additional in-service training in reading instruction is seen as a need, especially in the higher grade levels. District-, school-, and classroom-level behavior management and/or discipline policy are areas of concern that call for further evaluation. Steps should be taken to ensure that all teachers who evidence need in a specific area are provided access to appropriate staff development. Need should be determined through a review of the available data related to disciplinary referrals and student achievement as well as through self report.

Parental Involvement

This category refers to parent involvement as it relates directly to the likelihood that a student with a disability will drop out of school. In addition to IEP meetings, a significant number of opportunities for parent involvement were reported by district- and school-level staff, and by the parent focus group participants. Focus group participants noted activities such as FCAT workshops, book fairs, "Title I Night," informational and training sessions for parents regarding transition, and the Special Issues Committee that discusses issues of concern to parents of exceptional students, and forwards those concerns to the ESE director. No activities designed to directly target dropout prevention were reported by parents or by district staff.

It was reported that transportation or stipends are often provided to parents to encourage participation. Of the parents of students with disabilities who responded to the survey, 82% indicated that their child's school encourages them to participate in the child's education, and 81% stated that they have been provided information about activities and workshops for parents. Despite this, parents and staff reported that parent turnout for these activities is low. This opinion was supported by the relatively low turnout for the parent focus group, which was attended by four parents. In particular, lack of parent involvement was cited as a contributing factor to dropout rate at Baker High School, Baker County Alternative School, and by some staff at Baker Middle School.

In summary, while the district provides a substantial number and range of activities designed to encourage parental involvement in their children's education and provides resources for transportation and stipends to support these activities, parental participation is seen as an area of concern by staff and parents alike.

Stakeholder Opinions Related to the Dropout Rate for Students with Disabilities

This category refers to respondents' views on issues directly related to the dropout rate for students with disabilities. When asked their opinion on the likely contributors to dropout rate for students with disabilities in Baker County, the following perceptions were noted:

- zero-tolerance disciplinary policies and the provisions in the student code of conduct that allow for students to be suspended for behaviors that do not significantly disrupt instruction
- ineffective behavior management strategies
- lack of instruction in meaningful curriculum, especially vocational training, or instruction not being provided in a manner designed to actively engage students
- students are not motivated, by families or teachers, to remain in school and to pursue a standard diploma
- families and students do not value or find benefit to be derived from consistent school attendance
- the perception that the level of poverty and the rural nature of the community do not support students staying in school

Services to Gifted Students

Currently, all gifted students in the district receive services through a class provided one day per week, in the student's home school. At the high school, this is a class that can be repeated for credit. The district provides support for the gifted program through both resources and training. Of the 15 parents who responded to the survey for gifted students, 79% reported satisfaction with services their child receives, with 93% reporting that the teachers of the gifted have access to the latest technology.

It was reported that the identification procedures in place in the district include parent and/or teacher recommendation, the use of a gifted characteristics checklist, and informal screening prior to formal testing. All respondents to the survey reported that they were satisfied with how quickly services were implemented following the initial request for an evaluation. Students are dismissed from the program at parent request and when the student no longer exhibits a need for the program.

The district is currently addressing dropout rate in its continuous improvement monitoring plan for gifted students. The dropout rate for gifted students in the district has remained steady at 4% for the past two years, compared to the state average of <1%.

Student Record Reviews

A total of 21 student records, randomly selected from the population of exceptional students in Baker County, were reviewed for compliance. The records were sent to the DOE for review by Bureau staff prior to the on-site visit. The review included: 15 IEPs for students with disabilities, excluding students eligible as "speech only"; two IEPs for students eligible as speech impaired; two IEPs for students eligible for low-incidence disabilities; and, two EPs for students identified as gifted. The sample group included records of eight high school students, four middle school students, four intermediate school students, and five elementary students.

Of the 19 IEPs reviewed, five required reconvening of the IEP team because of a lack of a majority of measurable annual goals. There were no findings of noncompliance that required a funding adjustment. Systemic findings are those that occur at a sufficient enough frequency that the monitoring team could reasonably infer a system-wide problem. The following areas of noncompliance appear to be systemic in nature:

- lack of notice that the purpose of the meeting for students aged 14 and older will include a discussion of transition needs
- lack of documentation that the parent received a copy of the IEP, if the parent did not attend the meeting
- no indication of which IEP team member served as the interpreter of instructional implications
- lack of measurable annual goals and short-term objectives or benchmarks
- the present level of educational performance statement, annual goals, and short-term objectives or benchmarks do not support the services on the IEP

In addition, the following represent items of individual or non-systemic findings:

- missing parent participation form documenting notice of the meeting
- lack of adequate information in reporting progress toward the annual goal
- lack of documentation that the most recent evaluation or state-wide assessment were taken into account
- lack of strategies and supports to address behavior for a student whose behavior impedes his or her learning, or that of others
- lack of notice of change of free appropriate public education (FAPE)
- lack of agency participation for student aged 16 or older
- lack of transfer of rights notice

Two EPs for gifted students were reviewed for compliance; one exceeded its duration date and there was no indication that it had been reviewed.

Additional information regarding these findings, including identification of the specific student records that required reconvening of the IEP or EP teams, has been provided to the district under separate cover.

In summary, five IEPs and one EP were required to be reconvened; there were no funding adjustments. Systemic findings of noncompliance on IEPs were noted in five areas, and individual findings were noted in seven additional areas.

District Forms Review

Forms representing the thirteen areas identified below were submitted to Bureau staff for a review to determine compliance with federal and state laws. Findings were noted in six of the areas, and changes were required on those forms. The district was notified of the specific findings via a separate letter dated April 29, 2003. By the time of this report, the district had revised the forms. They were submitted to the Bureau for review, and have been approved.

A detailed explanation of the specific findings may be found in appendix E.

- *Parent Notification of Individual Education Plan (IEP) Meeting*
- *IEP forms~*
- *Notice and Consent for Initial Placement**
- *Informed Notice and Consent for Evaluation**
- *Informed Notice and Consent for Reevaluation*
- *Notification of Change of Placement*
- *Notification of Change of FAPE (Free Appropriate Public Education)*
- *Informed Notice of Refusal*
- *Documentation of Staffing/Eligibility Determination**
- *Informed Notice of Dismissal**
- *Notice: Not Eligible for Exceptional Student Placement*
- *Summary of Procedural Safeguards*
- *Annual Notice of Confidentiality**

* indicates findings that require immediate attention

~ indicates findings that require changes upon the next printing of the form

District Response

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 monitoring 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.

Baker County School District Focused Monitoring System Improvement Plan

This section includes the issues identified by the Bureau as most significantly in need of improvement. The district is required to provide system improvement strategies to address identified findings, 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. Findings identified as “ESE” are those findings that reflect issues specific to ESE students. Findings identified as “All” are those findings that reflect issues related to the student population as a whole, including ESE students.

Category	Findings	ESE	All	System Improvement Strategy	Evidence of Change and Target Date
Administration and Policy	A data quality review is needed to ensure that data reported by the district is accurate.		X		
	Students are often excluded from class for repeated minor infractions.		X		
	Child study teams are not utilized adequately for the development of effective interventions for at-risk students.		X		
	Not all policies and procedures, particularly those related to attendance and discipline, are fully understood by all staff or consistently implemented across the district.		X		

Category	Findings	ESE	All	System Improvement Strategy	Evidence of Change and Target Date
	There is a need for alternative educational (AE) programs or supports for students transitioning from the AE program at Keller Intermediate School to Baker Middle School.		X		
	There is a need for alternative educational programs or supports for students transitioning back to their home school from the Alternative School.		X		
Curriculum and Instruction	There is not a coordinated curriculum plan across schools and grade levels.		X		
	Access to vocational programs is limited for some students with disabilities who read below grade level.	X			
	The system in place for ESE teachers to serve as consultants or facilitators in order for students with disabilities to be enrolled in regular education classes needs to be expanded.		X		
Discipline and Classroom Management	Student-level data are not routinely used by child study teams and classroom teachers in the development of behavior management strategies for	X			

Category	Findings	ESE	All	System Improvement Strategy	Evidence of Change and Target Date
	individual students.				
	School-level data are not routinely used in the development of school-wide discipline plans.		X		
Staff Development	The district must ensure that staff participate in appropriate training opportunities.		X		
Parental Involvement	Despite significant efforts by the district to encourage parental involvement, parental participation continues to be seen as an area of concern by staff and parents alike, particularly at the middle and high school level.				
Gifted Services	No significant findings.				
Records Reviews	Five IEPs for students with disabilities are required to be reconvened.	X			By the time of the issuance of this report the IEP teams had reconvened; revised IEPs were reviewed and approved by Bureau staff.
	One EP for a gifted student is required to be reviewed.	X			
	Findings of noncompliance on IEPs primarily were related to	X			

Category	Findings	ESE	All	System Improvement Strategy	Evidence of Change and Target Date
	the content of the present level of educational performance statements, annual goals, and short-term objective or benchmarks.				
Forms Reviews	Forms used to document the following activities must be revised: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consent for Initial Placement • Documentation of Staffing/ Eligibility • Informed Notice of Ineligibility • Annual Written Notice of Confidentiality of Student Records 	X			By the time of the issuance of this report, all required forms were revised, submitted for review, and approved by the Bureau.

Recommendations and Technical Assistance

As a result of the focused monitoring activities conducted in Baker County during the week of March 31, 2003, the Bureau has identified specific findings related to dropout rate for students with disabilities in the district. The following are recommendations for the district to consider when developing the system improvement plan and determining strategies that are most likely to effect change. 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 plan. A partial listing of technical assistance resources is also provided. These resources may be of assistance in the development and/or implementation of the system improvement plan.

Recommendations

- Request a Data Quality Review from Education Information and Accountability Services at the DOE to ensure that student withdrawal codes are applied appropriately, and that periodic data correction activities are conducted.
- Consider the identified target population when collecting data and implementing strategies.
- Conduct school-level analyses of discipline data to address questions such as:
 - ✓ Which students have the highest referral rates, and for what types of infractions?
 - ✓ Do some staff members have significantly higher or lower referral rates than others, and what might be the cause?
 - ✓ Are some interventions or consequences more effective than others in changing student behavior?
 - ✓ Are there policies in place for some infractions that have unintended consequences (e.g., If a student receives two days of OSS for skipping school for one day, the result is actually three days of missed instruction).
 - ✓ Do instructional practices in the ISS setting promote student learning, especially for students with disabilities, or are they primarily designed for independent task completion and skill maintenance?
- Review the use of child study teams as a resource for teachers to address the behavioral and instructional needs of all students (e.g., recommendations for best practice interventions; mentor/lead teachers; etc...).
- Expand implementation of the Florida Reading Initiative; investigate programs for reading remediation for middle and high school aged students.
- Develop a parent/teacher summit to develop a dialogue on meeting the needs of students with disabilities.
- Develop strategies to determine why students dropped out, including interviews with students or their families.
- Provide staff with an opportunity to review data on Baker County demographic, economic, employment, and other information, with the intent of addressing misconceptions.
- Develop school-level plans to address areas of concern, with team building and cultural sensitivity training prior to the development of an improvement plan.

Technical Assistance

Student Support Services Project

(850) 922-3727

SunCom 292-3727

Fax (850) 921-4752

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

The project is responsible for providing 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).

Florida's Positive Behavioral Supports Project

(813) 974-6440

Fax: (813) 974-6115

<http://www.fmhi.usf.edu/cfs/dares/flpbs/>

This project is designed to support teachers, administrators, related services personnel, family members, and outside agency personnel in building district-wide capacity to address challenging behavior exhibited by students in regular and special education programs. It provides training and technical assistance for districts, schools, and individual teams in all levels of positive behavior support (individual, classroom and school-wide).

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. They provide 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.

Bureau of Instructional Support and Community 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.

Dropout Prevention and Academic Intervention

Mary Jo Butler

Michael Lisle

(850) 245-0479

Behavior/Discipline

Lee Clark, EH/SED

(850) 245-0478

SLD, IEPs

Paul Gallaher

(850) 245-0478

Clearinghouse Information Center

cicbiscs@FLDOE.org

Compliance

Eileen Amy

Iris Anderson

Gail Best

Kim Komisar

(850) 245-0476

Education Information and Accountability Services

Lavan Dukes, Bureau Chief

(850) 245-0400

email:

<mailto:askeias@fldoe.org>

APPENDIX A:
DEVELOPMENT OF THE MONITORING PROCESS

Development of the Monitoring Process 1999-2003

With guidance from a work group of parent, school and district representatives and members of the State Advisory Committee for Exceptional Students, substantial revisions to Bureau monitoring practices were initiated during the 1999-2000 school year. The shift to a focused monitoring approach began at the national level, with the monitoring of state departments of education by the Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP). The revisions reflect a change in the focus of the monitoring process from one that relies primarily on procedural compliance to one that focuses on improved outcomes for students with disabilities, as measured by key data indicators. As a result of the efforts of the monitoring stakeholders' workgroup, three types of monitoring processes were established as part of the Florida DOE's system of exceptional student education monitoring and oversight. Those monitoring activities were identified as focused monitoring, random monitoring, and continuous improvement monitoring.

Beginning in 1999, Bureau staff and the stakeholders' workgroup developed a system whereby districts would be selected for focused monitoring based on their performance on key data indicators related to student performance, and the monitoring activities would focus on determining the root cause of the district's performance on that indicator. The following key data indicators were recommended by the monitoring restructuring work group and were adopted for implementation by the Bureau. The identified indicators and the sources of the data used are

- percentage of students with disabilities participating in regular classes (i.e., spending at least 80% of the school day with their non-disabled peers) [Data source: Survey 9]
- dropout rate for students with disabilities [Data source: Survey 5]
- percentage of students with disabilities exiting with a standard diploma [Data source: Survey 5]
- participation in statewide assessments by students with disabilities [Data sources: performance data from the assessment files and Survey 3 enrollment data]

While districts were selected for focused monitoring based on their performance on key data indicators, they were randomly selected for the more procedural/ compliance-oriented random monitoring process. All 67 districts participate in the continuous improvement monitoring process. The focused monitoring activities applied only to students with disabilities, while random monitoring and continuous improvement monitoring involved both students with disabilities and students identified as gifted.

The change to the monitoring process also resulted in an adjustment to what is considered a "monitoring year." Historically, compliance monitoring activities in the state have been conducted in a cycle, and over the course of a school year. While the collection and analysis of data and implementation of system improvement plans for the continuous improvement monitoring process continue to be based on the traditional school year (e.g. 2002-03), the quality assurance visits conducted by the Bureau are conducted over the course of a calendar year (e.g., January to December, 2003).

During the transition year of 1999-2000 districts were asked to conduct extensive self-evaluations. Beginning in the 2000-01 school year, the focused monitoring process was

instituted. Four districts were selected for focused monitoring during the 2001 pilot year: Jackson County– standard diploma rate; Lee County– dropout rate; Osceola County– participation in statewide assessment; and, Taylor County– regular class placement.

During the 2002 monitoring cycle, seven districts were chosen for focused monitoring visits based on their state rankings, and three districts were selected at random for the more procedural/compliance-oriented random monitoring. The districts and the indicators they were selected on are as follows: Polk and Gadsden Counties – dropout rate; Madison and Franklin Counties – participation in statewide assessment; and, Dade and Lafayette Counties – regular class placement. Bradford County was selected on the basis of standard diploma rate, but that visit was changed to a random monitoring visit when it was determined that data reporting errors had resulted in a significant misrepresentation of the district’s ranking. Charlotte, Glades, and Duval Counties also were selected for random monitoring.

The continuous improvement monitoring process began during the 2001-02 school year. At that time, school districts were asked to examine key data indicators for exceptional students and to self-select two indicators (one for students with disabilities and one for gifted students) to target for improvement. The key data indicators for students with disabilities identified by the Bureau as part of the continuous improvement process are as follows:

- participation in statewide assessments
- percentage of students exiting with a standard diploma
- dropout rate
- percentage of students participating in regular classes (i.e., spending at least 80% of the school day with their nondisabled peers)
- performance on statewide assessments
- retention rate
- discipline rates
- disproportionality of student membership, which may include
 - percentage of PK-12 students identified as educable mentally handicapped (EMH)
 - racial/ethnic disparity of students identified as EMH
 - students identified as EMH served in separate class settings
 - student membership for selected disabilities (specific learning disabled, emotionally handicapped, severely emotionally disturbed, and educable mentally handicapped)

The key data indicators for students identified as gifted are as follows:

- performance on statewide assessments
- dropout rate
- student membership by racial/ethnic category, free/reduced lunch status, and limited English proficiency (LEP) status
- other, at the discretion of the district

In the fall of 2001, districts were required to develop a plan to conduct an in-depth analysis during the 2001-02 school year of the selected data indicators for both populations, and to submit the plan to the Bureau for review and approval. While all districts were required to submit a plan

for data collection during the initial year of continuous improvement monitoring, on-site visits by the Bureau were not conducted to review these activities.

For the 2002-2003 school year, based on the results of the data collection and analysis conducted during the 2001-02 school year, districts were required to submit continuous improvement monitoring plans (CIMPs) designed to improve outcomes for students with disabilities and for gifted students.

In an effort to utilize resources most effectively, activities related to random monitoring and continuous improvement monitoring visits have been consolidated. Therefore, during 2003 the Bureau is conducting on-site visits to eight districts chosen for focused monitoring based on key data indicators, and to two districts chosen at random for a review of the continuous improvement monitoring activities undertaken by the district. In addition, the Bureau will conduct follow-up visits to the four districts that participated in the focused monitoring process during 2001. Compliance reviews of selected policies, procedures, and student records are incorporated in varying degrees into all of the monitoring visits.

APPENDIX B:
DISTRICT DATA



**Florida Department of Education
Bureau of Instructional Support and Community Services
2003 LEA Profile**

District: Baker	PK-12 Population: 4,525
Enrollment Group: less than 7,000	Percent Disabled: 13%
	Percent Gifted: 2%

Introduction

The LEA profile is intended to provide districts with a tool for use in planning for systemic improvement. The 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** (*Section One*)

- Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test (FCAT) participation and performance
- Standard diploma rate
- Dropout rate
- Retention rate

Data presented as indicators of **educational environment** (*Section Two*)

- Regular class / natural environment placement
- Separate class placement
- Discipline rates

Data presented as indicators of **prevalence** (*Section Three*)

- Student membership by race/ethnicity
- Gifted membership by free/reduced lunch and Limited English Proficiency (LEP) status
- Student membership in selected disabilities by race/ethnicity
- Selected disabilities as a percent of all disabilities and as a percent of total PK-12 population

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 separate class placement of students identified as educable mentally handicapped (EMH) are included to correspond with provisions of the Bureau's partnership agreement with the Office for Civil Rights.

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. School year data are included for **1999-00** through **December 2002**.

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

Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test (FCAT) participation and performance data found in this section includes students who were reported in February (survey 3) **and** had a reported score on the multiple choice portion of the FCAT for the 1999-00, 2000-01, and 2001-02 administrations. (Scores are not reported in cases where the student identification number is missing, incorrect or where the student did not attempt to answer the test questions.) Students who had a reported FCAT score but were not reported in February (survey 3) are not included. Data for students with disabilities and students who are gifted includes only students with a primary exceptionality reported in February (survey 3). Students who had a reported FCAT score but did not have a primary exceptionality in February are not included in the disabled or gifted data. The statewide student match rate for students with disabilities and students identified as gifted in February (survey 3) and the FCAT files was between 98 and 99 percent across the reported grade levels.

Participation Rate in Statewide Assessments:

The number of students with disabilities reported in February (survey 3) who had a reported FCAT score divided by the total number enrolled during February (survey 3) of the same year. The resulting percentages are reported for the three-year period from **1999-00** through **2001-02**.

Grade 3 Participation FCAT Math		Grade 3 Participation FCAT Reading																									
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* Not administered in 1999-00.

** Reported number participating exceeds enrollment.

Performance on Statewide Assessments: FCAT Reading

The following tables show the percent of students in the district scoring at Level 1, Level 2, and Level 3 and above on the **2000-01** and **2001-02** FCAT for students with disabilities, all students, and gifted students. The bars in the graph display the percent of students in the district scoring at or above achievement level 3 for **2000-01** and **2001-02**.

	Grade 3 Achievement Level					
	Level 1		Level 2		Level 3+	
	2000-01	2001-02	2000-01	2001-02	2000-01	2001-02
students with disabilities	nr	59%	nr	7%	nr	35%
all students	nr	26%	nr	13%	nr	62%
gifted students	nr	0%	nr	0%	nr	100%

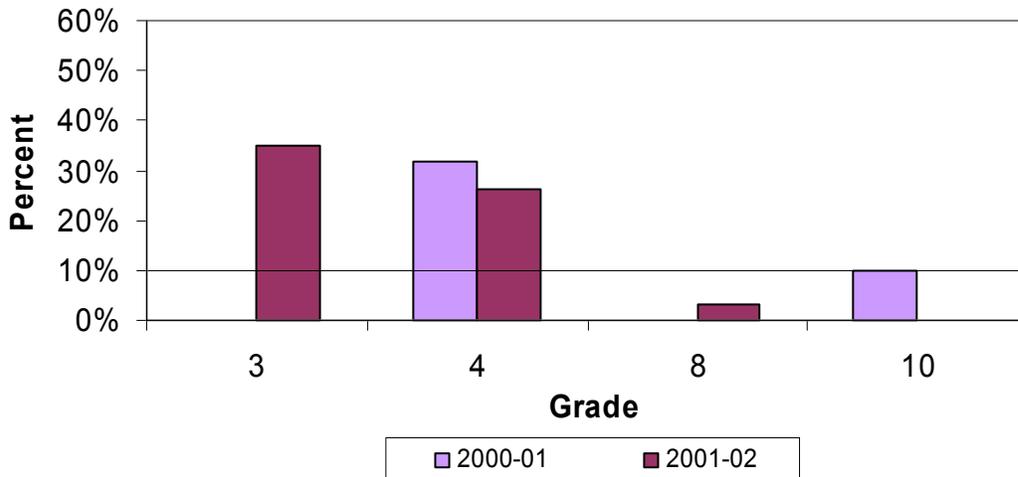
	Grade 4 Achievement Level					
	Level 1		Level 2		Level 3+	
	2000-01	2001-02	2000-01	2001-02	2000-01	2001-02
students with disabilities	61%	61%	7%	13%	32%	26%
all students	34%	41%	18%	17%	48%	42%
gifted students	0%	0%	0%	0%	100%	100%

	Grade 8 Achievement Level					
	Level 1		Level 2		Level 3+	
	2000-01	2001-02	2000-01	2001-02	2000-01	2001-02
students with disabilities	91%	83%	9%	13%	0%	3%
all students	29%	32%	30%	30%	42%	38%
gifted students	0%	0%	0%	14%	100%	86%

	Grade 10 Achievement Level					
	Level 1		Level 2		Level 3+	
	2000-01	2001-02	2000-01	2001-02	2000-01	2001-02
students with disabilities	60%	56%	30%	44%	10%	0%
all students	22%	32%	43%	41%	35%	28%
gifted students	0%	0%	50%	33%	50%	67%

nr = not reported

Percent of Students with Disabilities at Achievement Level 3 or Higher FCAT Reading



Performance on Statewide Assessments: FCAT Math

	Grade 3 Achievement Level					
	Level 1		Level 2		Level 3+	
	2000-01	2001-02	2000-01	2001-02	2000-01	2001-02
students with disabilities	nr	39%	nr	15%	nr	46%
all students	nr	15%	nr	16%	nr	70%
gifted students	nr	0%	nr	0%	nr	100%

	Grade 5 Achievement Level					
	Level 1		Level 2		Level 3+	
	2000-01	2001-02	2000-01	2001-02	2000-01	2001-02
students with disabilities	44%	62%	32%	21%	24%	17%
all students	24%	25%	29%	29%	47%	45%
gifted students	0%	0%	10%	0%	90%	100%

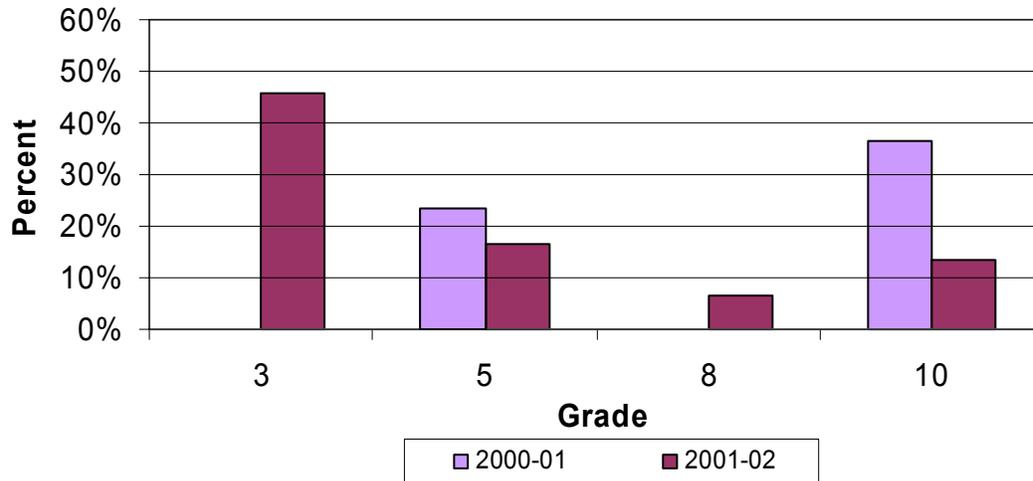
	Grade 8 Achievement Level					
	Level 1		Level 2		Level 3+	
	2000-01	2001-02	2000-01	2001-02	2000-01	2001-02
students with disabilities	70%	83%	30%	10%	0%	7%
all students	23%	22%	23%	22%	53%	57%
gifted students	0%	0%	0%	0%	100%	100%

	Grade 10 Achievement Level					
	Level 1		Level 2		Level 3+	
	2000-01	2001-02	2000-01	2001-02	2000-01	2001-02
students with disabilities	45%	80%	18%	7%	36%	13%
all students	13%	17%	16%	27%	71%	55%
gifted students	0%	11%	0%	0%	100%	89%

nr = not reported

Percent of Students with Disabilities at Achievement Level 3 or Higher

FCAT Math



Standard Diploma Graduation Rate:

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) as reported in end of year survey 5. The resulting percentages are reported for the three-year period from **1999-00** through **2001-02**.

	1999-00	2000-01	2001-02
Baker	100%	40%	47%
Enrollment Group	46%	42%	41%
State	56%	51%	48%

Retention Rate:

The number of students retained divided by the total year enrollment as reported in end of year survey 5. Total enrollment is the count of all students who attended school at any time during the school year. The results are reported for students with disabilities and all PK-12 students for **2001-02**.

2001-02		
	Students with Disabilities	All Students
Baker	5%	3%
Enrollment Group	7%	5%
State	7%	6%

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) as reported in end of year survey 5. The resulting percentages are reported for students with disabilities, all PK-12 students, and gifted students for the years **1999-00** through **2001-02**.

Students with Disabilities			
	1999-00	2000-01	2001-02
Baker	7%	6%	9%
Enrollment Group	5%	5%	5%
State	6%	5%	5%

All Students			
	1999-00	2000-01	2001-02
Baker	3%	4%	3%
Enrollment Group	4%	4%	3%
State	5%	4%	3%

Gifted Students			
	1999-00	2000-01	2001-02
Baker	4%	4%	0%
Enrollment Group	<1%	<1%	<1%
State	<1%	<1%	<1%

Section Two: Educational Environment

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

Regular Class Placement, Ages 6-21:

The number of students with disabilities ages 6-21 who spend 80 percent or more of their school week with nondisabled peers divided by the total number of students with disabilities ages 6-21 reported in December (survey 9). The resulting percentages are reported for the three years from **2000-01** through **2002-03**.

	2000-01	2001-02	2002-03
Baker	54%	53%	52%
Enrollment Group	44%	46%	49%
State	48%	48%	48%

Natural Environments, Ages 3-5:

The number of students with disabilities ages 3-5 who receive all of their special education and related services in educational programs designed primarily for children without disabilities or in their home divided by the total number of students with disabilities ages 3-5 reported in December (survey 9). The resulting percentages are reported for the three years from **2000-01** through **2002-03**.

	2000-01	2001-02	2002-03
Baker	4%	2%	2%
Enrollment Group	8%	10%	10%
State	6%	7%	7%

Separate Class Placement of EMH Students, Ages 6-21:

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 December (survey 9). The resulting percentages are reported for three years from **2000-01** through **2002-03**.

	2000-01	2001-02	2002-03
Baker	89%	89%	67%
Enrollment Group	56%	56%	49%
State	61%	62%	61%

Discipline Rates:

The number of students who served in-school or out-of-school suspensions, were expelled, or moved to alternative placement at any time during the school year divided by the total year enrollment as reported in end of year (survey 5). The resulting percentages are reported for students with disabilities and nondisabled students for **2001-02**.

		2001-02							
		In-School Suspensions		Out-of-School Suspensions		Expulsions		Alternative Placement *	
		Students with Disabilities	Nondisabled Students						
Baker		4%	2%	12%	9%	0%	<1%	3%	<1%
Enrollment Group		16%	11%	13%	7%	<1%	<1%	<1%	<1%
State		13%	8%	15%	7%	<1%	<1%	<1%	<1%

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

Section Three: Prevalence

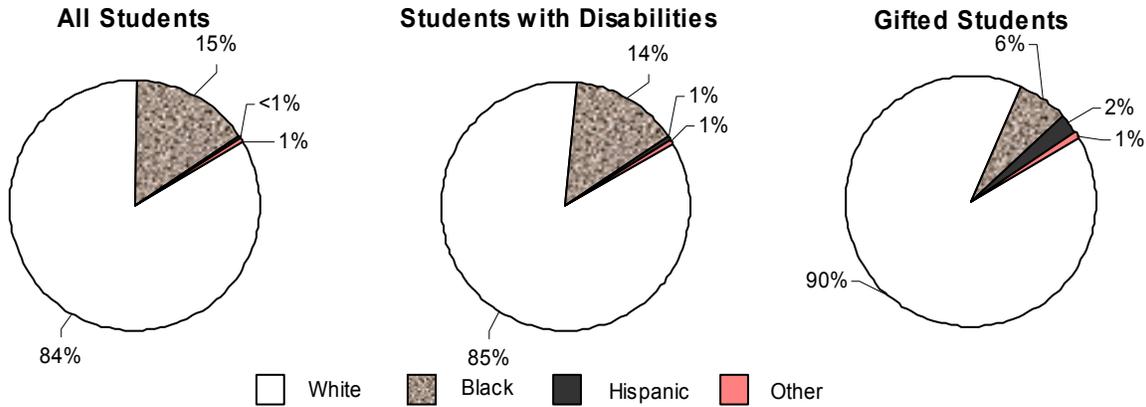
Prevalence refers to the proportion of the PK-12 population identified as exceptional at any given point in time. This section of the profile provides prevalence data by demographic characteristics.

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 2002** (survey 2). Statewide, there is a larger percentage of black students in the disabled population than in the total PK-12 population (28 percent vs. 24 percent) and a smaller percentage of black students in the gifted population (10 percent vs. 24 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	51%	52%	64%	84%	85%	90%
Black	24%	28%	10%	15%	14%	6%
Hispanic	21%	17%	19%	<1%	<1%	2%
Asian/Pacific Islander	2%	<1%	4%	<1%	<1%	1%
Am Ind/Alaskan Nat	<1%	<1%	<1%	<1%	0%	0%
Multiracial	2%	2%	3%	<1%	<1%	0%

District Membership by Race/Ethnicity



Free/Reduced Lunch and LEP:

The percent of all students and all gifted students in the district and the state on free/reduced lunch. The percent of all students and all gifted students in the district and in the state who are identified as Limited English Proficient (LEP). These percentages are based on data reported in **October 2002** (survey 2).

	State		District	
	All Students	Gifted Students	All Students	Gifted Students
Free / Reduced Lunch	44%	20%	40%	31%
LEP	12%	3%	<1%	0%

Selected Disabilities by Racial/Ethnic Category:

Racial/ethnic data for all students as well as students with a primary disability of specific learning disabled (SLD), emotionally handicapped or severely emotionally disturbed (EH/SED), and educable mentally handicapped (EMH) are presented below. The data are presented for the state and the district as reported in **October 2002** (survey 2).

	All Students		SLD		EH/SED		EMH	
	State	District	State	District	State	District	State	District
White	51%	84%	54%	81%	48%	84%	33%	67%
Black	24%	15%	24%	17%	39%	16%	53%	32%
Hispanic	21%	<1%	20%	<1%	11%	0%	13%	1%
Asian/Pacific Islander	2%	<1%	<1%	<1%	<1%	0%	<1%	0%
Am Ind/Alaskan Nat	<1%	<1%	<1%	0%	<1%	0%	<1%	0%
Multiracial	2%	<1%	1%	<1%	2%	0%	<1%	0%

Selected Disabilities as Percent of Disabled and PK-12 Populations:

The percentage of the total disabled population and the total population identified as SLD, EH or SED, EMH, and speech impaired (SI) for the district and for the state. Statewide, seven percent of the total population is identified as SLD and 46 percent of all students with disabilities are SLD. The data are presented for the district and state as reported in **October 2002** (survey 2).

	All Students		All Disabled	
	State	District	State	District
SLD	7%	5%	46%	36%
EH/SED	1%	<1%	10%	4%
EMH	1%	2%	8%	12%
SI	2%	5%	14%	36%

Districts in Baker's Enrollment Group:

Baker, Bradford, Calhoun, DeSoto, Dixie, Franklin, Gilchrist, Glades, Gulf, Hamilton, Hardee, Holmes, Jefferson, Lafayette, Levy, Liberty, Madison, Sumter, Suwannee, Taylor, Union, Wakulla, Walton, Washington



The New Department of
Education

Jim Horne, Commissioner

**Baker County School District
 Focused Monitoring Visit
 March 31-April 2, 2003**

Districts Rank-Ordered on Dropout Rate for Students with Disabilities

#	District	Dropout Rate	Rank
34	Lafayette	12.8	1
22	Glades	12.1	2
2	Baker	8.8	3
36	Lee	8.8	4
28	Highlands	8.3	5
49	Osceola	7.8	6
45	Nassau	7.7	7
35	Lake	7.5	8
15	Dixie	7.4	9
26	Hendry	7.2	10
16	Duval	7.0	11
33	Jefferson	6.9	12
61	Suwannee	6.8	13
9	Citrus	6.6	14
52	Pinellas	6.4	15
66	Walton	6.3	16
62	Taylor	6.2	17
25	Hardee	6.1	18
38	Levy	6.1	19
20	Gadsden	6.0	20
44	Monroe	6.0	21
13	Miami Dade	5.9	22
40	Madison	5.7	23
54	Putnam	5.7	24
58	Sarasota	5.6	25
24	Hamilton	5.5	26
65	Wakulla	5.5	27
11	Collier	5.4	28
18	Flagler	5.4	29
30	Holmes	5.4	30
19	Franklin	5.1	31
67	Washington	5.1	32
42	Marion	5.0	33
4	Bradford	4.9	34

#	District	Dropout Rate	Rank
29	Hillsborough	4.9	35
51	Pasco	4.6	36
8	Charlotte	4.5	37
17	Escambia	4.2	38
32	Jackson	4.0	39
48	Orange	4.0	40
50	Palm Beach	4.0	41
53	Polk	4.0	42
27	Hernando	3.9	43
46	Okaloosa	3.9	44
14	DeSoto	3.8	45
21	Gilchrist	3.8	46
47	Okeechobee	3.7	47
55	St. Johns	3.7	48
60	Sumter	3.7	49
10	Clay	3.6	50
37	Leon	3.6	51
41	Manatee	3.3	52
31	Indian River	3.2	53
7	Calhoun	3.1	54
64	Volusia	3.0	55
56	St. Lucie	2.9	56
3	Bay	2.8	57
12	Columbia	2.6	58
23	Gulf	2.5	59
6	Broward	2.2	60
57	Santa Rosa	2.2	61
59	Seminole	2.1	62
5	Brevard	1.3	63
63	Union	1.3	64
43	Martin	1.2	65
1	Alachua	1.0	66
39	Liberty	0.0	67
	District Total	4.6	

APPENDIX C:
MONITORING TEAM MEMBERS

**Baker County School District
Focused Monitoring Visit
March 31-April 2, 2003**

Monitoring Team Members

Department of Education Staff

Shan Goff, Chief, Bureau of Instructional Support and Community Services
Eileen Amy, Administrator, ESE Program Evaluation and Quality Assurance
Carol Kirkpatrick, Supervisor, ESE Program Administration and Quality Assurance
Iris Anderson, Program Specialist
Gail Best, Program Specialist
Lee Clark, Program Specialist
Kim Komisar, Program Specialist
Janet Adams, Program Specialist

Peer Reviewers

Ginny Chance, Santa Rosa County Public Schools
James Fowler, Broward County Public Schools
Kathy Nelson, Highlands County Public Schools

Contracted Staff

Batya Elbaum, Project Director, University of Miami
Emily Joseph, University of Miami
James Kohnstamm, University of Miami
Christopher Sarno, University of Miami
Hope Nieman, Consultant

APPENDIX D:
SURVEY RESULTS

**Baker County School District
2003 Parent Survey Report
Students with Disabilities**

Responding to the need to increase the involvement of parents and families of students with disabilities in evaluating the educational services provided to their children, the Florida Department of Education, Bureau of Instructional Support and Community Services contracted with the University of Miami to develop and administer a parent survey as part of the Bureau's district monitoring activities.

In conjunction with the 2003 Baker County School District monitoring activities, the parent survey was sent to parents of 539 students with disabilities for whom complete addresses were provided by the district. A total of 36 parents (PK, n=5; K-5, n=16; 6-8, n=8; 9-12, n=7) representing 7% of the sample, returned the survey. Surveys from 189 families were returned as undeliverable, representing 35% of the sample.

Parents responded "yes" or "no" to each survey item, indicating that they either agreed or disagreed with the statement. The district response for each item was calculated as the percentage of respondents who agreed with the item.

% Yes

Overall, I am satisfied with:

- the way I am treated by school personnel. 91
- how quickly services are implemented following an IEP (Individualized Educational Plan) decision. 85
- the way special education teachers and regular education teachers work together. 80
- the amount of time my child spends with regular education students. 78
- the level of knowledge and experience of school personnel. 76
- the exceptional education services my child receives. 74
- the effect of exceptional student education on my child's self-esteem. 73
- my child's academic progress. 70

My child:

- has friends at school. 85
- is learning skills that will be useful later on in life. 85
- is aiming for a standard diploma. 82
- spends most of the school day involved in productive activities. 79
- is usually happy at school. 71

At my child's IEP meetings, we have talked about:

- whether my child needed services beyond the regular school year. 55
- ways that my child could spend time with students in regular classes. 53

	% Yes
• whether my child would take the FCAT (Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test).	53
• which diploma my child may receive.*	50
• whether my child should get accommodations (special testing conditions), for example, extra time.	45
• the requirements for different diplomas.*	36

My child's teachers:

• are available to speak with me.	97
• expect my child to succeed.	94
• set appropriate goals for my child.	86
• call me or send me notes about my child.	83
• give students with disabilities extra time or different assignments, if needed.	79
• give homework that meets my child's needs.	65

My child's school:

• offers students with disabilities the classes they need to graduate with a standard diploma.	92
• does all it can to keep students from dropping out of school.	86
• offers a variety of vocational courses, such as computers and business technology.*	84
• encourages acceptance of students with disabilities.	84
• encourages me to participate in my child's education.	82
• sends me information about activities and workshops for parents.	81
• involves students with disabilities in clubs, sports, or other activities.	81
• sends me information written in a way I understand.	78
• wants to hear my ideas.	77
• makes sure I understand my child's IEP.	76
• provides students with disabilities updated books and materials.	75
• addresses my child's individual needs.	73
• informs me about all of the services available to my child.	64
• explains what I can do if I want to make changes to my child's IEP.	63
• provides information to students about education and jobs after high school.*	50

Parent Participation

• I am comfortable talking about my child with school staff.	97
• I have attended one or more meetings about my child during this school year.	82
• I participate in school activities with my child.	69
• I attend School Advisory Committee meetings concerning school improvement.	30
• I have used parent support services in my area.	23
• I belong to an organization for parents of students with disabilities.	7
• I am a member of the PTA/PTO.	0

**Baker County School District
2003 Parent Survey Report
Students Identified as Gifted**

Responding to the need to increase the involvement of parents and families of students with disabilities in evaluating the educational services provided to their children, the Florida Department of Education, Bureau of Instructional Support and Community Services contracted with the University of Miami to develop and administer a parent survey as part of the Bureau's district monitoring activities.

In conjunction with the 2003 Baker County School District monitoring activities, the parent survey was sent to parents of 76 students identified as gifted for whom complete addresses were provided by the district. A total of 15 parents (K-5, n=8; 6-8, n=5; 9-12, n=2) representing 20% of the sample, returned the survey. Surveys from 22 families were returned as undeliverable, representing 29% of the sample.

Parents responded "yes" or "no" to each survey item, indicating that they either agreed or disagreed with the statement. The district response for each item was calculated as the percentage of respondents who agreed with the item.

	% Yes
Overall, I am satisfied with:	
• the effect of gifted services on my child's self-esteem.	100
• how quickly services were implemented following an initial request for evaluation.	100
• gifted teachers' subject area knowledge.	93
• gifted teachers' expertise in teaching students identified as gifted.	92
• my child's academic progress.	87
• regular teachers' subject area knowledge.	86
• the gifted services my child receives.	79
• regular teachers' expertise in teaching students identified as gifted.	71
 In Regular Classes, my child:	
• has friends at school.	100
• is learning skills that will be useful later on in life.	93
• has his/her social and emotional needs met at school.	93
• is usually happy at school.	80
• is academically challenged at school.	80
• has creative outlets at school.	79

In Gifted Classes, my child:

- is learning skills that will be useful later on in life. 100
- is usually happy at school. 93
- has friends at school. 93
- has creative outlets at school. 93
- has his/her social and emotional needs met at school. 87
- is academically challenged at school. 80

My child's regular teachers:

- expect appropriate behavior. 100
- are available to speak with me. 93
- have access to the latest information and technology. 87
- set appropriate goals for my child. 86
- provide coursework that includes representation of diverse ethnic, racial, and other groups. 86
- give homework that meets my child's needs. 73
- relate coursework to students' future educational and professional pursuits. 73
- call me or send me notes about my child. 60

My child's gifted teachers:

- expect appropriate behavior. 100
- are available to speak with me. 100
- have access to the latest information and technology. 93
- set appropriate goals for my child. 93
- provide coursework that includes representation of diverse ethnic, racial, and other groups. 93
- relate coursework to students' future educational and professional pursuits. 80
- call me or send me notes about my child. 73
- give homework that meets my child's needs. 64

My child's home school:

- treats me with respect. 100
- sends me information written in a way I understand. 90
- sends me information about activities and workshops for parents. 80
- involves me in developing my child's Educational Plan (EP or IEP). 80
- makes sure I understand my child's EP or IEP. 80
- encourages me to participate in my child's education. 78
- explains what I can do if I want to make changes to my child's EP or IEP. 70
- informs me about all of the services available to my child. 60

	% Yes
• addresses my child's individual needs.	56
• provides students identified as gifted with appropriate books and materials.	56
• wants to hear my ideas.	55
• implements my ideas.	44

My child's 2nd school:

• wants to hear my ideas.	100
• implements my ideas.	100
• treats me with respect.	100
• encourages me to participate in my child's education.	100
• addresses my child's individual needs.	100
• provides students identified as gifted with appropriate books and materials.	100
• sends me information written in a way I understand.	100
• informs me about all of the services available to my child.	75
• sends me information about activities and workshops for parents.	75
• involves me in developing my child's Educational Plan (EP or IEP).	75
• makes sure I understand my child's EP or IEP.	75
• explains what I can do if I want to make changes to my child's EP or IEP.	75

Students identified as gifted: (primarily for high school students)

• are provided with information about options for education after high school.	100
• have the option of taking a variety of vocational courses.	67
• are provided with career counseling.	67
• are provided with the opportunity to participate in externships or mentorships.	33

Parent Participation

• I participate in school activities with my child.	87
• I have attended one or more meetings about my child during this school year.	79
• I attend School Advisory Committee meetings concerning school improvement.	36
• I am a member of the PTA/PTO.	8
• I belong to an organization for parents of students identified as gifted.	0
• I have used parent support services in my area.	0

**Baker County School District
2003 Student Survey Report
Students with Disabilities**

In order to obtain the perspective of students with disabilities who receive services from public school districts, the Florida Department of Education, Bureau of Instructional Support and Community Services contracted with the University of Miami to develop and administer a student survey as part of the Bureau's focused monitoring activities.

In conjunction with the 2003 Baker County School District monitoring activities, a sufficient number of surveys were provided to allow all students with disabilities, grades 9-12, to respond. Instructions for administration of the survey by classroom teachers, including a written script, were provided for each class or group of students. Since participation in this survey is not appropriate for some students whose disabilities might impair their understanding of the survey, professional judgment is to be used to determine appropriate participation.

Surveys were received from 62 students, representing approximately 44% of students with disabilities in grades 9-12 in the district. Data are from both of the district's schools with students in grades 9-12(100%).

	% Yes
I am taking the following ESE classes:	
• Math	60
• English	58
• Social Studies	49
• Science	48
• Electives (physical education, art, music)	38
• Vocational (woodshop, computers)	21
At my school:	
• ESE teachers give students extra help, if needed.	85
• ESE teachers believe that ESE students can learn.	85
• ESE teachers teach students in ways that help them learn.	80
• ESE teachers understand ESE students' needs.	75
• ESE teachers teach students things that will be useful later on in life.	75
• ESE teachers give students extra time or different assignments, if needed.	75
• ESE teachers provide ESE students with updated books and materials.	56
I am taking the following regular/mainstream classes:	
• Electives (physical education, art, music)	67
• Vocational (woodshop, computers)	56
• Science	38

I am taking the following regular/mainstream classes continued: %Yes

- Math 35
- Social Studies 33
- English 29

At my school:

- Regular education teachers believe that ESE students can learn. 90
- Regular education teachers teach ESE students things that will be useful later on in life. 78
- Regular education teachers give ESE students extra help if needed. 76
- Regular education teachers teach ESE students in ways that help them learn. 73
- Regular education teachers understand ESE students' needs. 73
- Regular education teachers give ESE students extra time or different assignments if needed. 66

At my school, ESE students:

• participate in clubs, sports, and other activities.	82
• get the help they need to do well in school.	80
• get work experiences (on-the-job-training) if they are interested.	78
• fit in at school.	78
• are encouraged to stay in school.	78
• are treated fairly by teachers and staff.	73
• can take business technology such as computers and business technology.	72
• spend enough time with regular education students.	69
• get information about education after high school.	58

Diploma Option

• I know the difference between a regular and special diploma.	90
• I know what courses I have to take to get my diploma.	73
• I had a say in the decision about which diploma I would get.	70
• I agree with the type of diploma I am going to receive.	61
• I will probably graduate with a regular diploma.	58

%Yes

IEP

• I had a say in the decision about which classes I would take.	72
• I was invited to attend my IEP meeting this year.	72
• I attended my IEP meeting this year.	67
• I had a say in the decision about special testing conditions I might get for the FCAT or other tests.	24
• I had a say in the decision about whether I need to take the FCAT or a different test.	18

FCAT

• Teachers help ESE students prepare for the FCAT.	57
• In my English/reading classes, we work on the kinds of skills that are tested on the reading part of the FCAT	46
• I took the FCAT this year.	43
• In my math classes, we work on the kinds of problems that are tested on the math part of the FCAT.	39
• I received accommodations (special testing conditions) for the FCAT.	32

**Baker County School District
2003 Teacher Survey Report
Students with Disabilities**

Responding to the need to increase the involvement of the service providers of students with disabilities in evaluating the educational services provided to their children, the Florida Department of Education, Bureau of Instructional Support and Community Services contracted with the University of Miami to develop and administer a teacher survey in conjunction with the Bureau's district monitoring activities.

Surveys developed for teachers and other service providers were mailed to each school, with a memo explaining the key data indicator and the monitoring process. All teachers, both general education and ESE, were provided an opportunity to respond. Surveys were returned from 154 teachers (59% of all teachers in the district) from all six of the schools in Baker County.

Teachers responded "consistently," "to some extent," "minimally," or "not at all" to each survey item. The district response for each item was calculated as the percentage of respondents reported that it consistently occurs.

% Consistently

To provide students with disabilities access to the general curriculum, my school:

- ensures that students with disabilities feel comfortable when taking classes with general education students. 81
- addresses each student's individual needs. 79
- modifies and adapts curriculum for students as needed. 77
- places students with disabilities into general education classes whenever possible.
- ensures that the general education curriculum is taught in ESE classes to the maximum extent possible. 76
- encourages collaboration among ESE teachers, GE teachers and service providers.
- provides adequate support to GE teachers who teach students with disabilities. 60
- offers teachers professional development opportunities regarding curriculum and support for students with disabilities. 53

To help students with disabilities who take the FCAT, my school:

- provides students with appropriate testing accommodations. 92
- provides teachers with FCAT test preparation materials. 87
- aligns curriculum for students with the standards that are tested on the FCAT. 79
- gives students in ESE classes updated textbooks. 74

To keep students with disabilities from dropping out, my school:

- develops IEPs according to student needs. 96
- makes an effort to involve parents in their child's education. 91

% Consistently

- allows students to make up credits lost due to disability-related absences. 85
- conducts ongoing assessments of individual students' performance. 83
- encourages participation of students with disabilities in extracurricular activities.
- ensures that classroom material is grade- and age-appropriate. 77
- provides positive behavioral supports. 72
- implements a dropout prevention program. 68
- ensures that students are taught strategies to manage their behavior as needed. 68
- ensures that classroom material is culturally appropriate. 67
- provides social skills training to students as needed. 65

The following items relate primarily to middle and high schools. Responses are provided by school level.

**% Consistently
MS HS**

To encourage students with disabilities to stay in school, my school:

- implements an IEP transition plan for each student.* 88 91
- provides students with information about options after graduation.* 41 82
- teaches transition skills for future employment and independent living.* 40 73
- coordinates on-the-job training with outside agencies. 19 73
- provides students with job training.* 13 69

To ensure that as many students with disabilities as possible graduate with a standard diploma, my school:

- informs students through the IEP process of the different diploma options and their requirements.* 76 88
- encourages students to aim for a standard diploma when appropriate.* 65 83
- provides extra help to students who need to retake the FCAT.* 56 83

APPENDIX E:
FORMS REVIEW

**Baker County School District
Focused Monitoring Report
Forms Review**

This forms review was completed as a component of the focused monitoring visit conducted the week of April 2, 2003. The following district forms were compared to the requirements of applicable State Board of Education rules, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), and applicable sections of Part 300, Code of Federal Regulations. The review includes required revisions and recommended revisions based on programmatic or procedural issues and concerns. The results of the review are detailed below and list the applicable sources used for the review.

<p>Parent Notification of Individual Educational Plan (IEP) Meeting <i>Form Meeting Participation Form</i> Title 34 of the Code of Federal Regulation Section 300.345</p>

This form contains the components for compliance.

<p>Individual Educational Plan (IEP) Meeting <i>Form Individual Educational Program</i> Title 34 of the Code of Federal Regulation Section 300.347</p>
--

The following must be addressed:

- At the next printing of this form, the statement that beginning at least one year before the student reaches the age of majority, the student has been informed of his or her rights that will transfer to the student upon reaching the age of majority must be added to the IEP. It is noted that this statement is on the Meeting Participation Form, but it is required to be on the IEP.

<p>Notice and Consent for Initial Placement <i>Form Eligibility and Assignment Form</i> Title 34 of the Code of Federal Regulation Sections 300.503 and 300.505</p>

The following must be addressed:

- This form implies that the recommended placement of the student was a result of the staffing committee determining that the student met eligibility for an ESE program. The staffing committee does not determine placement. This form must be revised to indicate that the placement option recommendation was determined by an IEP team. It is recommended that the sentence, "In order to meet the educational needs of the child, the district proposes to place your child as indicated on the individual educational plan," which appears in small print at the bottom of the page, be moved to the section which gives placement recommendations.

Notice of Change in FAPE, Change in Placement Form
Form *Informed Notice of Change in Educational Placement*
Informed Notice of Change in Placement and/or Free Appropriate Public Education
Title 34 of the Code of Federal Regulation Sections 300.503 and 300.505

This form contains the components for compliance.

Notice of Ineligibility
Form *Eligibility and Assignment Form*
Title 34 of the Code of Federal Regulation Sections 300.503 and 300.505

This form contains the components for compliance.

Notice of Dismissal
Form *Eligibility and Assignment Form*
Title 34 of the Code of Federal Regulation Sections 300.503 and 300.505

The following recommendation is made regarding this form:

- The IEP team, not the staffing committee, determines dismissal. It is noted that under dismissal, the sentence does mention reevaluation data, and an IEP meeting, but it is still listed as if it was the action of the staffing committee. It is recommended that the whole sentence reflecting dismissal be moved under the Placement Option section.

Informed Notice and Consent for Evaluation
Form *Consent for Individual Evaluation*
Title 34 of the Code of Federal Regulation Sections 300.503 and 300.505

The following must be addressed:

- The statement “Under State Board of Education Rules and Federal Law 94-142 you have certain rights pertaining to student evaluation,” needs to be revised to reflect that parents of a child with a disability have protections under the procedural safeguards of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).

Informed Notice and Consent for Reevaluation
Form *Informed Parental Consent for Reevaluation*
Title 34 of the Code of Federal Regulation Sections 300.503 and 300.505

This form contains the components for compliance.

Informed Notice of Refusal

Form *Notice of Refusal to Take a Specific Action*

Title 34 of the Code of Federal Regulation Section 300.503

This form contains the components for compliance.

Documentation of Staffing/Eligibility Determination

Form *Eligibility Determination and Staffing Form*

Title 34 of the Code of Federal Regulation Sections 300.534, 300.503

The following must be addressed:

- There is a requirement that the eligibility form address that the staffing committee reviewed educational information about the student.

Confidentiality of Information

Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act, Part 99 Title 34 of the Code of Federal Regulation Title 34 of the Code of Federal Regulation Section 300.503

The following must be addressed:

- The statement that the parents have a right to consent to disclosure of personally identifiable information contained in the student’s records (except to the extent that FERPA and state statute permits disclosure without consent) is not clear. The statement in the report implies that the parents have to request within a specific timeframe that any personally identifiable information not be released.
- The notice does not contain the required component that informs parents that they have a “right to file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Education concerning alleged failures by the district to comply with the requirements.”
- The notice lacks the required component that if the educational agency has a policy of disclosing educational records to school officials determined to have a limited educational interest, the specification for determining who constitutes a school official and what constitutes a legitimate educational interest must be specified.

It was noted that the district utilizes the procedural safeguards wording provided by the Bureau of Instructional Support and Community Services.

APPENDIX F:
GLOSSARY OF ACRONYMS

**Baker County School District
Focused Monitoring Visit
March 31-April 2, 2003**

Glossary of Acronyms

AE	Alternative Education
BIP	Behavior Intervention Plan
Bureau	Bureau of Instructional Support and Community Services
CCC	Computer Curriculum Corporation
CST	Child Study Team
DJJ	Department of Juvenile Justice
DOE	Department of Education
DNE	Did not enter
EH	Emotionally Handicapped
EMH	Educable Mentally Handicapped
EP	Educational Plan (for gifted students)
ESE	Exceptional Student Education
FAPE	Free Appropriate Public Education
FCAT	Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test
FRI	Florida Reading Initiative
IDEA	Individuals with Disabilities Act
IEP	Individual Educational Plan (for students with disabilities)
ISS	In-school suspension
LEA	Local Educational Agency
MIS	Management Information System
OSS	Out-of-school suspension
PreK (PK)	Pre-kindergarten
SED	Severely Emotionally Disturbed
SLD	Specific Learning Disability