

**BROWARD COUNTY**

**Continuous Improvement Monitoring**

**Exceptional Student Education Programs**

**March 27-28, 2007**

Florida Department of Education  
Bureau of Exceptional Education and Student Services  
ESE Program Administration and Quality Assurance

This is one of many publications available through the Bureau of Exceptional Education and Student Services, Florida Department of Education, designed to assist school districts, state agencies which support educational programs, and parents in the provision of special programs. For additional information on this publication, or for a list of available publications, contact the Clearinghouse Information Center, Bureau of Exceptional Education and Student Services, Florida Department of Education, Room 628, Turlington Bldg., Tallahassee, Florida 32399-0400.

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# FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION



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May 31, 2007

Dr. Franklin L. Till, Jr., Superintendent  
Broward County School District  
600 S.E. Third Avenue  
Ft. Lauderdale, Florida 33301-3125

Dear Superintendent Till:

We are pleased to provide you with the final report of continuous improvement monitoring of Exceptional Student Education Programs in Broward County that was conducted on March 27-28, 2007. This report was developed by integrating multiple sources, including information from the interviews with school and district staff, student record reviews, and surveys of parents of exceptional students in the district. The report includes a table outlining the findings of the monitoring team. The final report will be placed on the Bureau of Exceptional Education and Student Services' website and may be viewed at [www.firn.edu/doe/commhome/mon-home.htm](http://www.firn.edu/doe/commhome/mon-home.htm).

The district is directed to develop new continuous improvement plans for students with disabilities and gifted students. Designated Bureau staff have worked with Ms. Denise Rusnak, ESE Director, and her staff to develop the required continuous improvement measures, including strategies and activities to address the areas of concern and noncompliance identified in the report. By **November 30, 2007**, or before, the district is required to submit the completed continuous improvement plans for review by our office. 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 measures of effectiveness. An update of outcomes achieved and/or a summary of related activities, as identified in your district's plans, must be submitted by November 30, 2007.

**BAMBI J. LOCKMAN**

*Chief*

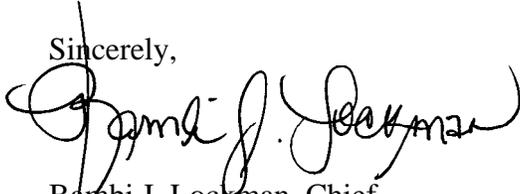
*Bureau of Exceptional Education and Student Services*

Superintendent Till  
May 31, 2007  
Page 2

If my staff can be of any assistance as you develop and implement your new continuous improvement plans, 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](mailto:Eileen.Amy@fldoe.org).

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

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Bambi J. Lockman". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "B".

Bambi J. Lockman, Chief  
Bureau of Exceptional Education and Student Services

Enclosure

cc: Benjamin J. Williams, School Board Chairman  
Members of the School Board  
Edward J. Marko, School Board Attorney  
School Principals  
Denise Rusnak, ESE Director  
Eileen L. Amy  
Ginny Chance

**Broward County Monitoring Report  
Continuous Improvement Monitoring  
March 27-28, 2007**

**Table of Contents**

Monitoring Process .....	1
Authority .....	1
State Performance Plan and Monitoring .....	1
Indicator Selection .....	2
Background Information and Demographics .....	2
Parent Survey Report: Students with Disabilities .....	3
Monitoring Activities .....	4
Reporting of Information .....	5
Reporting Table .....	7
Child Find/Disproportionate Representation – Selected Disabilities .....	7
Gifted .....	7
Matrix of Services .....	7
System Improvement Plan .....	9
Promising Practices, Recommendations and Technical Assistance .....	9
Promising Practices .....	9
Recommendations .....	9
Technical Assistance .....	10
System Improvement Strategies .....	11
Appendix A: ESE Monitoring Team Members .....	13

# **Broward County Monitoring Report Continuous Improvement Monitoring March 27-28, 2007**

## **Monitoring Process**

### **Authority**

The Florida Department of Education, Bureau of Exceptional Education and Student 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 ESE programs; 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 of 2004 (IDEA 2004) is to assess and ensure the effectiveness of efforts to educate children with disabilities (Section 300.1(d) of Title 34, Code of Federal Regulations (CFR), and school 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 2004, the Department is responsible for ensuring that the requirements of the 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)). Federal Regulations for IDEA 2004 were made public on August 14, 2006, and implementation required on October 13, 2006.

The monitoring system reflects the Department's commitment to provide assistance, service, and accountability to school districts, and is designed to emphasize improved educational outcomes for students while continuing to conduct those activities necessary to ensure compliance with applicable federal laws and regulations and state statutes and rules. In addition, these activities serve to ensure implementation of corrective actions, such as those required subsequent to monitoring by the U.S. Department of Education (USDOE), Office of Special Education Programs, (OSEP) and by the Office for Civil Rights (OCR), as well as other quality assurance activities of the Department.

### **State Performance Plan and Monitoring**

In accordance with 34 CFR 300.600(a)(1), not later than one (1) year after the date of enactment of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act of 2004, each state must have in place a performance plan that evaluates the state's efforts to implement the requirements and purposes of Part B and describe how the state will improve such implementation. The purpose of the monitoring process is to implement a methodology that targets the Bureau's monitoring

intervention on key data indicators identified as significant for educational outcomes for students. Through this process, the Bureau uses data to inform the monitoring process, thereby implementing a strategic approach to intervention and commitment of resources that will improve student outcomes. A detailed description of the Bureau's monitoring processes is provided in *Focused Monitoring and Verification Monitoring: Work Papers and Source Book for Exceptional Student Education Programs (2006-07)*. The protocols used by Bureau staff when conducting procedural compliance reviews are available in *Compliance Manual: Work Papers and Source Book for Exceptional Student Education Programs (2006-07)*. These documents are available on the Bureau's website at [www.firn.edu/doe/commhome/mon-home.htm](http://www.firn.edu/doe/commhome/mon-home.htm).

## **Indicator Selection**

In its continuing effort to focus the monitoring process on student educational outcomes, there are three (3) specific monitoring priority areas which are identified in the IDEA 2004 at section 616(a)(3). The first priority is the provision of a free appropriate public education (FAPE) in the least restrictive environment (LRE) which includes standard diploma rate, dropout rate, participation and performance on statewide assessments, suspension and expulsion, LRE for both ages 6-21 and for ages 3-5, PK outcomes, and parent satisfaction. The second priority is general supervision by the state which includes child find, transition (Part C to Part B), secondary transition, and postsecondary outcomes. The third priority is disproportionate representation of racial and ethnic groups in special education and related services including all disabilities in general and specific disability categories. The IDEA 2004 can be viewed on the web at <http://www.ed.gov/policy/speced/guid/idea/idea2004.html>.

Data on all State Performance Plan (SPP) indicators used to determine the focus of this on-site visit was based on a review of data from the 2006 local educational agency (LEA) Profile that was submitted electronically to the Department of Education (DOE) Information Database for Surveys 2, 3, 5, 9, and from the assessment files for each school year. This data is compiled into an annual data profile for each school district. The 2006 LEA Profiles for all Florida school districts are available on the web at <http://www.firn.edu/doe/commhome/datapage.htm>.

## **Background Information and Demographics**

During the week of March 26, 2007, the Florida Department of Education, Bureau of Exceptional Education and Student Services, conducted an on-site review of the exceptional student education (ESE) programs in Broward County Public Schools. This monitoring visit was conducted to fulfill all general supervision requirements of the Florida Department of Education in relation to the provision of special education services for students with a disability enrolled in public schools in Broward County. Prior to this visit, efforts on the part of both Broward County School District staff and the Florida Department of Education were curtailed and delayed due to a hurricane. It was agreed that an additional on-site visit during the week of March 26, 2007, with additional interviews, records reviews, and observations would serve to complete the requirements of general supervision of the school district. Ms. Denise Rusnak, ESE Director, served as the coordinator and point of contact for the school district during the monitoring visit. Broward County was monitored on the following indicators: disproportionate representation of students with disabilities and gifted students.

Based on the 2006 LEA Profile, Broward County School District has a total school population (PK-12) of 271,470 with 12% of students being identified as students with disabilities, 2% identified as speech impaired as the primary exceptionality and 3% identified as gifted. Broward County is considered a “large size” school district and is comprised of 133 elementary schools (two Pre-K-5 and 145 K-5), 44 middle/high schools (one 8<sup>th</sup> grade only and 43 6-8), 30 high schools (9-12), 6 ESE center schools, 3 alternative schools, 4 vocational schools, and 4 vocational/adult schools. The school district has no DJJ facilities and 45 charter schools.

Broward County is a diverse community, with 41% of students on free or reduced lunch and 13% of students identified as limited English proficient. Of the students with disabilities who exited from the school district during the 2004-05 school year, 40% met all requirements for a standard diploma, 8% met the requirements through a waiver of a passing score on the Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test (FCAT), and <1% graduated through the General Educational Development diploma (GED) exit option (i.e., under-credited students who have passed the FCAT and who pass the GED examination). The school district has a dropout rate of 2% for all students and a dropout rate of 3% for students with disabilities as stated on the LEA Profile. Less than one percent (<1%) of the population of students with disabilities received out-of-school suspensions or expulsions totaling more than ten (10) days.

## **Parent Survey Report: Students with Disabilities**

FDOE has elected to use the 25-item scale from the National Center for Special Education Accountability Monitoring (NCSEAM) survey that addresses family involvement. Each family selected to be included in the annual sample received a mailed survey printed on an optical scan form accompanied by a cover letter explaining the importance of the survey and guaranteeing the confidentiality of the parent’s responses. The packet also included a pre-addressed, postage-prepaid envelope for return of the survey. The survey was provided in three languages: English, Spanish, and Haitian-Creole.

Data from the surveys was scanned into an electronic database and sent to Dr. William Fisher, NCSEAM’s measurement consultant, who analyzed the data and produced reports at both the state and LEA levels.

During the 2005-06 school year, the parent survey was sent to parents of 7,105 students (PK-12) with disabilities in Broward County School District for whom complete addresses were provided by the school district. A total of 909 parents, representing 12.79% of the sample, returned the survey. When applying the standard of measure indicating their perception of schools’ facilitation of parental involvement, 34.76% of parents of children ages 3-21 reported their perceived level of satisfaction at or above the standard.

## Monitoring Activities

The Bureau conducted the on-site continuous improvement monitoring visit from March 27-28, 2007. Three (3) Bureau staff members and three (3) peer monitors conducted site-visits to the following four (4) schools:

- Gator Run Elementary School
- Sunland Park Elementary School
- Tedder Elementary School
- Lauderdale Lakes Middle School

Peer monitors are exceptional student personnel from other school districts who are trained to assist with the DOE's monitoring activities. A listing of Bureau staff and peer monitors who conducted the monitoring activities for this visit is included as appendix A.

The monitoring process includes interviews with administrators, teachers, and other service delivery providers, focus group interviews with students, case studies, classroom observations, record reviews, and parent surveys. A summary of the monitoring activities conducted in Broward County is included in the table below.

Activity	Source	Number
Interviews	District staff	2
	School staff	
	▪ School administrators/non-instructional support	15
	▪ ESE teachers—disabilities	11
	▪ ESE teachers—gifted	4
	▪ General education teachers	<u>6</u>
	Total	38
Case studies	Individual student case studies	10
Classroom Visits	ESE and general education classrooms	23
Record Reviews	IEPs	
	▪ Targeted on-site review	26
	▪ Matrix of services documents	5
	EPs	
	▪ Targeted on-site review	<u>15</u>
	Total	46
Surveys	Parents of students with disabilities	
	▪ Number sent	7,105
	▪ Number returned (%)	909(12.79%)
	▪ School facilitates parent involvement	316(34.76%)

## **Reporting of Information**

Findings based on data generated through: record reviews; focus group interviews; individual interviews; case studies; classroom visits; parent surveys; and, the review of district forms are summarized in the reporting table that follows. This report provides conclusions with regard to the key data indicators and specifically addresses related areas that may contribute to or impact the indicators. In addition, information related to identification of students identified as educable mentally handicapped (EMH), as well as services for gifted students are reported.

To the extent possible, this report focuses on systemic issues rather than on isolated instances of noncompliance or need for improvement. In accordance with established Bureau monitoring procedures, a finding of a systemic violation will be made if evidence of such a violation is found in 25% or more of the pertinent data sources. There were no instances of noncompliance with federal requirements for programs for students with disabilities that will result in the adjustment of federal funds.

During the course of conducting the continuous improvement monitoring activities, including debriefings with the monitoring team and school district staff, it is often the case that suggestions and/or recommendations related to interventions or strategies are proposed, and promising practices are noted. Listings of these recommendations and promising practices, as well as DOE contacts available to provide technical assistance in the development and implementation of a system improvement plan, are included following the reporting table.

A total of twenty six (26) student records of students with disabilities and fifteen (15) records of students identified as gifted were randomly selected from the population of ESE students and reviewed. The records were from four (4) schools in the district. None of the records represented transition IEPs for students aged 14 or older. Targeted or partial reviews of an additional ten (10) records were conducted on-site in conjunction with student case studies. The collected information related to additional compliance are as designated by the Bureau. In addition to IEP reviews, the Bureau conducted reviews of five (5) matrix of services documents for students reported at the 254 or 255 funding level through the Florida Education Finance Program (FEFP). Any services claimed on the matrix must be documented on the IEP and must be in evidence in the classroom.

In response to specific student related findings listed in the letter to the ESE Director, dated May 11, 2007, the school district is required to correct the items as noted. There was one (1) instance of noncompliance that has resulted in the requirement to reconvene the IEP team to correct identified deficiencies with both the IEP and the matrix. A due date for these activities has been set for May 30, 2007.

In response to the findings included in the reporting table, the school district is required to develop a system improvement plan. This plan is developed in consultation with the Bureau, and must include activities and strategies intended to address specific findings, as well as measurable evidence of change. A draft system improvement plan is also included.



**Broward County School District  
Continuous Improvement Monitoring**

**Reporting Table**

<b>Standard/Citation</b>	<b>Findings</b>	<b>Supporting Evidence</b>	<b>Concerns</b>
<b>Indicator: Child Find/Disproportionate Representation—Selected Disabilities</b>			
<b>Related Factors: Activities Required Prior to Referral (K-12 only); Referral; Evaluation; Assessments; and Eligibility</b>			
	No findings of noncompliance in this area.		
<b>Gifted</b>			
<b>Related Factors: Eligibility; Service Delivery; EP Requirements/Implementation</b>			
	No findings of noncompliance in this area.		
<b>Matrix of Services</b>			
S. 1011.62(1)(e), F.S.	One (1) of five (5) matrix of service documents requires review/ revision after IEP is reviewed.	<i>Records:</i> The Bureau conducted reviews of five (5) matrix of service documents for students enrolled at the 254 or 255 funding level through the Florida Education Finance Program (FEFP). One (1) of five (5) matrix of service documents did not support the level of services stated on the IEP.	June 15, 2007



## **System Improvement Plan**

In response to these findings, the school 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 continuous improvement monitoring report to the school district's targeted technical assistance needs identified through the State Performance Plan Indicator teams. The promising practices, recommendations, and technical assistance resources included below should be considered when developing strategies and/or interventions targeting the critical issues identified by the Bureau as most significantly in need of improvement.

## **Promising Practices, Recommendations and Technical Assistance**

### **Promising Practices**

During the visit, several promising practices were noted by district and school staff and by Bureau and peer monitors. Some of the reported promising practices were school specific, some were grade specific, and others were the results of district-wide initiatives. The school district is encouraged to continue to promote an atmosphere where teachers and staff can share these practices. Some of the reported promising practices at the schools visited are listed below:

- General education teachers appeared to be well-versed in ESE strategies. They reported that school leadership, ESE teachers and the ESE administration have been extremely positive and supportive.
- Extracurricular activities are planned for a high level of interactions between students with disabilities and their non-disabled peers.
- The school district has changed leadership at one elementary school, which has resulted in the school being reconstituted, new positive ideas for learning, and more inclusionary practices for students with disabilities, an accelerated tract to identify more students who may be gifted, and high community involvement at the school.
- At two elementary schools, PreK students (3, 4 and 5 year olds) are in full inclusionary programs called Preschool Learning Activities and Classroom Experiences (PLACE).
- At the middle school, department chairs and grade-level chairs meet regularly to coordinate curriculum offerings for students with a disability and the gifted students.

### **Recommendations**

Recommendations have been proposed for the school district to consider when developing the system improvement plan (SIP) and determining strategies that are most likely to effect change. The list is intended only as a starting point for discussion among the parties responsible for the development of the system improvement plan.

- Continue training in the development of matrix of services documents.
- Continue monitoring of matrix of services documents for accurate reporting.

## **Technical Assistance**

Bureau staff are available for assistance on a variety of topics. Staff may be contacted for assistance in the development and/or implementation of the system improvement plan. Following is a partial list of contacts:

### **ESE Program Administration and Quality Assurance—Monitoring**

(850) 245-0476

Eileen L. Amy, Administrator

[Eileen.Amy@fldoe.org](mailto:Eileen.Amy@fldoe.org)

Ginny Chance, Program Director

[Ginny.Chance@fldoe.org](mailto:Ginny.Chance@fldoe.org)

Annette Oliver, Program Specialist

[Annette.Oliver@fldoe.org](mailto:Annette.Oliver@fldoe.org)

Ken Johnson, Program Specialist

[Ken.Johnson@fldoe.org](mailto:Ken.Johnson@fldoe.org)

### **ESE Program Development and Services**

(850) 245-0478

Cathy Bishop, Administrator

[Cathy.Bishop@fldoe.org](mailto:Cathy.Bishop@fldoe.org)

### **Special Programs Information, Clearinghouse, and Evaluation** (850) 245-0475

Karen Denbroeder, Administrator

[Karen.Denbroeder@fldoe.org](mailto:Karen.Denbroeder@fldoe.org)

### **Clearinghouse Information Center**

[cicbiscs@FLDOE.org](mailto:cicbiscs@FLDOE.org)

(850) 245-0477

Kathy Dejoie, Program Director

[Kathy.Dejoie@fldoe.org](mailto:Kathy.Dejoie@fldoe.org)

**Broward County School District  
Continuous Improvement Monitoring  
System Improvement Strategies**

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

11

<b>Findings of Noncompliance</b>	<b>Improvement Strategies/Interventions</b>	<b>Outcome Measures and Timeline</b>
<b>Indicator: Child Find/Disproportionate Representation—Selected Disabilities</b>		
<b>Related Factors: Activities Required Prior to Referral (K-12 only); Referral; Evaluation; Assessments; and Eligibility</b>		
No findings of noncompliance in this area.		
<b>Gifted</b>		
<b>Related Factor: Eligibility</b>		
No findings of noncompliance in this area.		
<b>Matrix of Services</b>		
One matrix of service document requires review following review/revision of the corresponding IEP.	The IEP team for the identified student will reconvene to address identified findings.	June 15, 2007
	District will submit both a new IEP and a new matrix for identified student to the Bureau for review and if needed, an amendment to the Automated Student Information System database.	June 15, 2007
	The identified noncompliant elements will be targeted in the school district's IEP training.	November 30, 2007



**Appendix A:**  
**ESE Monitoring Team Members**



**Florida Department of Education  
Bureau of Exceptional Education and Student Services  
2006-07 Continuous Improvement Monitoring  
Broward County School District**

**ESE Monitoring Team Members**

**Department of Education Staff**

Bambi J. Lockman, Chief, Bureau of Exceptional Education and Student Services  
Eileen L. Amy, Administrator, ESE Program Administration and Quality Assurance  
Ginny Chance, Program Director, ESE Program Administration and Quality Assurance

**ESE Monitoring Team Members**

Ken Johnson, Program Specialist, Co-team Leader  
Annette Oliver, Program Specialist, Co-team Leader  
Ginny Chance, Program Director

**Peer Reviewers and Contracted Staff**

Jan Benet, Alachua County School District  
Cheryl Brinduse, Citrus County School District  
Brenda Johnson, DeSoto County School District