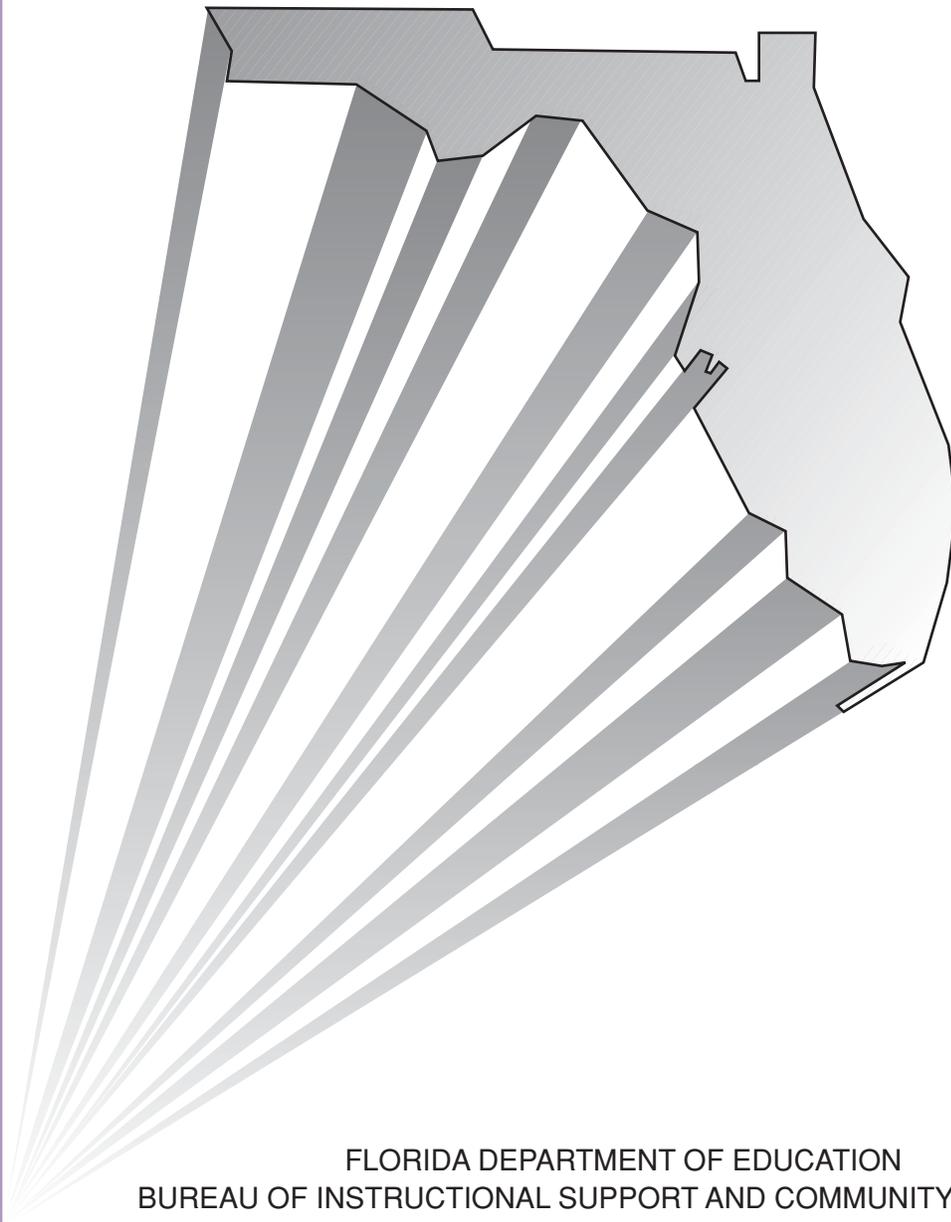


FINAL REPORT OF FOCUSED MONITORING OF
EXCEPTIONAL STUDENT EDUCATION PROGRAMS IN

HENDRY COUNTY

MARCH 17 - 19, 2003



FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
BUREAU OF INSTRUCTIONAL SUPPORT AND COMMUNITY SERVICES

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November 3, 2003

Mr. Thomas Conner
Hendry County School District
P.O. Box 1980
LaBelle, Florida 33935-1980

Dear Superintendent Conner:

We are pleased to provide you with the Final Report of Focused Monitoring of Exceptional Student Education Programs in Hendry 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 17-19, 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 Ruth Meredith, 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 Ruth Meredith 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

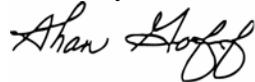
Mr. Thomas Conner
November 3, 2003
Page 2

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 Hendry County.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Shan Goff".

Shan Goff
K-12 Deputy Chancellor for Student Achievement

Enclosure

**Hendry County Final Monitoring Report
 Focused Monitoring Visit
 March 17-19, 2003**

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Hendry County School District Focused Monitoring Visit March 17-19, 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 17, 2003, the Florida Department of Education (DOE), Bureau of Instructional Support and Community Services, conducted an on-site review of the exceptional student education programs in Hendry County Public Schools. Ruth Meredith, Exceptional Student Education Director, 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. Hendry County was selected for monitoring on the basis of the rate of students with disabilities who exit the school district (graduate) with a standard diploma. The results of the monitoring process are reported under four categories or related areas 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

Hendry County is a medium/small rural school district whose primary work force is involved in harvesting sugar cane. Respondents indicated that this district has the lowest income per capita in the state. Hendry County is made up of two townships, Clewiston and LaBelle. Many of the students in the Hendry County school district are children of migrant parents who are not native

English speakers. A majority of the students are on free or reduced lunch. In the past, students with disabilities have traditionally been placed in restrictive environments, and have not had access to the standard curriculum. Expectations of parents, school personnel, and students regarding academic achievement for students with disabilities have been low.

Access

For the most part students with disabilities who are working to earn a standard diploma in Hendry County access instruction in the Sunshine State Standards (SSS) from the regular education teachers in the general education classroom. With few exceptions, the exceptional student education (ESE) teachers do not teach the regular course standards in their classrooms. Generally, classroom observations found good instructional practices in the classrooms, although some district and school administrative staff voiced the opinion that the curriculum used in the ESE classrooms is not adequately challenging and does not prepare students to achieve academic success. Efforts are being made to provide students with disabilities access to the Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test (FCAT). Interviews with district and school administrative staff found that there was a lack of consensus regarding the district's overall support of inclusion. Because of the nature of the different curricula used in ESE and general education classrooms, mainstreaming is reported to be difficult. There was a concern that SLD students have to "qualify" for an academic area before they can receive ESE services in that area.

Decision-Making

Interviews with district and school personnel at the middle and high schools revealed that the formal decision about the diploma option for a student with disabilities is made at the transition IEP meeting held at the end of the student's eighth grade year. The parents were said to have the final decision as to the diploma option, and it was reported that the low expectations held by the parents and the students often resulted in the special diploma option being selected. It was reported that in the past, students who were in restrictive settings at the elementary school were placed in restrictive settings at the middle school, which limited their success at the high school level. There is concern about the informal transition process and placement decisions from elementary to middle school for students with disabilities, which do not appear to occur at an IEP meeting.

Stakeholder Opinions Related to the Indicator

District and school staff are of the opinion that the impoverished environment of the district, with few incentives for academic achievement, and low expectations of the families, students, and teachers, have resulted in the low percentage of students with disabilities earning a standard diploma.

Gifted Services

In the Hendry County School District, there are three teachers of the gifted, all with gifted endorsements. One teacher works with all of the elementary school gifted students with an emphasis on creative thinking, and experiential activities. There is a part-time teacher of the gifted at each middle school. At one middle school the gifted course is an academic class, while the other middle school offers gifted electives. There are no services at the high school level. The district develops individual educational plans (IEPs) for the gifted students and holds annual reviews and three-year reevaluations. There is no formal curriculum.

Record Reviews

During the formal record reviews carried out as a part of the focused monitoring procedures, 26 individual educational plans (IEPs) were reviewed for compliance. Findings of noncompliance for four of the IEPs will result in fund adjustments. Twenty-four of the IEPs will require reconvening of the IEP teams due to a lack of measurable goals. Specific and systemic findings are identified later in this report.

Forms Reviews

Forms were submitted to Bureau staff for a review to determine compliance with federal and state laws. Forms representing the following actions were found to require modifications or revisions:

- Parent Notification of Individual Educational Plan (IEP) Meeting
- IEP Forms for students with disabilities
- Notice and Consent for Initial Placement
- Notice and Consent for Reevaluation
- Notification of Change of Placement
- Notification of Change of FAPE
- Documentation of Staffing/Eligibility Determination
- Informed Notice of Dismissal
- Notice of Ineligibility for Exceptional Student Placement
- Annual Notice of Confidentiality

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.

Hendry County School District Focused Monitoring System Improvement Strategies

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.

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Category	Findings	ESE	All	System Improvement Strategy	Evidence of Change (Including target date)
Access to Curriculum and Instruction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some students with disabilities at the elementary level are placed in restrictive environments where they do not have access to the general curriculum. • There is not a coordinated curriculum plan across schools and grade levels that ensure that students with disabilities have access to general curriculum. • SLD students only receive services in the academic area that they initially qualify for, regardless of their individual needs. 	X			

Category	Findings	ESE	All	System Improvement Strategy	Evidence of Change (Including target date)
Decision-Making	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Placement decisions for students with disabilities moving from the elementary school to the middle school are not made at an IEP meeting with all participants having input into the decision. • Many students at the middle schools are not given access to the general curriculum until the eighth grade year. • Once placed on special diploma when entering Clewiston High School, there is little opportunity for students to access the general curriculum or participate with nondisabled peers. 	X			

Category	Findings	ESE	All	System Improvement Strategy	Evidence of Change (Including target date)
Gifted Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is not an ESE coordinated curriculum plan across schools and grade levels. • There are no services for high school gifted students 	X			
Record Reviews	<p>The review of IEPs resulted in the following findings:</p> <p>IEPs for 24 students with disabilities are required to be reconvened due to the lack of a majority of measurable goals.</p> <p>Fund adjustments will be required for four IEPs due to lack of parent notice of change of placement.</p>	X			Reconvenes were held by the district, submitted for review and accepted by DOE.

Category	Findings	ESE	All	System Improvement Strategy	Evidence of Change (Including target date)
Record reviews (Continued)	<p>Systemic findings on IEPs are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • lack of measurable annual goals • lack of frequency of services, accommodations, and/or modifications • the present level of educational performance statement, annual goals, and short-term objectives or benchmarks do not support the services on the IEP • lack of documentation of the concerns of the parents for enhancing the education of their child • the results of the student's performance on any state- or district-wide assessment were not addressed 	X			

Category	Findings	ESE	All	System Improvement Strategy	Evidence of Change (Including target date)
Forms Reviews	<p>Forms used to document the following activities must be revised.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parent Notification of Individual Educational Plan (IEP) Meeting • IEP Forms for students with disabilities • Notice and Consent for Initial Placement • Notice and Consent for Reevaluation • Notification of Change of Placement • Notification of Change of FAPE • Documentation of Staffing/Eligibility Determination • Informed Notice of Dismissal • Notice of ineligibility for Exceptional Student Placement • Annual Notice of Confidentiality 	X	X		

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 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 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 have been 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

The following key data indicators were recommended by the monitoring stakeholders' workgroup and were adopted for implementation by the Bureau. The key data indicators and their sources 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 FCAT 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 the Hendry County School District in this year's focused monitoring visits, Bureau staff reviewed data related to the rate of students with disabilities exiting the school system with a standard diploma taken from survey 5. This review indicated that Hendry County's rate of 23% was the lowest rate of students with disabilities exiting with a standard diploma in the state. Hendry County School District's LEA profile and the listing of districts rank-ordered for the standard diploma graduation 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 17-19, 2003. Six Bureau staff members, one contracted staff member, and three peer monitors conducted the on-site visits. Peer monitors are exceptional student education personnel from other school districts who are trained to assist with the DOE's monitoring activities. In addition, five 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 standard diploma graduation 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 juvenile justice facilities. In Hendry County, interviews were conducted with 68 people, including four district-level administrators or support staff, 24 school-level administrators or support staff, 25 ESE teachers, and 17 general education teachers.

Focus Group Interviews

In order to provide maximum opportunity for input about the district's ESE services, a minimum of four separate focus group interviews are conducted by the University of Miami research staff. The participant groups include: parents of students with disabilities; teachers, both 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 Hendry County monitoring activities, three parents participated in the parent focus group, representing seven students with disabilities in prekindergarten, elementary, and middle school. Two ESE teachers (grades k-5) participated in the teacher focus group. Fourteen students participated in the standard diploma student focus group, and 13 participated in the group of 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. 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. Criteria for selection of students for case studies vary by key data indicator, and the decision is made by Bureau staff at the time of the school visit. Five in-depth case studies were conducted in Hendry 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 29 ESE and regular education classrooms were visited during the focused monitoring visit to Hendry County at the following schools:

- LaBelle High School
- Clewiston High School
- LaBelle Middle School
- Clewiston Middle School
- Eastside Elementary School
- Upthegrove Elementary School
- Westside Elementary School
- LaBelle Youth Development Academy
- Clewiston Youth Development Academy

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 parents of 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 Hendry County monitoring activities, the parent survey was sent to parents of 1,324 students with disabilities for whom complete addresses were provided by the district. A total of 97 parents representing 7% of the sample returned the survey. Surveys from 85 families were returned as undeliverable, representing 7% of the sample for students with disabilities. For gifted students, the survey was sent to parents of 113 students identified as gifted for whom complete addresses were provided by the district. A total of 20 parents representing 17% of the sample returned the survey. Surveys from four families were returned as undeliverable, representing 4% 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 275 teachers (68% of all teachers in the district), representing 11 of the 12 schools in Hendry 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. Sixty-three student surveys were returned from the Hendry County administration. Data are from two of the district's six 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. Twenty-eight records were reviewed off-site. 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 Hendry County, 42 records were reviewed on-site for compliance.

Selected district forms and notices are also reviewed to determine if the required components are included. The results of the reviews 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 related areas that may contribute to or impact the indicator. These areas include:

- general information
- access
- decision-making
- stakeholder opinion

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(s) related to the key data indicator are also addressed through the district's continuous improvement monitoring plan.

Results

General Information

This category refers to demographic or other influences that may impact the rate of students with disabilities graduating with a standard diploma. The Hendry County School District has a total school population (PK-12) of 7,673 students with 18 % of students being identified as students with disabilities (including 2% identified as receiving only speech services), and 1% identified as gifted.

Hendry County is considered a medium/small district and is one of 14 districts in this enrollment group. The district is comprised of two high schools, two middle schools, six elementary schools, and two alternative schools.

When discussing the population, district and school staff reported that Hendry County has the lowest income per capita as well as the highest unemployment rate in the state. It was estimated that less than 50% of the adult population have a high school diploma. Many of the residents of the district are migrant workers who come to work in the sugar cane fields. The workers are primarily Hispanic and many of the students from these families do not have a good command of the English language. It was noted that frequently these students do not enter school until late

fall, and leave in the spring before the school year is over. The monitoring team was informed that many of these students were identified as students with disabilities.

In interviews, district and school staff indicated that many educators in the district have low expectations in regard to academic achievement from students with disabilities. Students with disabilities have been traditionally placed in restrictive environments, have been exempted from state and district standardized testing, and were not exposed to the standard curriculum. While it was the consensus of the staff that now students with disabilities are being mainstreamed and are being included in the testing and in the general curriculum, the students currently in high school have not had that opportunity.

There are two townships in Hendry County, LaBelle and Clewiston that have very different populations. Each of these townships has its own high school, middle school, alternative education center and three elementary schools. Due to the dissimilarity in the populations, philosophy, curriculum, and data from these schools, results from each school are reported separately.

In summary, Hendry County is a medium/small rural school district whose primary work force is involved in harvesting sugar cane. Respondents indicated that this district has the lowest income per capita in the state. Hendry County is made up of two townships, Clewiston and LaBelle. Many of the students in the Hendry County school district are children of migrant parents who are not native English speakers. A majority of the students are on free or reduced lunch. In the past, students with disabilities have traditionally been placed in restrictive environments, and have not had access to the standard curriculum. Expectations of parents, school personnel, and students regarding academic achievement for students with disabilities are low.

Access

This category refers to the types of settings and the specific curriculum (content and/or specific publisher and program) available to students with disabilities and to the effectiveness or quality of instruction. Lack of access to the general curriculum could negatively impact the rate of students who earn a standard diploma.

For the most part, students with disabilities who are working to earn a standard diploma in the Hendry County School District access instruction in the Sunshine State Standards (SSS) from the general education teachers in the general education classrooms. With few exceptions, the ESE teachers do not teach the regular course standards in their classrooms.

Interviews with district and school administrative staff found that there is a lack of consensus regarding the district's overall support of inclusion. While each of the interviewees indicated that he or she supported inclusion, the interviewee also indicated that "others" at the district level were opposed to the concept. Some district and school administrative staff voiced the opinion that the curriculum used in the ESE classrooms is not adequately challenging and does not prepare students for academic success. This was supported by statements from some students in the student focus groups who indicated that they believed the coursework in ESE classes was not challenging and that it was repetitive from year to year. It was reported that there is very little available in regard to vocational training for students who are pursuing a standard diploma.

Many individuals interviewed stated that there is a “history” in Hendry County of ESE students being placed in ESE classrooms, and of ESE students being automatically exempted from the FCAT testing. However, most people indicated that this is changing and the district is supporting mainstreaming more ESE students, especially at the elementary and middle schools, and including all but the most severe ESE students in FCAT testing.

Of concern to the monitors was the statement by staff that SLD students have to “qualify” for an academic area before they can receive ESE services in that area. For example, if a student is determined to be eligible for the special learning disabilities (SLD) program by “qualifying” in reading, but not “qualifying” in math that student can receive ESE services in reading, but cannot receive ESE services in math. This may result in lack of services for some students with needs in several academic areas.

LaBelle High School

Staff at LaBelle High School reported that, for students with disabilities pursuing a standard diploma, there are inclusion classes for math and language arts. Supports to the general education teachers included teacher assistants in the inclusion classes. Almost every ESE student who is working toward a standard diploma is also enrolled in a learning strategies class. The learning strategies teachers have copies of the regular class text books, and are responsible for assisting ESE students with work from their general education classes. The teacher consultant stated she is available to the general education teachers upon request.

The monitoring team conducted six classroom observations at LaBelle High School including two observations each of general education classes, inclusion classes, and learning strategies classes. With one exception, the observations supported good instructional practices in these classrooms. It was reported that 36 grade eligible students were coded to take the FCAT.

In reviewing the placement data for 117 students at LaBelle High School who have been determined to be specific learning disabled, it was found that 13 are served at the regular class level, 87 are served at the resource class level, and 17 are served at the separate class level.

Clewiston High School

Interviews with school staff at Clewiston High School indicated that ESE students pursuing a standard diploma have access to the regular curriculum for language arts and math courses in the general education classroom or in an “inclusion class” taught by a general education teacher with an aide to assist students. Additionally, there is a math class for ESE students that is taught by a general education teacher. It was reported that in this class the general education teacher teaches the SSS but at slower pace, with more opportunity for practice, and not in as much depth as in a regular class. Only ESE students who are pursuing a standard diploma have access to this class

During the classroom observations, effective instruction was observed in the one ESE classroom and the two regular education classrooms visited, and it was noted that both of the regular education teachers used a variety of strategies to promote student participation and understanding. At Clewiston High School, all grade eligible ESE students were coded to participate in the FCAT.

In reviewing the placement data for 95 students determined to be specific learning disabled at Clewiston High School it was determined that 48 are served at the regular class level, 3 are served at the resource class level, and 44 are served at the separate class level.

LaBelle Middle School

At LaBelle middle school interviewees reported that the majority of ESE students are in resource or separate class placements. While some ESE students are in the intensive reading and math general curriculum classes, most students with disabilities are in ESE classes for reading, math, language arts, science, social studies, and learning strategies. School staff did indicate that students with disabilities are frequently enrolled in a general business course. There is a school-wide reading program in which teachers read books aloud to ESE and nondisabled students, and the students may earn accelerated reader points. While the guidance counselor reported that a consultative teacher is available to help maintain students with disabilities in the general classroom, none of the ESE or regular education teachers mentioned this support. The ESE classroom teachers use SRA reading and Math Advantage as curriculum and the teachers report these programs to be effective with the majority of ESE students.

Because of the nature of the different curricula used in ESE and general education classrooms, mainstreaming is reported to be difficult. An observation of the learning strategies class revealed that it is primarily used as a support for the ESE students who were taking general education classes.

The finding that students with disabilities are served primarily in ESE classes is supported by the two case studies conducted at LaBelle Middle School. Both students were identified as students with specific learning disabilities. One of the students is on a special diploma track; the other is on a standard diploma track. Each is scheduled in all ESE classes, with the exception of art and physical education. At LaBelle Middle School, out of 235 students with disabilities, all but 5 students were coded as taking the FCAT.

In reviewing the placement data for 166 students determined to be specific learning disabled at LaBelle Middle School it was determined that 42 are served at the regular class level, 96 are served at the resource class level, and 28 are served at the separate class level.

Clewiston Middle School

It was reported that a full continuum of placements is available for students with disabilities at Clewiston Middle School. The ESE teachers are on teams with the regular education teachers making communication about individual students easier which enhanced the mainstreaming of students with disabilities. The reading teacher at the school also works with ESE students as well as general education students.

In interviews with the ESE teachers, they reported that they use SRA Reading Mastery, SRA math, and some also said that they used the regular education textbooks. They indicated that they are very enthusiastic about being able to mainstream students, and that they work very hard to prepare all of their students in the regular curriculum. It was reported that they have a “trial mainstreaming” that can last for a marking period. The monitoring staff were told that an IEP meeting is held prior to the trial placement.

There was a difference of opinion as to the adequacy of materials and resources for ESE teachers. These teachers did report teaching several different subjects during a class period. During the interviews several of the general education teachers stated that the resources to assist them to work with students with disabilities are not adequate.

There was evidence that the needed accommodations on the IEPs of individual teachers are communicated to the regular education teachers and the regular education teachers are aware of them. Classroom observations indicated that the accommodations are being attempted in the regular classes. Classroom observations in four general education classrooms found that three of the four teachers appeared to be having difficulty with classroom management. At Clewiston Middle School all but 16 of 201 students with disabilities were coded to take the FCAT.

In reviewing the placement data for 133 students determined to be specific learning disabled at Clewiston Middle School it was determined that 32 are served at the regular class level, 61 are served at the resource class level, and 40 are served at the separate class level.

Eastside Elementary School

During the monitoring visit at Eastside Elementary, interviews with the principal and two teachers revealed that students have access to resource, full-time and consultative services. A specialized curriculum, modified to meet the needs of ESE students but substantially different from the regular education curriculum, is used for the resource and full time classes. All students with disabilities have equal access to art, physical education and extracurricular activities. The use of a different curriculum in the ESE resource room can make transition to the regular curriculum difficult. At Eastside Elementary all grade eligible students with disabilities were coded to take the FCAT.

Upthegrove Elementary School

Upthegrove Elementary has been structured as an inclusion school in which the majority of students with disabilities receive all of their services and instruction in the regular education classroom. A visit to this school by monitoring staff found a very supportive and enthusiastic staff who reported that students with disabilities are thriving well in the environment. This school serves as a model in the district for inclusive practices. All grade eligible students with disabilities were coded to take the FCAT.

Westside Elementary School

Interviewees at Westside Elementary School indicated that the students in this school are generally served for the majority of their day in a separate varying exceptionalities (VE) setting, regardless of the level of instruction or behavioral support they require. While it appeared that ESE students are being presented with grade level material, they may be receiving services in a more restrictive environment than is necessary. The two classroom visits revealed effective instructional practices. At Westside Elementary all but two grade eligible students with disabilities were coded to take the FCAT.

Clewiston Youth Development Academy

Interviews and observations at this alternative school found that the school uses Life Centered Curriculum for Educational Enhancement; however, the curriculum lacked scope and sequence. Various materials are used including the Parallel Alternative Strategies for Students (PASS) materials developed by the Department of Education. Once the students are able to perform well in the ESE curriculum, they are transitioned to the general education curriculum.

LaBelle Youth Development Academy

At the LaBelle alternative site, the same curriculum and materials are available. It was explained by the staff that accommodations are provided to all ESE students, but due to confidentiality, specific accommodations are not identified for specific students. Examples of accommodations include open book tests, extended time on tests, and one to one assistance for students.

In summary, for the most part students with disabilities who are working to earn a standard diploma in Hendry County access instruction in the Sunshine State Standards (SSS) from the regular education teachers in the general education classroom. With few exceptions, the exceptional student education (ESE) teachers do not teach the regular course standards in their classrooms. Generally, classroom observations found good instructional practices in the classrooms, although some district and school administrative staff voiced the opinion that the curriculum used in the ESE classrooms is not adequately challenging and does not prepare students to achieve academic success. Efforts are being made to provide students with disabilities access to the Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test (FCAT). Interviews with district and school administrative staff found that there was a lack of consensus regarding the district's overall support of inclusion. Because of the nature of the different curricula used in ESE and general education classrooms, mainstreaming is reported to be difficult. There was a concern that SLD students have to "qualify" for an academic area before they can receive ESE services in that area.

Decision-Making

Decision-making refers to the process by which the diploma option decision for a student with a disability is made. Interviews with district and school personnel at the middle and high schools revealed that the formal decision about the diploma option for a student with disabilities is made at the transition IEP meeting held at the end of the student's eighth grade year. It was reported by middle school and high school staff that a representative from the high school, generally a guidance counselor, would attend the meeting at the middle school. Also invited to attend the meeting, are the middle school counselor(s), ESE teacher(s), general education teachers(s), the parent(s) and the student. All of the students in both of the focus groups recalled having attended a transition meeting and felt that they were able to express their preferences.

Interviewees at both middle and high school stated that the IEP team reviews prior evaluations, current performance documentation from the classroom, standardized testing such as the FCAT, and information about the student's behavior. The student's reading level appears to be weighted heavily in the decision-making, but most staff agreed that the parent and/or the student ultimately made the final decision.

At both high schools, comments were made that the diploma option is reviewed during the first semester of the ninth grade year to determine if the student is being successful in his scheduled classes, or if a move to a lesser or more restrictive setting should be considered. While staff indicated that a student's diploma option could be changed at any time, it was also reported that once the student begins earning special diploma credits it is very difficult to go back and pick up the necessary standard diploma credits needed.

One of the special diploma students selected as a case study by the monitoring team was a student who had been placed on the special diploma track at the end of the eighth grade. Currently an eleventh grader, this student was described by his ESE teacher as a student who probably could have been changed to the standard diploma option, but the student did not want to change his diploma option as it would mean more time in school to make up his credits toward the standard diploma.

In regard to parent and student involvement in decision-making, many interviewees expressed the opinion that the low expectations held by the parents and the student often resulted in the special diploma option being selected. Several school staff members said that parents are often pleased to see their child with a disability receive a diploma but do not want the student to stay in school longer to make up credits. It was reported that the students often do not see any value in having to work harder to get the standard diploma. Another factor discussed was the lack of vocational opportunities for students on the standard diploma track. Students who are pursuing a special diploma apparently have more opportunities for vocational training and job preparation training, and it was reported that some students with disabilities choose to take vocational training through the special diploma options.

At the middle school, interviewees acknowledged that in the past, students who have been in restrictive settings in elementary school were placed in restrictive settings in middle school. Staff reported that at the present time they are mainstreaming many more middle school students, and at the eighth grade level they are recommending more students to start with the standard diploma option than in the past.

At the elementary schools, staff reported that they felt they have properly identified the students and are using the proper curriculum. There was concern that students may be in a more restrictive environment than necessary. One school, Upthegrove Elementary, is an inclusion school and the staff reported that their students with disabilities are meeting with great success.

Of some concern was the apparent lack of a coordinated transition meeting from elementary schools to middle schools. Staff reported that the elementary ESE teachers meet informally with the middle school guidance counselors to determine the student's middle school schedule, which in effect determines the student's placement. These placement decisions do not occur at an IEP meeting and apparently do not involve the parents or regular education teachers.

While district interviewees reported that school level staff were trained in the diploma options, when asked if there had been training provided on how to determine appropriate diploma option for students with disabilities, the majority of school staff interviewed said that they have not had such training.

In the focus groups, most students in the standard diploma group shared the views of the parents that schools do not encourage ESE students to strive for a standard diploma.

In summary, interviews with district and school personnel at the middle and high schools revealed that the formal decision about the diploma option for a student with disabilities is made at the transition IEP meeting held at the end of the student's eighth grade year. The parents' were said to have the final decision as to the diploma option, and it was reported that the low expectations held by the parents and the students often resulted in the special diploma option being selected. It was reported that in the past, students who were in restrictive settings at the elementary school were placed in restrictive settings at the middle school, which limited their success at the high school level. There is concern about the informal transition process and placement decisions from elementary to middle school for students with disabilities, which do not appear to occur at an IEP meeting.

Stakeholder Opinions Related to the Key Data Indicator

This category refers to respondents' views on issues directly related to the rate of students with disabilities graduating with a standard diploma. When asked their opinion of the likely contributors to the low rate of students with disabilities earning a standard diploma from the Hendry County School District, the following reasons were cited:

- the low socioeconomic status in this rural district resulting in a very high rate of poverty, and educational deprivation
- the high numbers of migrants whose children enter school late in the fall and leave early in the spring and whose children quit school early to work to support the family
- the large number of students with disabilities whose native language is not English affecting their ability to pass the FCAT
- the high rate of unemployment with little opportunity of students finding jobs in the district once they graduate
- the low expectations of academic achievement of families, students, and teachers
- the previous lack of access to the regular classrooms and curriculum by students with disabilities.

Staff reported that, in general, many parents and students in this district do not see academic achievement as viable and have little expectation of the students succeeding in school. It was said that the parents of students with disabilities do want to see their children complete high school, but do not differentiate between the standard and the special diploma. Interviewees said that students saw little benefit in doing the extra work for the standard diploma, since it "didn't make much difference" once they completed school. It was also noted that students pursuing a special diploma have more access to vocational training than those pursuing a standard diploma.

In summary, district and school staff are of the opinion that the impoverished environment of the district with few incentives for academic achievement, and low expectations of the families, students, and teachers, have resulted in the low percentage of students with disabilities earning a standard diploma.

Gifted Services

The monitoring team interviewed the district ESE Director who coordinates the gifted program, and the three teachers of the gifted who serve gifted students in elementary and middle school. At the elementary school, gifted students are bused to a school site one day a week. Middle school gifted students at LaBelle Middle School are scheduled into an academic class that serves sixth, seventh and eighth graders. At Clewiston Middle School the students are offered a gifted elective at each grade level. While gifted students are not dismissed from the program when they enter high school, there are no gifted classes. Gifted students at high school can participate in Advanced Placement courses, or participate in dual-enrollment at Edison College.

The ESE Director explained that there is no formal curriculum used in the gifted program, and that the gifted teachers selected resources and materials to compliment what the regular classroom teachers are doing. This was confirmed by interviews with the three teachers. One middle school teacher stated that she had personally developed a differentiated curriculum based on the standards for the course codes, enrichment materials, and creative projects/activities based on the students' IEP goals. All three of the teachers have their gifted endorsement.

The district uses the individual educational plan (IEP) when developing the services for gifted students, and the interviewees stated that they “follow the rules” for IEPs such as holding annual reviews, and conducting three year reevaluations.

When asked if there is a problem with gifted students dropping out of school, the staff stated that there have been gifted students who, rather than finish high school, opted to leave with a GED in order to start vocational or college preparation early.

The district's continuous monitoring plan for the gifted program is to increase the percentage of under-represented populations enrolled in gifted programs. Interviews with the teachers of the gifted revealed that they are aware of this plan, and of activities going on in the schools to implement the plan.

Student Record Reviews

A total of 28 student records, randomly selected from the population of exceptional students in Hendry 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: 20 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; two IEPs for students in juvenile justice facilities; and, two IEPs for students identified as gifted.

Of the 26 IEPs reviewed for students with disabilities, 24 require reconvening of the IEP teams due to a lack of a majority of measurable annual goals. There were four instances of noncompliance that require fund adjustments resulting from a lack of parent notice of change of placement. 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 measurable annual goals

- lack of frequency of services, accommodations, and/or modifications
- the present level of educational performance statement, annual goals, and short-term objectives or benchmarks do not support the services on the IEP
- lack of documentation of the concerns of the parents for enhancing the education of their child
- the results of the student's performance on any state-or district-wide assessments were not addressed

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

- lack of a parent participation form documenting notice of the meeting
- lack of notice of reevaluation on the parent participation form
- lack of adequate information in reporting progress toward the annual goal
- lack of documentation of the most recent evaluation or state-wide assessment
- lack of notice of change of free appropriate public education (FAPE)

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

In summary, 24 IEPs are required to be reconvened and four fund adjustments are required. Systemic findings of noncompliance on IEPs were noted in five areas, and individual findings were noted in five additional areas.

District Forms Review

Forms representing the fourteen areas identified below were submitted to Bureau staff for a review to determine compliance with federal and state laws. Findings were noted in 10 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. A detailed explanation of the specific findings may be found in appendix E.

- *Parent Notification of Individual Education Plan (IEP) Meeting**
- *IEP forms for students with disabilities**
- *IEP forms for students who are gifted*
- *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 of ineligibility for placement in Exceptional Student Education**
- *Summary of Procedural Safeguards*
- *Annual Notice of Confidentiality**

* indicates findings that require immediate attention

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.

Hendry County School District Focused Monitoring System Improvement Strategies

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 (Including target date)
Access to Curriculum and Instruction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Many students with disabilities at the elementary level are placed in restrictive environments where they do not have access to the general curriculum. • There is not a coordinated curriculum plan across schools and grade levels that ensure that students with disabilities have access to general curriculum. • SLD students only receive services in the academic area that they initially qualify for, regardless of their individual needs. 	X			

Category	Findings	ESE	All	System Improvement Strategy	Evidence of Change (Including target date)
Decision-Making	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Placement decisions for students with disabilities moving from the elementary school to the middle school are not made at an IEP meeting with all participants having input into the decision. • Many students at the middle schools are not given access to the general curriculum until the eighth grade year. • Once placed on special diploma when entering Clewiston High School, there is little opportunity for students to access the general curriculum or participate with nondisabled peers. 	X			
		X			
		X			

Category	Findings	ESE	All	System Improvement Strategy	Evidence of Change (Including target date)
Gifted Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is not an ESE coordinated curriculum plan across schools and grade levels. • There are no services for high school gifted students 	X			
Record Reviews	<p>The review of IEPs resulted in the following findings:</p> <p>IEPs for 24 students with disabilities are required to be reconvened due to the lack of a majority of measurable goals.</p> <p>Fund adjustments will be required for four IEPs due to lack of parent notice of change of placement.</p>	X			Reconvenes were held by the district, submitted for review and accepted by DOE.

Category	Findings	ESE	All	System Improvement Strategy	Evidence of Change (Including target date)
Record Reviews (Continued)	<p>Systemic findings on IEPs are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • lack of measurable annual goals • lack of frequency of services, accommodations, and/or modifications • the present level of educational performance statement, annual goals, and short-term objectives or benchmarks do not support the services on the IEP • lack of documentation of the concerns of the parents for enhancing the education of their child • the results of the student's performance on any state- or district-wide assessment were not addressed 	X			

Category	Findings	ESE	All	System Improvement Strategy	Evidence of Change (Including target date)
Forms Reviews	<p>Forms used to document the following activities must be revised.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parent Notification of Individual Educational Plan (IEP) Meeting • IEP Forms for students with disabilities • Notice and Consent for Initial Placement • Notice and Consent for Reevaluation • Notification of Change of Placement • Notification of Change of FAPE • Documentation of Staffing/Eligibility Determination • Informed Notice of Dismissal • Notice of ineligibility for Exceptional Student Placement • Annual Notice of Confidentiality 	X	X		

Recommendations and Technical Assistance

As a result of the focused monitoring activities conducted in Hendry County during the week of March 17, 2003, the Bureau has identified specific findings related to the rate of students with disabilities graduating with a standard diploma. 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:

- Develop parent and teacher training modules to address options and decision-making for diploma selection. Include strategies for increasing district, school, and parent expectations for academic achievement for students with disabilities.
- Develop a district policy paper on the inclusion of students with disabilities into the general education classrooms, to provide additional opportunities for students with disabilities to be placed in the least restrictive environment.
- Establish a dialogue among the various district staff working with at-risk students including programs and resources in ESE, ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages), Migrant Services, and Parent Services in order to better coordinate and utilize district resources.
- Continue to encourage the participation of students with disabilities in the FCAT assessments, particularly at the lower grade levels.
- Review the curricula being used by ESE teachers to increase consistency across the district, to strengthen the presentation of the Sunshine State Standards, and increase student access to the general curriculum.
- Consider developing a partnership with the major industry in Hendry County to provide additional resources for the public schools.
- Consider the option of using the Education Plan (EP) for students who are gifted,
- Form a writing team to develop a gifted curriculum or access through other districts.

Technical Assistance

The Able Trust

High School/High Tech

Donna Mundy

(321) 631-5047

Website: <http://www.abletrust.org>

High School/High Tech is an initiative of the US Department of Labor, Office of Disability Employment Policy. It is sponsored in Florida by The Able Trust/Florida Governor's Alliance for the Employment of Citizens with Disabilities. The mission of the Able Trust is to provide Floridians with disabilities fair employment opportunities through fundraising, grant programs, public awareness and education.

The High School/High Tech project is a community-based partnership of students, parents, educators, rehabilitation professionals, and businesses. Schools may apply to be a pilot program under this project which, among other services, will offer assistance in establishing school and business partnerships.

Florida Inclusion Network

(850) 414-6773

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.

Effective Instructional Practices/Project Central

Margie Ringler

(386) 274-0175

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

This comprehensive, statewide project is designed to identify and disseminate information about resources, training, and research related to current and emerging effective instructional practices. The ultimate goals are to provide information leading to appropriate training, products, and other resources that provide benefits and appropriate outcomes for all students, including students with disabilities.

Career Development and Transition/Project Connect

Drew Andrews/Joyce Lubbers

(352) 392-0701 ext. 267/285

Website: <http://www.thetransitioncenter.org>

The Career Development and Transition Project helps school districts provide specialized instruction and services to students with disabilities that will assist them in achieving a more successful transition from school to adult and community living.

Student Support Services Project

(850) 922-3727

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).

In addition to the resources described above, DOE and the Bureau of Instructional Support and Community Services staff are available for assistance on a variety of topics. Following is a partial list of contacts.

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.

Clearinghouse Information Center

cicbiscs@FLDOE.org

Dropout Prevention and Academic Intervention

Mary Jo Butler

(850) 245-0479

Gifted

Donnajo Smith

(850) 245-0478

Graduation, FCAT

Michele Polland

(850) 245-0478

IEPs, SLD

Paul Gallaher

(850) 245-0478

Office of Multicultural Student Language Education

Lisa Saavedra

(850) 245-0891

Parent Services

Kelly Claude

(850) 245-0478

Transition

Janet Adams

(850) 245-0478

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: Hendry	PK-12 Population: 7,673
Enrollment Group: 7,000 to 20,000	Percent Disabled: 18%
	Percent Gifted: 1%

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
1999-00	2000-01	2001-02	1999-00	2000-01	2001-02
*	92%	92%	*	92%	93%
*	87%	87%	*	86%	87%
*	85%	87%	*	85%	87%
Hendry Enrollment Group			State		
Grade 5 Participation FCAT Math			Grade 4 Participation FCAT Reading		
1999-00	2000-01	2001-02	1999-00	2000-01	2001-02
92%	92%	93%	87%	92%	99%
84%	87%	87%	82%	86%	87%
84%	85%	88%	83%	85%	88%
Hendry Enrollment Group			State		
Grade 8 Participation FCAT Math			Grade 8 Participation FCAT Reading		
1999-00	2000-01	2001-02	1999-00	2000-01	2001-02
67%	81%	85%	69%	86%	85%
80%	79%	81%	80%	79%	81%
76%	76%	80%	76%	76%	80%
Hendry Enrollment Group			State		
Grade 10 Participation FCAT Math			Grade 10 Participation FCAT Reading		
1999-00	2000-01	2001-02	1999-00	2000-01	2001-02
36%	29%	34%	41%	31%	34%
64%	60%	64%	63%	60%	65%
58%	59%	62%	58%	59%	62%
Hendry Enrollment Group			State		

* 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	68%	nr	12%	nr	20%
all students	nr	35%	nr	16%	nr	50%
gifted students	nr	0%	nr	0%	nr	100%

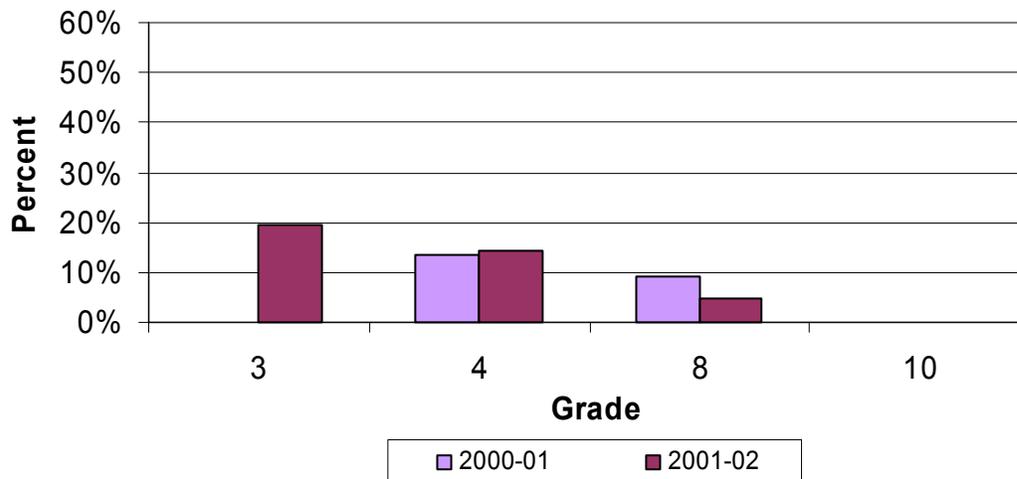
	Grade 4 Achievement Level					
	Level 1		Level 2		Level 3+	
	2000-01	2001-02	2000-01	2001-02	2000-01	2001-02
students with disabilities	79%	78%	8%	8%	14%	14%
all students	44%	38%	15%	18%	41%	45%
gifted students	0%	0%	0%	6%	100%	94%

	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	77%	83%	13%	12%	9%	5%
all students	39%	39%	29%	26%	33%	36%
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	85%	96%	15%	4%	0%	0%
all students	36%	45%	36%	31%	29%	24%
gifted students	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%

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	53%	nr	26%	nr	21%
all students	nr	30%	nr	27%	nr	43%
gifted students	nr	0%	nr	0%	nr	100%

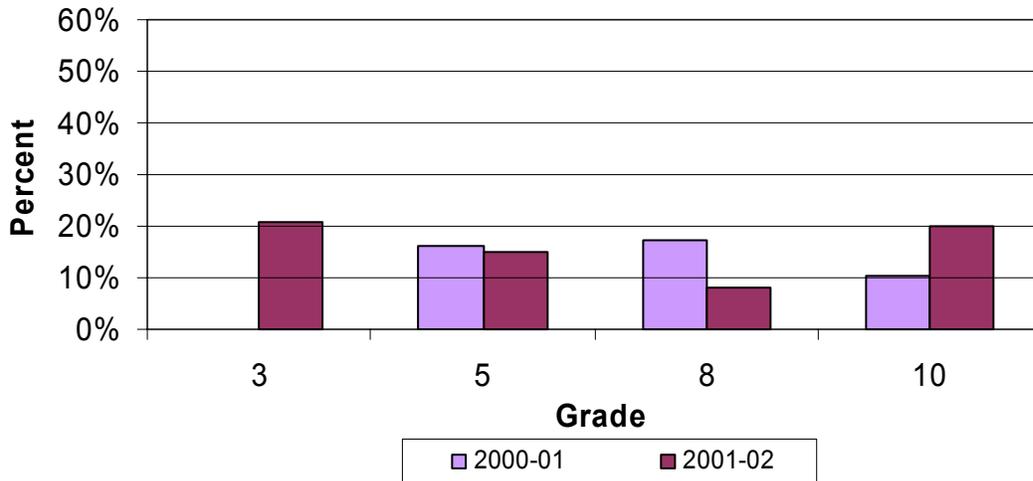
Grade 5 Achievement Level						
Level 1		Level 2		Level 3+		
2000-01	2001-02	2000-01	2001-02	2000-01	2001-02	
students with disabilities	67%	65%	17%	20%	16%	15%
all students	31%	31%	26%	29%	43%	40%
gifted students	0%	0%	8%	6%	92%	94%

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	65%	77%	17%	15%	17%	8%
all students	31%	34%	22%	24%	47%	42%
gifted students	9%	0%	0%	0%	91%	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	74%	52%	16%	28%	11%	20%
all students	22%	22%	25%	25%	52%	53%
gifted students	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%

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
Hendry	50%	35%	23%
Enrollment Group	57%	50%	52%
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
Hendry		5%	4%
Enrollment Group		5%	4%
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
Hendry		9%	6%	7%
Enrollment Group		5%	5%	5%
State		6%	5%	5%

		All Students		
		1999-00	2000-01	2001-02
Hendry		6%	6%	5%
Enrollment Group		3%	3%	3%
State		5%	4%	3%

		Gifted Students		
		1999-00	2000-01	2001-02
Hendry		0%	0%	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
Hendry	32%	40%	39%
Enrollment Group	44%	45%	46%
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
Hendry	0%	3%	0%
Enrollment Group	5%	5%	5%
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
Hendry	74%	74%	82%
Enrollment Group	56%	58%	60%
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						
Hendry Enrollment Group State	Hendry	7%	4%	20%	9%	<1%	<1%	<1%	<1%
	Enrollment Group	15%	10%	14%	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

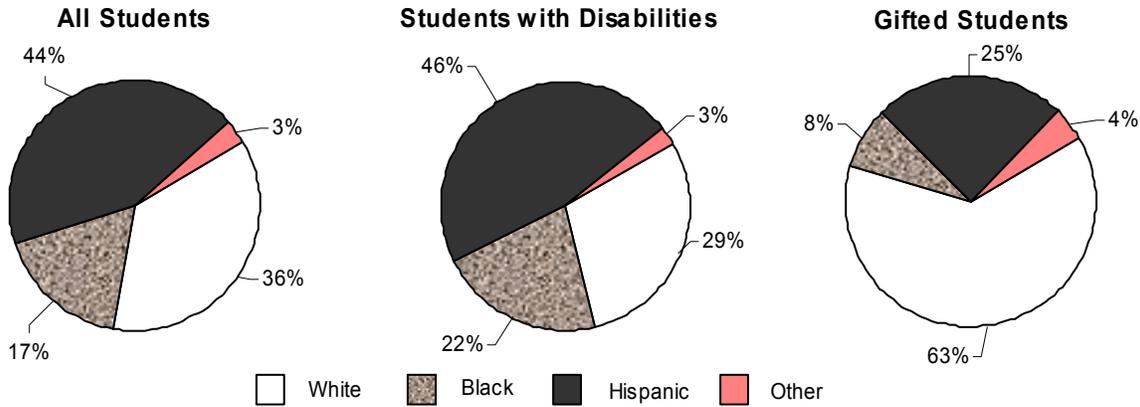
Prevalence refers to the proportion of the PK-12 population identified as exceptional at any given point in time. This section of the profile provides prevalence data by demographic characteristics.

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%	36%	29%	63%
Black	24%	28%	10%	17%	22%	8%
Hispanic	21%	17%	19%	44%	46%	25%
Asian/Pacific Islander	2%	<1%	4%	<1%	<1%	2%
Am Ind/Alaskan Nat	<1%	<1%	<1%	<1%	<1%	2%
Multiracial	2%	2%	3%	2%	2%	<1%

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%	70%	36%
LEP	12%	3%	13%	<1%

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%	36%	54%	27%	48%	37%	33%	21%
Black	24%	17%	24%	16%	39%	49%	53%	37%
Hispanic	21%	44%	20%	54%	11%	13%	13%	40%
Asian/Pacific Islander	2%	<1%	<1%	0%	<1%	0%	<1%	0%
Am Ind/Alaskan Nat	<1%	<1%	<1%	<1%	<1%	<1%	<1%	<1%
Multiracial	2%	2%	1%	2%	2%	<1%	<1%	<1%

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%	11%	46%	61%
EH/SED	1%	1%	10%	8%
EMH	1%	2%	8%	10%
SI	2%	2%	14%	11%

Districts in Hendry's Enrollment Group:

Charlotte, Citrus, Columbia, Flagler, Gadsden, Hendry, Hernando, Highlands, Indian River, Jackson, Martin, Monroe, Nassau, Okeechobee, Putnam



The New Department of
Education

Jim Horne, Commissioner

Hendry County School District
Focused Monitoring Visit
March 17-19, 2003

Districts Rank-Ordered on Standard Diploma Rate for Students with Disabilities

District	# Complete	# St. Dip.	%	Rank
Hendry	44	10	23%	1
Columbia	60	18	30%	2
Jackson	61	19	31%	3
Suwannee	29	10	34%	4
Polk	575	208	36%	5
Duval	558	203	36%	6
Hardee	19	7	37%	7
Lee	249	93	37%	8
Union	8	3	38%	9
Putnam	114	43	38%	10
Madison	47	18	38%	11
Marion	287	115	40%	12
Orange	871	354	41%	13
Bradford	57	24	42%	14
Okeechobee	63	27	43%	15
Levy	50	22	44%	16
Sumter	54	24	44%	17
Taylor	29	13	45%	18
Osceola	230	104	45%	19
Holmes	21	10	48%	20
Bay	148	72	49%	21
Gilchrist	31	16	52%	22
Wakulla	50	26	52%	23
Martin	98	51	52%	24
Palm Beach	786	411	52%	25
Miami Dade	1,469	777	53%	26
Walton	34	18	53%	27
DeSoto	30	16	53%	28
Escambia	348	188	54%	29
Washington	22	12	55%	30
Pinellas	685	375	55%	31
Highlands	160	88	55%	32
Alachua	124	70	56%	33
Manatee	352	199	57%	34

District	# Complete	# St. Dip.	%	Rank
Calhoun	21	12	57%	35
Liberty	12	7	58%	36
Volusia	587	350	60%	37
Collier	280	167	60%	38
Franklin	10	6	60%	39
Lafayette	10	6	60%	40
Gadsden	53	32	60%	41
Clay	244	150	61%	42
Jefferson	13	8	62%	43
Monroe	68	43	63%	44
Pasco	540	342	63%	45
Lake	276	180	65%	46
Baker	26	17	65%	47
Hillsborough	1,023	674	66%	48
Hamilton	6	4	67%	49
Citrus	182	123	68%	50
Dixie	31	21	68%	51
Seminole	317	218	69%	52
St. Johns	117	84	72%	53
Hernando	115	84	73%	54
Broward	1,270	928	73%	55
Santa Rosa	146	108	74%	56
St. Lucie	236	175	74%	57
Glades	8	6	75%	58
Sarasota	514	389	76%	59
Okaloosa	284	218	77%	60
Charlotte	160	125	78%	61
Gulf	19	15	79%	62
Leon	461	369	80%	63
Indian River	174	140	80%	64
Brevard	724	603	83%	65
Nassau	52	49	94%	66
Flagler	74	73	99%	67
District Total	15,816	9,370	59%	

APPENDIX C:
MONITORING TEAM MEMBERS

**Hendry County
Focused Monitoring Visit
March 17-19, 2003**

ESE Monitoring Team Members

Department of Education Staff

Shan Goff, Chief, Bureau of Instructional Support and Community Services
Eileen Amy, Administrator, ESE Program Administration and Quality Assurance
Carol Kirkpatrick, Program Director, ESE Program Administration and Quality Assurance
Paul Gallaher, Program Specialist
Iris Anderson, Program Specialist
Lee Clark, Program Specialist
Kim Komisar, Program Specialist

Peer Reviewers

Cara Sipel, Indian River County
Nancy Pope, Wakulla County
Mary Camp, Sumter County

Contracted Staff

Hope Nieman, Consultant
Adalis Sancho, University of Miami
Emily Joseph, University of Miami
James Kohnstamm, University of Miami
Christopher Sarno, University of Miami
Maria Elena Arguelles, University of Miami

APPENDIX D:
SURVEY RESULTS

**2003 Parent Survey Report
Students with Disabilities
Hendry County**

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 Hendry County monitoring activities, the Parent Survey was sent to parents of the 1,324 students with disabilities for whom complete addresses were provided by the district. A total of 97 parents (PK, n = 6; K-5, n = 41; 6-8, n = 28; 9 - 12, n = 22) representing 7% of the sample, returned the survey. Eighty-five surveys were returned as undeliverable, representing 6% 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.

Parent Survey Results

	% Yes
Overall, I am satisfied with:	
• the way I am treated by school personnel.	84
• the amount of time my child spends with regular education students.	77
• the way special education teachers and regular education teachers work together.	75
• the effect of exceptional student education on my child's self-esteem.	73
• the exceptional education services my child receives.	67
• the level of knowledge and experience of school personnel.	65
• my child's academic progress.	63
• how quickly services are implemented following an IEP (Individualized Educational Plan) decision.	56
 My child:	
• has friends at school.	89
• is learning skills that will be useful later on in life.	79
• is aiming for a standard diploma.	79
• is usually happy at school.	77
• spends most of the school day involved in productive activities.	72

**These questions answered by parents of students grade 8 and above*

% Yes

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

- ways that my child could spend time with students in regular classes. 65
- whether my child would take the FCAT (Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test). 63
- whether my child needed services beyond the regular school year. 54
- the requirements for different diplomas.* 76
- which diploma my child may receive.* 72
- whether my child should get accommodations (special testing conditions), for example, extra time. 52

My child's teachers:

- expect my child to succeed. 91
- set appropriate goals for my child. 89
- are available to speak with me. 87
- give homework that meets my child's needs 77
- call me or send notes about my child. 70
- give students with disabilities extra time or different assignments, if needed 65

My child's school:

- encourages me to participate in my child's education. 83
- makes sure I understand my child's IEP. 75
- wants to hear my ideas. 74
- addresses my child's individual needs 68
- sends me information about activities and workshops for parents. 68
- sends me information written in a way I understand. 64
- encourages acceptance of students with disabilities. 64
- involves students with disabilities in clubs, sports, or other activities. 57
- offers students with disabilities the classes they need to graduate with a standard diploma 64
- provides students with disabilities updated books and materials. 61
- does all it can to keep students from dropping out of school. 57
- informs me about all of the services available to my child. 56
- explains what I can do if I want to make changes to my child's IEP. 54
- offers a variety of vocational courses, such as computers and business technology.* 70
- provides information to students about education and jobs after high school.* 46

**These questions answered by parents of students grade 8 and above*

Parent Participation:

% Yes

- | | |
|--|----|
| • I am comfortable talking about my child with school staff. | 82 |
| • I have attended one or more meetings about my child during this school year. | 82 |
| • I participated in school activities with my child. | 74 |
| • I have used parent support services in my area. | 30 |
| • I attend School Advisory Committee meetings concerning school improvement. | 25 |
| • I belong to an organization for parents of students with disabilities | 22 |
| • I am a member of the PTA/PTO. | 14 |

**These questions answered by parents of students grade 8 and above*

**2003 Parent Survey Report
Students Identified as Gifted
Hendry County**

Responding to the need to increase the involvement of parents and families of students identified as gifted 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 in conjunction with the Bureau’s district monitoring activities.

The Parent Survey was sent to parents of the 113 students identified as gifted for whom complete addresses were provided by the district. A total of 20 parents (KG-5, n = 11, 6-8, n = 9; 9 - 12, n = 0) representing 17% of the sample, returned the survey. Four surveys were returned as undeliverable.

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.

Parent Survey Results

	% Yes
Overall, I am satisfied with:	
• regular teachers’ subject area knowledge.	79
• my child’s academic progress.	74
• how quickly services were implemented following an initial request for evaluation.	74
• the effect of gifted services on my child’s self-esteem.	
• regular teachers’ expertise in teaching students identified as gifted.	68
• gifted teachers’ subject area knowledge.	63
• gifted teachers’ expertise in teaching students identified as gifted.	58
• the gifted services my child receives.	47
In Regular Classes, my child:	
• has friends at school.	100
• has his/her social and emotional needs met at school.	95
• is usually happy at school.	90
• is learning skills that will be useful later on in life.	85
• has creative outlets at school.	80
• is academically challenged at school.	40
In Gifted Classes, my child:	
• has friends at school.	100

% Yes

- has his/her social and emotional needs met at school. 95
- is learning skills that will be useful later on in life. 84
- is usually happy at school. 79
- has creative outlets at school. 68
- is academically challenged at school. 58

My child's regular teachers:

- expect appropriate behavior. 100
- are available to speak with me. 100
- call me or send me notes about my child. 79
- have access to the latest information and technology. 74
- give homework that meets my child's needs. 68
- provide coursework that includes representation of diverse ethnic, racial, and other groups. 67
- set appropriate goals for my child. 61
- relate coursework to students' future educational and professional pursuits. 39

My child's gifted teachers:

- expect appropriate behavior. 88
- are available to speak with me. 83
- set appropriate goals for my child. 69
- have access to the latest information and technology. 61
- provide coursework that includes representation of diverse ethnic, racial, and other groups. 53
- relate coursework to students' future educational and professional pursuits. 35
- give homework that meets my child's needs. 28
- call me or send me notes about my child. 17

My child's home school:

- treats me with respect. 100
- encourages me to participate in my child's education. 88
- sends me information written in a way I understand. 88
- involves me in developing my child's Educational Plan (EP or IEP). 88
- makes sure I understand my child's EP or IEP. 82
- explains what I can do if I want to make changes to my child's EP or IEP. 69
- wants to hear my ideas. 67
- sends me information about activities and workshops for parents. 60
- provides students identified as gifted with appropriate books and materials. 59
- addresses my child's individual needs. 56

% Yes

- informs me about all of the services available to my child. 47
- implements my ideas. 43

My child's 2nd school:

- treats me with respect. 100
- sends me information written in a way I understand. 100
- involves me in developing my child's Educational Plan (EP or IEP). 100
- makes sure I understand my child's EP or IEP. 83
- explains what I can do if I want to make changes to my child's EP or IEP. 71
- encourages me to participate in my child's education. 67
- provides students identified as gifted with appropriate books and materials. 57
- sends me information about activities and workshops for parents. 50
- implements my ideas. 40
- informs me about all of the services available to my child. 40
- addresses my child's individual needs. 38
- The school wants to hear my ideas. 33

Parent Participation

- I have attended one or more meetings about my child during this school year. 95
- I participate in school activities with my child. 89
- I attend School Advisory Committee meetings concerning school improvement. 63
- I am a member of the PTA/PTO. 33
- I have used parent support services in my area. 19
- I belong to an organization for parents of students identified as gifted. 6

**2003 Teacher Survey Report
Students with Disabilities
Hendry County**

Responding to the need to increase the involvement of teachers 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 275 teachers (68% of all teachers in the district) from 11 of the 12 schools in Hendry 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.

Teacher Survey Results

% Consistently

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

- places students with disabilities into general education classes whenever possible. 75
- ensures that students with disabilities feel comfortable when taking classes with general education students. 74
- modifies and adapts curriculum for students as needed. 70
- addresses each student's individual needs. 67
- ensures that the general education curriculum is taught in ESE classes to the maximum extent possible. 57
- encourages collaboration among ESE teachers, GE teachers and service providers. 57
- offers teachers professional development opportunities regarding curriculum and support for students with disabilities. 51
- provides adequate support to GE teachers who teach students with disabilities. 43

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

- provides students with appropriate testing accommodations. 82
- provides teachers with FCAT test preparation materials. 79
- aligns curriculum for students with the standards that are tested on the FCAT. 73
- gives students in ESE classes updated textbooks. 65

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

- develops IEPs according to student needs. 90
- makes an effort to involve parents in their child's education. 78
- conducts ongoing assessments of individual students' performance. 78
- allows students to make up credits lost due to disability-related absences. 75
- ensures that classroom material is grade- and age-appropriate. 71
- provides positive behavioral supports. 64
- encourages participation of students with disabilities in extracurricular activities. 64
- ensures that students are taught strategies to manage their behavior as needed. 56
- ensures that classroom material is culturally appropriate. 56
- provides social skills training to students as needed. 51
- implements a dropout prevention program. 39

The following items relate primarily to middle and high schools.

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

- implements an IEP transition plan for each student. 84
- provides students with information about options after graduation. 64
- teaches transition skills for future employment and independent living. 55
- provides students with job training. 53
- coordinates on-the-job training with outside agencies. 51

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. 82
- encourages students to aim for a standard diploma when appropriate. 77
- provides extra help to students who need to retake the FCAT. 75

**2003 Student Survey Report
Students with Disabilities
Hendry County**

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 contracts with the University of Miami to develop and administer a student survey in conjunction with the Bureau’s focused monitoring activities. The survey was administered for the first time during the 2002 monitoring year.

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.

Sixty-three student surveys were returned from the Hendry County School District. Data are from two of the district’s six schools with students in grades 9-12. Students 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.

Student Survey Results

	% Yes
I am taking the following ESE classes:	
• English	57
• Math	43
• Social Studies	38
• Science	37
• Electives (physical education, art, music)	17
• Vocational (woodshop, computers)	7
At my school:	
• ESE teachers believe that ESE students can learn.	79
• ESE teachers give students extra help, if needed.	74
• ESE teachers teach students things that will be useful later on in life.	69
• ESE teachers teach students in ways that help them learn.	68
• ESE teachers understand ESE students' needs.	63
• ESE teachers give students extra time or different assignments, if needed.	61
• ESE teachers provide ESE students with updated books and materials.	45

	% Yes
I am taking the following regular/mainstream classes:	
• Electives (physical education, art, music)	70
• Vocational (woodshop, computers)	50
• English	47
• Science	44
• Math	42
• Social Studies	37

The following section was filled out by students with disabilities who are taking any or all regular/mainstream classes.

At my school:

• Regular education teachers teach ESE students things that will be useful later on in life.	71
• Regular education teachers believe that ESE students can learn.	68
• Regular education teachers give ESE students extra help if needed.	58
• Regular education teachers understand ESE students' needs.	56
• Regular education teachers teach ESE students in ways that help them learn.	53
• Regular education teachers give ESE students extra time or different assignments if needed.	48

At my school, ESE students:

• are encouraged to stay in school.	74
• can take vocational classes such as computers and business technology.	72
• fit in at school.	69
• get the help they need to well in school.	67
• get work experience (on-the-job training) if they are interested.	65
• get information about education after high school.	62
• spend enough time with regular education students.	60
• participate in clubs, sports, and other activities.	57
• are treated fairly by teachers and staff.	56

Diploma Option

• I know the difference between a regular and a special diploma.	74
• I know what courses I have to take to get my diploma.	68
• I had a say in the decision about which diploma I would get.	58
• I agree with the type of diploma I am going to receive.	58
• I will probably graduate with a regular diploma.	46

% Yes

IEP

- I was invited to attend my IEP meeting this year. 61
- I attended my IEP meeting this year. 61
- I had a say in the decision about which classes I would take. 60
- I had a say in the decision about special testing conditions I might get for the FCAT or other tests. 42
- I had a say in the decision about whether I need to take the FCAT or a different test. 39

FCAT

- I took the FCAT this year. 63
- Teachers help ESE students prepare for the FCAT. 57
- In my math classes, we work on the kinds of problems that are tested on the math part of the FCAT. 53
- In my English/reading classes, we work on the kinds of skills that are tested on the reading part of the FCAT. 52
- I received accommodations (special testing conditions) for the FCAT. 46

APPENDIX E:
FORMS REVIEW

**Hendry County
Focused Monitoring Report
Forms Review**

This forms review was completed as a component of the focused monitoring visit conducted the week of March 17, 2003. The following district forms were compared to the requirements of applicable State Board of Education rules, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), applicable sections of Part 300, Code of Federal Regulations, and the Monitoring Work Papers/Source Book for 2003. The review includes 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 Notice</i> Title 34 of the Code of Federal Regulation Section 300.345</p>

The district provided samples of four parent notices for meetings including: “Parent Notice of IEP Meeting;” “Notice of Transitional Individualized Educational Plan Meeting;” “Notice of Staffing Committee and Transitional Individualized Educational Plan;” and “Parent Notice of Staffing Committee Meeting.” The district also provided a copy of sample forms sent as second notices.

The following must be addressed:

- The statement on these forms which reads: “Those present at this meeting may include (but not be limited to)...” which is followed by a preprinted listing of titles, is not in compliance with the IDEA which clearly states that the parents must be informed of who will be invited to the meeting. (Titles may be used.) The district does not have the option to invite individuals to the meeting without informing parents in the notice.
- The statement that reads “You, or we, may also invite other individuals who have specific expertise or knowledge of your child” must be revised to state that the parent may invite other individuals who have special expertise regarding their child. Any person that the district intends to invite to the meeting must be specified on the parent notice.
- The statement on the parent notice of staffing form which states that the purpose of the meeting is to determine appropriate educational placement must be revised. Statutorily, the staffing committee recommends eligibility or ineligibility, while placement is determined by the IEP team.

The following comment is made regarding this form

- The district has eight individual forms to provide parent notice of staffings and IEP meetings. It is recommended that the district consider eliminating much duplication by combining some of these forms. The Bureau is available to provide technical assistance.

Individual Educational Plan (IEP) Meeting
Form *Transitional Individual Educational Plan*
Title 34 of the Code of Federal Regulation Section 300.347

The following must be addressed:

- There is not a place on the form to indicate the anticipated frequency and location for the accommodations and modifications.
- There is not a statement of how the student’s progress toward the annual goals will be measured and how the student’s parent will be regularly informed at least as often as parents are informed of the progress of nondisabled students.
- There was not a statement of needed transition services including, when appropriate, a statement of the interagency responsibilities or any needed linkages.

Notice and Consent for Initial Placement, Notice of Change in FAPE, Change in Placement, Notice of Ineligibility, and Notice of Dismissal.
Form *Notice of Educational Placement*
Title 34 of the Code of Federal Regulation Sections 300.503 and 300.505

The district submitted one form to address the requirements of notice for five separate functions.

The following must be addressed:

- The form indicates that a “placement staffing was held”
- In regard to any requirements for a generic notice to parents this form does not contain the components for compliance

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

This form contains the components for compliance.

The following comment is made regarding this form

While the statement on this form does reference the “parent’s rights” regarding evaluation, it is recommended that at the next printing of this form the district add the statement 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 ESE00322*
Title 34 of the Code of Federal Regulation Sections 300.503 and 300.505

The following must be addressed:

- At the next printing of this form, the district needs to add the statement that “parents of a child with a disability have protections under the Procedural Safeguards of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).”

The following comment is made regarding this form

It is suggested that at the next printing of this form, the statement “I do not give consent for the recommended reevaluation.” be revised to read “I do/do not give consent for the recommended reevaluation.” to clarify that the parent gives formal consent.

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 *IEP and Cover Page*
Title 34 of the Code of Federal Regulation Sections 300.534, 300.503

The following must be addressed:

The documents submitted include the IEP form and a cover page entitled “Staffing Committee Progress Notes, which documents that evaluation results have been provided to the parent. The following required components are lacking:

- the recommendation of the staffing committee (eligible, ineligible),
- a review of the recommendation by the ESE director or designee, and
- the date that the recommendation was reviewed by the ESE director or designee.

The following comment is made regarding this form.

The only place to document the signatures of the members of the staffing committee that is making the eligible recommendation is in the signature section of the IEP. The district is reminded that the statutory composition of the staffing committee and the IEP team is not the same.

Confidentiality of Information

Form *Code of Conduct, Student Records*

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 notice informing parents, guardians, or eligible students that they have a right to inspect and review the student’s educational records does not contain the required component explaining the procedures needed to be followed in order to exercise that right.
- 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 information: “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 is specified.”

The following comment is made regarding this form.

The student records notice has a section stating that “Parents, guardians, or eligible students have the responsibility to meet their financial obligation as it relates to the to school fees.” It is recommended that this statement be moved to another section.

APPENDIX F:
GLOSSARY OF ACRONYMS

Glossary of Acronyms

Bureau	Bureau of Instructional Support & Community Services
DOE	Department of Education
EH	Emotionally Handicapped
ESE	Exceptional Student Education
ESY	Extended School Year
FAPE	Free Appropriate Public Education
FCAT	Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test
FDLRS	Florida Diagnostic and Learning Resources System
IDEA	Individuals with Disabilities Education Act
IEP	Individual Educational Plan
K	Kindergarten
LEA	Local Education Agency
PK	Prekindergarten
SED	Severely Emotionally Disturbed
SLD	Specific Learning Disability
S/L	Speech and Language
SSS	Sunshine State Standards
VE	Varying Exceptionalities