

FINAL REPORT: FOCUSED MONITORING  
EXCEPTIONAL STUDENT EDUCATION PROGRAMS

# HERNANDO COUNTY

SEPTEMBER 26 - 30, 2005



FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION  
BUREAU OF EXCEPTIONAL EDUCATION AND STUDENT SERVICES

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

**Reporting Table**

Standard/Citation	Findings	Supporting Evidence	Concerns
<b>Access to General Curriculum</b>			
34 CFR §300.26(a)(3) Special education 34 CFR §300.347(a)(4) Content of IEP 34 CFR §300.550(b) General LRE requirements 34 CFR §300.552 Placements 34 CFR §300.553 Nonacademic settings Rule 6A-0311(1), FAC, Eligible Special Programs for Exceptional Students	<p>Removal of students with disabilities from the regular educational environment does not occur only when the nature or severity of the disability is such that education in regular classes with the use of supplementary aids and services cannot be achieved satisfactorily.</p> <p>The placement decision for students at Deltona Elementary School is not always based on the child's IEP.</p> <p>The IEP for each child with a disability does not include an explanation of the extent, if any, to which the child will not participate with nondisabled children in the regular class.</p>	<p><i>Records:</i></p> <p>For 13 of 15 IEPs the explanation of the extent to which the student will not participate with nondisabled peers was inadequate or the same/similar to the majority of students.</p> <p><i>Observations:</i></p> <p>At Deltona Elementary School (E.S.) at least one self-contained classroom attends special area/ elective classes in general education classrooms, but not when nondisabled peers are in attendance (removed from general education 100% of the day).</p> <p><i>Interviews:</i></p> <p>3 of 5 teachers at Deltona E.S. reported students are in trial mainstream settings without IEP team involvement. Staff at other schools reported IEP team meetings to determine trial placements.</p>	<p>None noted.</p>

Standard/Citation	Findings	Supporting Evidence	Concerns
		<p>3 of 4 staff at Deltona E.S. reported placements for some students were more restrictive than required based on their needs.</p> <p><i>Case Studies:</i></p> <p>A West Hernando Middle School (M.S.) student functioning on grade level was moved to an ESE math class due to refusal to complete assignments; no supports were provided in the general education classroom; at the time of the site-visit an IEP team meeting had been scheduled to return this student to the general education math class with a behavior intervention plan in place.</p>	
<b>Accommodations, Modifications, Supplementary Aids and Services and Supports to School Personnel</b>			
<p>34 CFR §300.342 When IEPs must be in effect.</p> <p>34 CFR §300.347(a) Content of IEP.</p> <p>34 CFR §300.342.350(a) IEP—accountability.</p> <p>Rule 6A-6.03028(7), FAC, Development of Individual Educational Plans for Exceptional Students</p>	<p>Students at Springstead H.S. are not provided accommodations in accordance with their IEPs.</p>	<p><i>Focus Groups:</i></p> <p>All students from both focus groups at Springstead High School (H.S.) reported teachers require students to ask for instructional or testing accommodations; they are not simply provided.</p> <p>7 of 28 students reported embarrassment and/or discomfort at having to request accommodations.</p>	<p>Administrative and teaching staff at several schools visited reported a need for additional training for general education teachers on implementation of instructional accommodations.</p> <p>While there was evidence of students receiving accommodations based on their unique needs these were not always determined by the IEP</p>

Standard/Citation	Findings	Supporting Evidence	Concerns
		<p><i>Interviews</i></p> <p>4 of 4 teachers at Springstead H.S. who were asked about accommodations reported that students are required to request the accommodations that are on their IEPs.</p> <p>1 of 4 teachers at Springstead H.S. reported that students are expected to ask but that the teacher attends to body language, facial expression, and prior knowledge of the student to ensure the accommodations are available when needed.</p> <p><i>Records</i></p> <p>None of the IEPs reviewed at Springstead H.S. stated that the accommodations would only be provided upon student request.</p> <p><i>Case Studies</i></p> <p>At 4 of 7 schools visited teachers reported providing individualized accommodations beyond those indicated on the case study students' IEPs.</p>	<p>teams or documented on the IEPs.</p>

Standard/Citation	Findings	Supporting Evidence	Concerns
<b>Discipline and Positive Behavior Supports</b>			
<p>34 CFR §300.520 Authority of school personnel.</p> <p>34 CFR §300.523(a) Manifestation determination review.</p> <p>34 CFR §300.346(a) (2) Development, review, and revision of the IEP.</p> <p>Rule 6A-6.03028 (6)(d), FAC, Development of Individual Educational Plans for Exceptional Students</p> <p>Rule 6A-6.03016, FAC, Special Programs for Students who are Emotionally Handicapped</p> <p>Rule 6A-6.03312(4), FAC, Discipline Procedures for Students with Disabilities</p>	<p>Manifestation determinations are not conducted for students who experience long term removals, as required by Rule 6A-6.03312(4), FAC.</p> <p>Functional behavior assessments are not conducted and behavior intervention plans are not developed and implemented for student who experience long term removals, as required by Rule 6A-6.03312(4), FAC.</p> <p>Individualized behavior intervention plans that have been developed based on functional behavioral assessments are not being implemented for some students; general class-wide management plans are implemented instead.</p>	<p><i>Focus Groups</i></p> <p>Consensus of students in both focus groups that Out-of-School Suspension is assigned for relatively minor infractions (e.g., skipping class); results in students accruing a high number of suspensions.</p> <p><i>Records:</i></p> <p>13 of 13 IEPs of students at Hernando H.S. who had extensive suspensions did not address behavior or did not target the behaviors that resulted in the suspensions.</p> <p>5 of 6 students at Hernando H.S. with &gt;10 days of suspension had not had a manifestation determination.</p> <p>2 of 2 students at Central H.S. with &gt;10 days of suspension had not had a manifestation determination.</p> <p><i>Interviews:</i></p> <p>Two staff members responsible for providing or acting on suspension reported that student-specific suspension data is not reported as often as required under district policy.</p>	<p>Administrative school staff do not notify staffing specialists of suspensions as outlined in district policy; this results in procedures regarding functional behavioral assessments (FBAs), behavior intervention plans (BIPs), and manifestation determinations not being followed.</p> <p>The district’s behavior specialists prepare BIPs for consideration by IEP teams subsequent to conducting FBAs; however, there is no evidence the BIPs are adopted or implemented; those in the records are labeled “draft.”</p>



Standard/Citation	Findings	Supporting Evidence	Concerns
<b>FCAT Preparation</b>			
<p>Rule 6A-6.03028(7) (a), FAC, Development of Individual Educational Plans for Exceptional Students</p> <p>S. 1003.43(11)(b) General requirements for high school graduation.</p>	<p>No findings of noncompliance in this area.</p>		
<b>Student Course of Study and Diploma Option Decisions</b>			
<p>34 CFR §300.347(b) Content of IEP.</p> <p>Rule 6A-6.03028(7), FAC, Development of Individual Educational Plans for Exceptional Students</p> <p>Rule 6-1.0996(13), FAC, Graduation Requirements for Certain Students with Disabilities.</p>	<p>No findings of noncompliance in this area.</p>	<p><i>Interviews:</i></p> <p>Middle school ESE teachers reported being unaware of the FCAT waiver.</p> <p>High school ESE teachers reported discussing the FCAT waiver process beginning in the 10<sup>th</sup> grade; few were aware of special diploma option 2.</p>	<p>ESE teachers at West Hernando M.S. were not aware of the FCAT waiver process.</p> <p>ESE teachers at Springstead H.S., Central H.S., and Hernando H.S. reported that the FCAT waiver process is not discussed until at least 10<sup>th</sup> grade.</p> <p>Special diploma option 2 is not considered for many students with disabilities who are participating in on-the-job training (OJT) and other vocational or career preparation programs.</p>

Standard/Citation	Findings	Supporting Evidence	Concerns
<b>Staff Development</b>			
34 CFR 300.382 Improvement strategies.	No findings of noncompliance.		
<b>Counseling Services</b>			
34 CFR §300.24 Related services.  Rule 6A-6.03016(4) (d), FAC, Special Programs for Students Who Are Emotionally Handicapped	Counseling as a related service not consistently provided to and documented on IEPs of SED students.	<p><i>Records:</i></p> <p>IEPs of 3 SED students did not include counseling as a related service.</p> <p>21 of 32 records reviewed with an identified need for counseling as a related service to be considered by the IEP team had counseling identified as a related service on the IEP.</p> <p><i>Interviews:</i></p> <p>Teachers and/or IEP team participants of 6 of the remaining 11 students reported counseling had not been considered but likely should have been.</p> <p>Counseling on IEP of SED student on home instruction reportedly not provided.</p>	It is unclear that all students with disabilities who need counseling as a related service in order to benefit from their specially designed instruction are provided that service.

Standard/Citation	Findings	Supporting Evidence	Concerns
<b>Communication Services</b>			
<p>34 CFR §300.346(a)(2)(iv) Development, review, and revision of the IEP.</p> <p>Rule 6A-6.03028(6), FAC, Development of Individual Educational Plans for Students with Disabilities</p>	<p>IEP of one language impaired student did not address communication.</p>	<p><i>Records:</i></p> <p>1 of 15 records reviewed had an identified need for communication which was unaddressed.</p> <p>Remaining students had communication addressed through goals and objectives.</p>	
<b>Transition Services</b>			
<p>34 CFR §300.344(b) IEP team.</p> <p>Rule 6A-6.03028(3)-(4), FAC, Development of Individual Educational Plans for Exceptional Students</p>	<p>Three students at CHS for whom there was evidence of a need for agency involvement did not have an agency representative invited to the transition IEP meeting.</p> <p>Transition is not always included as a purpose of the IEP team meeting for students ages 14 and older.</p>	<p><i>Records:</i></p> <p>Transition IEPs from four schools with students ages 16 and older were reviewed on-site.</p> <p>3 of 5 student records reviewed at Central H. S. had evidence of needed transition agency linkages but the agency had not been invited to the transition IEP meeting.</p> <p>5 of 15 meeting notices for students ages 14 and older did not include transition as a purpose of the meeting.</p> <p><i>Focus Groups:</i></p> <p>1 of 17 special diploma students reported receiving transition assistance beyond school staff.</p>	

Standard/Citation	Findings	Supporting Evidence	Concerns
		<p><i>Surveys:</i></p> <p>52% of parents of students with disabilities responding to survey questions reported being informed of transition being a purpose of the IEP meeting always, almost always, or frequently.</p> <p>57% of parents of students with disabilities responding to survey questions reported transition services are discussed at the IEP meeting always, almost always or frequently.</p>	
<b>Gifted Services</b>			
<p>Section 1003.57, F.S. Exceptional Student Instruction</p> <p>Section 1003.01(3)(a), F.S. Definitions.</p> <p>Rule 6A-6.030191(5)(a), FAC, Development of Educational Plans for Exceptional Students Who Are Gifted</p>	No findings of noncompliance	<p><i>Records:</i></p> <p>10 of 10 EPs reviewed on-site were individualized</p> <p><i>Interviews</i></p> <p>5 of 5 teachers of the gifted reported services available to students in identified subject areas, depending on the grade level and school site.</p>	<p>Because the focus or content of the gifted services vary by school, there is a concern that the individual needs of all gifted students may not be met (e.g., student at the middle school who have needs beyond the general curriculum in science or math).</p>

Standard/Citation	Findings	Supporting Evidence	Concerns
<b>Charter Schools</b>			
<p>34 CFR §300.241(a) Treatment of charter schools and their students.</p> <p>34 CFR §300.312(a) Children with disabilities in public charter schools.</p>	<p>No findings of noncompliance</p>	<p><b>Records:</b></p> <p>4 of 4 student records reviewed included teacher-to-student monitoring taking place during extended school day hours in addition to the teacher-to-teacher consultation provided in accordance with the school’s charter.</p> <p><b>Interviews:</b></p> <p>Extended school day services are available to all students; parent must sign an agreement upon student enrollment that attendance at the extended day program is mandatory for students whose grades fall below a certain level.</p>	<p>If an IEP team determines that services beyond teacher-to-teacher consultation are required (e.g., teacher to student monitoring or support), this must be provided during the student attendance hours required by the charter school.</p>
<b>Services to ESE Students in Department of Juvenile Justice Facilities</b>			
<p>34 CFR §300.2(b) Applicability of this part to State, local, and private agencies.</p> <p>Rule 6A-6.05281(1)(c), FAC, Educational Programs for Youth in Department of Juvenile Justice Detention, Commitment, Day</p>	<p>IEPs not current on the day of review.</p>	<p><b>Records:</b></p> <p>2 of 5 records did not have current IEPs on the day of review (meetings have been scheduled for these students).</p> <p><b>Interviews:</b></p> <p>Administrative staff reported no standard procedure in place to ensure identification/ verification of special</p>	<p>Staff from the DJJ facility do not routinely communicate with district office staff to ensure ESE students are identified and served within the 10 days required under DJJ quality assurance standards.</p>

Standard/Citation	Findings	Supporting Evidence	Concerns
Treatment, or Early Delinquency Intervention Programs.		education status for incoming students, or for development of IEPs during the summer months.	
<b>Matrix of Services</b>			
S. 1011.62(1)(e), F.S. Funding model for exceptional student education programs.	Two matrix of service documents require correction due to inaccurate reporting.	<b>Records:</b> 2 of 9 records reviewed for matrix of service were not reported adequately.	
<b>Student Record Reviews</b>			
34 CFR §300.340-300.350 Individualized Educational Programs Rule 6A-6.03028, FAC, Development of Individual Educational Plans for Exceptional Students. Rule 6A-6.030191, FAC, Development of Educational Plans for Exceptional Students who are Gifted.	4 findings of noncompliance required funding adjustments. 19 IEP teams must reconvene to address identified findings.	124 IEPs were reviewed, in part or in whole 20 EPs were reviewed, in part or in whole A detailed description of the findings related to student records can be found in Appendix D.	

Standard/Citation	Findings	Supporting Evidence	Concerns
<b>Forms</b>			
<p>34 CFR §300.503 Prior written notice by the public agency; content of notice.</p> <p>34 CFR §300.347 Content of the IEP</p> <p>Rule 6A-6.03028, FAC, Development of Individual Educational Plans for Exceptional Students</p>	<p>13 forms require revisions to meet compliance.</p>	<p>A detailed description of the forms reviews was provided to the district in a letter dated August 10, 2005.</p>	













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

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

<b>Findings of Noncompliance</b>	<b>Improvement Strategies/Interventions</b>	<b>Outcome Measures and Timeline</b>
<b>Access to the General Curriculum</b>		
<p>Removal of students with disabilities from the regular educational environment does not occur only when the nature or severity of the disability is such that education in regular classes with the use of supplementary aids and services cannot be achieved satisfactorily.</p> <p>The placement decision for students at Deltona E.S. is not always based on the child's IEP.</p> <p>The IEP for each child with a disability does not include an adequate explanation of the extent, if any, to which the child will not participate with nondisabled children in the regular class.</p>	<p>Training and/or technical assistance regarding requirements for trial placements and justification for removal during academic and nonacademic periods will be incorporated into the general staff development activities for ESE staff.</p> <p>District and/or school staff will conduct quarterly reviews of a sampling of IEPs (<math>\geq 20</math> records) of students who are removed from the general education setting for some part of the school day to evaluate sufficiency of explanations justifying removal.</p> <p>Following an analysis of the record review results, district staff will determine if additional training is required or targeted meet compliance.</p>	<p>District report of self-assessment reveals compliance with targeted elements for 100% of IEPs reviewed.</p> <p>May 2006 November 2006</p>

Findings of Noncompliance	Improvement Strategies/Interventions	Outcome Measures and Timeline
<b>Accommodations, Modifications, Supplemental Aids and Services, and Supports to School Personnel</b>		
<p>Students at Springstead H.S. are not provided accommodations in accordance with their IEPs.</p> <p><i>Areas of concern are noted in the body of the report.</i></p>	<p>Training and/or technical assistance regarding implementation of accommodations will be incorporated into the general staff development activities for ESE staff.</p> <p>Referring to students' IEPs, district and/or school staff will interview students and their teachers regarding implementation of accommodations on the IEPs (<math>\geq 10</math> students, semi-annually).</p> <p><i>The district is encouraged to include strategies to address concerns noted in the body of this report.</i></p>	<p>District report of self-assessment reveals implementation of required accommodations for 100% of IEPs reviewed.</p> <p>May 2006 November 2006</p>
<b>Discipline and Positive Behavior Supports</b>		
<p>Manifestation determinations are not conducted for students who experience long term removals.</p> <p>Functional behavior assessments are not conducted and behavior intervention plans are not developed and implemented for student who experience long term removals.</p> <p>Individualized behavior intervention plans that have been developed based on functional behavioral assessments are not being implemented for some students; general class-wide management plans are implemented instead.</p>	<p>Training and/or technical assistance regarding manifestation determinations, functional behavior assessments, and implementation of positive behavior intervention plans will be incorporated into the general staff development activities for ESE and administrative staff.</p> <p>District and/or school staff will conduct quarterly reviews of a sampling of IEPs (<math>\geq 10</math> records) of students who have been assigned <math>&gt;10</math> days of out-of-school suspension ensure that manifestation determinations and functional behavior assessments are conducted and behavior intervention plans are developed and implemented.</p> <p>Following an analysis of the record review results, district staff will determine if additional training is required or targeted meet compliance.</p>	<p>District report of self-assessment reveals compliance with targeted elements for 100% of IEPs reviewed.</p> <p>May 2006 November 2006</p>

Findings of Noncompliance	Improvement Strategies/Interventions	Outcome Measures and Timeline
<i>Areas of concern are noted in the body of the report.</i>	<i>The district is encouraged to include strategies to address concerns noted in the body of this report.</i>	
<b>FCAT Preparation</b>		
No findings of noncompliance in this area.		
<b>Student Course of Study and Diploma Option Decisions</b>		
No findings of noncompliance in this area. <i>Areas of concern are noted in the body of the report.</i>	<i>The district is encouraged to include strategies to address concerns noted in the body of this report.</i>	
<b>Staff Development</b>		
No findings of noncompliance in this area.		
<b>Counseling as a Related Service</b>		
Counseling as a related service not consistently provided to and documented on IEPs of SED students. <i>Areas of concern are noted in the body of the report.</i>	The IEP teams for the identified students will reconvene to determine if reevaluation of the student is warranted and to ensure that all required services are documented and provided on the IEP.  District or school level staff will identify the appropriate service provider and implement services.  <i>The district is encouraged to include strategies to address concerns noted in the body of this report.</i>	Documentation submitted and accepted by the Bureau within prescribed timeline.

Findings of Noncompliance	Improvement Strategies/Interventions	Outcome Measures and Timeline
<b>Communication</b>		
IEP of one language impaired student did not address communication.	The IEP team for the identified student will be reconvene to determine if reevaluation of the student is warranted and to ensure that all the student's needs that result from the disability are addressed.	Documentation submitted and accepted by the Bureau within prescribed timeline.
<b>School to Post-school Transition</b>		
Three (3) students at Central H.S. for whom there was evidence of a need for agency involvement did not have an agency representative invited to the transition IEP meeting.	<p>Training and/or technical assistance regarding transition planning procedures (e.g., inviting transition agencies to participate in transition IEP team meetings whenever they may be expected to provide or pay for transition services; including transition as a purpose of the meeting on meeting notices) will be incorporated into the general staff development activities for ESE staff.</p> <p>District and/or school staff will conduct quarterly reviews of a sampling of IEPs (<math>\geq 10</math> records) of students ages 14 or older to ensure that all transition requirements are addressed.</p> <p>Following an analysis of the record review results, district staff will determine if additional training is required or targeted meet compliance.</p>	<p>District report of self-assessment reveals compliance with targeted elements for 100% of IEPs reviewed.</p> <p>May 2006 November 2006</p>
<b>Services to Gifted Students</b>		
<p>No findings of noncompliance.</p> <p><i>Areas of concern are noted in the body of the report.</i></p>	<p><i>The district is encouraged to include strategies to address concerns noted in the body of this report.</i></p>	



Findings of Noncompliance	Improvement Strategies/Interventions	Outcome Measures and Timeline
<b>Services to Exceptional Student s in Charter Schools</b>		
<p>No findings of noncompliance.</p> <p><i>Areas of concern are noted in the body of the report.</i></p>	<p><i>The district is encouraged to include strategies to address concerns noted in the body of this report.</i></p>	
<b>Services to ESE Students in Department of Juvenile Justice Facilities</b>		
<p>Two IEPs were not current on the day of review.</p> <p><i>Areas of concern are noted in the body of the report.</i></p>	<p>IEPs for the two students have been developed.</p> <p>The district will review the process at the DJJ facility for identification and verification of special education services and development and implementation of IEPs, with specific emphasis on summer months. Based on that review, a procedure will be developed and implemented to ensure that students are identified and verified and an IEP developed and implemented within the required DJJ Quality Assurance Standard of 10 business days.</p> <p>Facility and/or district staff will conduct compliance reviews of a random sample of records for students enrolled May through September, at least once per month, to ensure timely identification and services.</p> <p><i>The district is encouraged to include strategies to address concerns noted in the body of this report.</i></p>	<p>Documentation submitted and accepted by the Bureau within prescribed timeline.</p> <p>District report of self-assessment reveals compliance with targeted elements for 100% of IEPs reviewed.</p> <p>May 2006 November 2006</p>

Findings of Noncompliance	Improvement Strategies/Interventions	Outcome Measures and Timeline
<b>Matrix of Services</b>		
Two (2) matrix of services documents require correction due to inaccurate reporting.	The district will identify the five schools with the greatest number of students claimed at the 254 or 255 levels. Using protocols developed by the Bureau, district staff will conduct reviews of two IEPs per school (first and last record from alphabetical list of 254/255 records). For students whose IEPs do not support the services on the matrix or for whom the services are not in evidence, the district will submit an amendment to the Automated Student Information System database for the open window of correction.	District report of self-assessment reveals compliance with targeted elements for 100% of IEPs reviewed.  May 2006 November 2006
<b>Student Record Reviews</b>		
Four (4) findings of noncompliance required funding adjustments.  IEP teams for nineteen (19) students must reconvene to address identified findings.	The IEP teams for the identified students will reconvene to address identified findings.  The identified noncompliant elements will be targeted in the district's IEP and EP training.  Pre-and post- training surveys will be conducted to determine perceived effectiveness of the training.  Using protocols developed by the Bureau, school and/or district staff will conduct semi-annual compliance reviews of a random sample of 15 IEPs and 5 EPs developed by staff who participated in the training session.	Documentation submitted and accepted by the Bureau within prescribed timeline.  District report of self-assessment reveals compliance with targeted elements for 100% of IEPs reviewed.  May 2006 November 2006
<b>Review of District Forms</b>		
Thirteen (13) forms require revisions to meet compliance.	The district will revise forms as required and submit them to the Bureau for review.	February 2006

**Appendix A:**

**District Data**











































































































