

FINAL REPORT: FOCUSED MONITORING
EXCEPTIONAL STUDENT EDUCATION PROGRAMS

HILLSBOROUGH COUNTY

MARCH 28 - APRIL 1, 2005



FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
BUREAU OF EXCEPTIONAL EDUCATION AND STUDENT SERVICES

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October 28, 2005

Mrs. MaryEllen Elia, Superintendent
Hillsborough County School District
P.O. Box 3408
Tampa, Florida 33601-3408

Dear Superintendent Elia:

We are pleased to provide you with the Final Report of Focused Monitoring of Exceptional Student Education Programs in Hillsborough 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 28-April 1, 2005. The report includes a system improvement plan outlining the findings of the monitoring team. The final report will be placed on the Bureau of Exceptional Education and Student Services' website and may be viewed at www.firn.edu/doe/commhome/mon-home.htm.

Bureau staff have worked with Ed McDowell, Jr., ESE Director, and his staff to develop a system improvement plan that includes 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. The system improvement plan has been approved and is included as a part of this final report.

Semi-annual updates of outcomes achieved and/or a summary of related activities, as identified in your district's plan, must be submitted for the next two years, unless otherwise noted on the plan. The first scheduled update will be due on November 30, 2005. A verification monitoring visit to your district will take place two years after your original monitoring visit.

BAMBI J. LOCKMAN
Chief

Bureau of Exceptional Education and Student Services

Superintendent Elia
October 28, 2005
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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 Hillsborough County.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Bambi J. Lockman". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name being the most prominent.

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

Enclosure

cc: Glenn Barrington, School Board Chairman
Carol Kurdell, School Board Chair
Members of the School Board
W. Crosby Few, School Board Attorney
School Principals
Ed McDowell, Jr., ESE Director
Eileen Amy
Evy Friend
Kim Komisar

Hillsborough County Final Monitoring Report

Focused Monitoring

March 28 – April 1, 2005

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Hillsborough County Final Monitoring Report

Focused Monitoring

March 28 – April 1, 2005

Executive Summary

The Florida Department of Education, Bureau of Exceptional Education and Student Services, in carrying out its roles of leadership, resource allocation, technical assistance, monitoring, and evaluation is required to oversee the performance of district school boards in the enforcement of all laws and rules (Sections 1001.03(8) and 1008.32, Florida Statutes (F.S.)). In fulfilling this requirement, the Bureau conducts monitoring activities of the exceptional student education (ESE) programs provided by district school boards in accordance with Sections 1001.42 and 1003.57, F.S. Through these monitoring activities, the Bureau examines and evaluates procedures, records, and 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 the IDEA are carried out and that each educational program for children with disabilities administered in the state meets the educational requirements of the state (34 CFR Section 300.600(a)(1) and (2)).

During the week of March 28, 2005 the Florida Department of Education, Bureau of Exceptional Education and Student Services, conducted an on-site review of the ESE programs in Hillsborough County Public Schools. Edward McDowell, Exceptional Student Education Director, served as the coordinator and point of contact for the district during the monitoring visit. In its continuing effort to focus the monitoring process on student educational outcomes, the Bureau 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 percentage of students with disabilities participating in statewide assessments. Hillsborough County was selected for monitoring on the basis of the percent of students with disabilities participating in Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test (FCAT). The results of the monitoring process are reported under categories or related areas that are considered to impact or contribute to the key data indicator. In addition, information related to the following are addressed: services provided to ESE students in Department of Juvenile Justice (DJJ) facilities and charter schools; counseling as a related service, including psychological counseling; speech and language services as related services; transition services; services for gifted students; review of student records, and, review of district forms.

Summary of Findings

Decision-making

Decisions regarding participation of some students in statewide assessment are based on the perceived anxiety level or projected performance level of the student rather than on the criteria in Rule 6A-1.0943, Florida Administrative Code (FAC). For some students in kindergarten through second grade decisions regarding district-side assessments are based on behavioral concerns rather than cognitive ability. Although there is no state criteria for exemption from district-wide testing it may be to the students' benefit to take the general district-wide assessments in order to be exposed to testing situations. The district is required to develop and implement a system of staff training and district self-monitoring to ensure that the criteria for exclusion from the FCAT is followed.

Access to the General Curriculum

Individual educational plan (IEP) teams do not always consider the supports and services needed to maintain a student in the general education setting prior to placement in an ESE class. Many students at Grady Elementary are removed from the general education environment for "special area" classes due to scheduling issues, not because the IEP team has determined that placement in the general education setting for these classes can not be successful, even with supplemental supports and services. Students at Middleton High School who are deaf or hard of hearing are not provided access to elective courses other than art. The district must incorporate decision-making and placement decisions into the district's existing IEP training to ensure that placement decisions result in students with disabilities only being removed from the general education setting when education in regular classes with the use of supplementary aids and services cannot be achieved satisfactorily. District and/or school staff are required to review the staffing plan and course options at targeted schools; based on the results, a plan must be developed to ensure appropriate access to the general education setting for all students with disabilities, including elective periods. Students throughout the county are grouped for reading, math, social studies and science using norm referenced tests (NRT) math scores from the FCAT. The district is encouraged to continue providing "Improving Outcomes for ESE Students" in-service training to both ESE and general education teachers, and to explore ways to group students other than using NRT math scores (for classes other than math).

Student Preparation

There were no findings of noncompliance in this area. A concern was noted that some students at East Bay High School who are pursuing a special diploma expressed a desire to pursue a standard diploma, but reported that they do not feel prepared to take the math portion of the FCAT. The district is encouraged to ensure that students are involved in all diploma option decisions, and that students who participate in the general statewide assessment (FCAT) are provided appropriate instruction in the standards assessed.

Parental Involvement

There were no findings of noncompliance in this area. A concern was noted that consideration of the concerns of the parents for enhancing their child's education was not always evident in the IEP, particularly when the parents did not attend the meeting. The district is encouraged to

include in the notice of conference a way for the parents to provide input into the IEP process if they are unable to attend the meeting.

Stakeholder Opinions Related to the Key Data Indicator

When asked about possible factors that might impact the rate at which students with disabilities participate in the FCAT, stakeholders reported a relatively high proportion of students with significant disabilities whose parents have requested assignment to McDill Air Force Base in order to access the services offered by the district, the high number of DJJ facilities in the district (13), data entry errors, a high number of struggling students eligible for free and/or reduced lunch (i.e., low socio-economic status (SES) students), and a high number of ESOL (English Speakers of Other Languages) students.

Services to Exceptional Education Students in Department of Juvenile Justice Facilities

IEPs are not always reviewed and revised to ensure that they accurately reflect the individual needs of the students and the services and placement that will be provided to meet those needs. The district is required to develop and implement a system of self-monitoring to ensure that the IEPs of students in DJJ facilities are reviewed and revised in accordance with all requirements.

Services to Exceptional Education Students in Charter Schools

There were no findings of noncompliance or concerns noted in this area.

Counseling as a Related Service

Some SED students at Foster Elementary, Middleton High, Sligh Middle, King High and Van Buren Middle School are not receiving counseling as a related service. A concern was noted that counseling for ESE students other than those eligible as SED students is available on a limited basis, and receipt may be based on the school the student attends rather than the individual needs of the student. The IEP teams for the identified SED students are required to reconvene to address the need for counseling as a related service. The district is encouraged to continue to expand the availability of counseling services for any ESE student whose IEP team deems necessary to benefit from special education services.

Speech and Language Services as Related Services

There were no findings of noncompliance or concerns noted in this area.

Transition Services

Agency participation in transition planning was not evident in the IEPs of some trainable mentally handicapped students who were in their last school year of eligibility under the IDEA. A concern was noted that the roles and responsibilities of staff are not clear to all involved with ensuring agency participation in transition planning. The district must develop and implement a plan to ensure that agencies are invited to participate in transition planning for students who may be expected to need such assistance, and that an IEP team member or designee provides oversight to ensure the students' needs are met. The plan must include a self-assessment component.

Services to Gifted Students

Gifted services are delivered primarily in the areas of math and science; services are not individualized to address the students' specific areas of need beyond the general curriculum. There was a systemic finding that educational plans (EPs) did not include documentation of district or state wide testing and did not address students' needs beyond the general curriculum. The district must expand gifted services to address students' individual needs beyond math and science. The district is encouraged to revise its EP forms to directly request information on district- or state-wide testing and the needs of the student beyond the general curriculum.

Review of Student Records

Findings of noncompliance included three findings requiring the adjustment of federal funding; eight systemic findings of noncompliance on IEPs for students with disabilities; two systemic findings of noncompliance on EPs for gifted students; and, inaccurate matrix of services documents for five students. The district is required to reconvene the IEP teams for 36 students to address identified findings; correct the matrix funding level for the five students with disabilities; and develop training to address systemic issues in the IEPs and EPs.

Review of District Forms

Sixteen forms required changes to meet compliance standards and recommendations were made regarding five forms.

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. Compliance and procedural issues regarding the IEP and direct services to students are required to be resolved by a date, designated by the monitoring team leader, not to exceed 90 days. In addition, long-term and/or systemic issues may be required to be included in the district's continuous improvement plan (CIP). The district may be required to address an issue for an extended period of time, identifying benchmarks to reach acceptable changes. 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. Also included in this report will be a list of recommendations and technical assistance available to the district.

Hillsborough 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 Strategies	Evidence of Change and Reporting Date
Decision-Making	Decisions regarding participation of some students in statewide assessment are based on the perceived anxiety level or projected performance level of the student rather than on the criteria in Rule 6A-1.0943, FAC.	X		<p>The district is required to develop and implement a system of staff training and district self-monitoring to ensure that the criteria for exclusion from the FCAT is followed.</p> <p>Additional recommendations are included in the respective section of this report and/or under <i>General Recommendations and Technical Assistance</i>.</p>	<p>District training and self-monitoring to ensure criteria for exclusion from FCAT. District review of 15 IEPs, of students exempt from FCAT, verify 100% compliance.</p> <p>Report of self-assessment will reveal 100% compliance with the use of the State Board of Education Rule.</p> <p>May 2006 November 2006</p>

Category	Findings	ESE	All	System Improvement Strategies	Evidence of Change and Reporting Date
Access to the General Curriculum	<p>Many students at Grady Elementary are removed from the general education environment for “special area” classes due to scheduling issues, not because the IEP team has determined that placement in the general education setting for these classes cannot be successful, even with supplemental supports and services.</p> <p>Students at Middleton High School who are deaf or hard of hearing are not provided access to elective courses other than art.</p> <p>IEP teams do not always consider the supports and services needed to maintain a student in the general education setting prior to placement in an ESE class.</p>	X		<p>District and/or school staff are required to review the staffing plan and course options at Grady Elementary school and Middleton High School; based on the results, a plan will be developed to ensure appropriate access to the general education setting for all students with disabilities, including elective periods.</p> <p>Incorporate decision-making and placement decisions into the district’s existing IEP training to ensure that placement decisions result in students with disabilities only being removed from the general education setting when education in regular classes with the use of supplementary aids and services cannot be achieved satisfactorily.</p> <p>Additional recommendations are included in the respective section of this report and/or under <i>General Recommendations and Technical Assistance</i>.</p>	<p>Review of records at Grady Elementary School and Middleton High School reveal 100% of students have appropriate access to the general curriculum.</p> <p>District training held on the placement decision process.</p> <p>May 2006 November 2006</p>

Category	Findings	ESE	All	System Improvement Strategies	Evidence of Change and Reporting Date
Student Preparation	No findings of noncompliance in this area.			Recommendations are included in the respective section of this report and/or under <i>General Recommendations and Technical Assistance</i> .	
Parental Involvement	No findings of noncompliance in this area.			Recommendations are included in the respective section of this report and/or under <i>General Recommendations and Technical Assistance</i> .	
DJJ Facilities	IEPs are not always reviewed and revised to ensure that they accurately reflect the individual needs of the students and the services and placement that will be provided to meet those needs.	X		The district is required to develop and implement a system of self-monitoring to ensure that the IEPs of students in DJJ facilities are reviewed and revised in accordance with all requirements.	The district self-assessment of ten DJJ records reveals no evidence of noncompliance in the review and revisions of IEPs. May 2006 November 2006
Charter Schools	No findings of noncompliance in this area.				
Counseling	Some SED students at Foster Elementary, Middleton High, Sligh Middle, King High and Van Buren Middle School are not receiving counseling as a related service.	X		IEP teams for the identified SED students are required to reconvene to address the need for counseling as a related service. Additional recommendations are included in the respective section	Documentation of this corrective action received by the Bureau. October 2005

Category	Findings	ESE	All	System Improvement Strategies	Evidence of Change and Reporting Date
Counseling (continued)				of this report and/or under <i>General Recommendations and Technical Assistance</i> .	
Speech and Language	No findings of noncompliance in this area.				
Transition	Agency participation in transition planning was not evident in the IEPs of trainable mentally handicapped students who were in their last school year of eligibility under the IDEA.	X		<p>The district shall develop and implement a plan to ensure that agencies are invited to participate in transition planning for students who may be expected to need such assistance, and that an IEP team member or designee provides oversight to ensure the students' needs are met. The plan must include a self-assessment component that includes periodic reviews of transition IEPs for students whose age, area of eligibility, and/or severity of disability would likely warrant agency participation (at least 4 schools, at least 5 students per school).</p> <p>Additional recommendations are included in the respective section of this report and/or under <i>General Recommendations and Technical Assistance</i>.</p>	<p>District report of self-assessment reveals no findings of noncompliance regarding appropriate agency participation requirements.</p> <p>May 2006 November 2006</p>

Category	Findings	ESE	All	System Improvement Strategies	Evidence of Change and Reporting Date
Gifted	Gifted services are delivered primarily in the areas of math and science; services are not individualized to address the students' specific areas of need beyond the general curriculum.	X		The district shall develop and implement a plan to expand gifted services to ensure that students' individual needs are addressed.	Self assessment of 20 EPs from random schools show individual needs of gifted students are being addressed 100% of the time. May 2006 November 2006
Review of Student Records	36 IEP teams were required to be reconvened and five matrix documents required adjustment.	X		The district shall reconvene 36 IEPs for individual findings of noncompliance. Five matrix of services records will be corrected.	Documentation of 36 IEPs reconvened. Five corrected matrix of services documented. October 2005
Review of District Forms	Sixteen forms required correction.	X		The district will revise all forms indicated in need of correction in the letter sent to the ESE director dated March 21, 2005.	All forms corrected May 2006

Monitoring Process

Authority

The Florida Department of Education, Bureau of Exceptional Education and Student Services, in carrying out its roles of leadership, resource allocation, technical assistance, monitoring, and evaluation is required to oversee the performance of district school boards in the enforcement of all laws and rules (Sections 1001.03(8) and 1008.32, Florida Statutes (F.S.)). In fulfilling this requirement, the Bureau conducts monitoring activities of the exceptional student education (ESE) programs provided by district school boards in accordance with Sections 1001.42 and 1003.57, F.S. Through these monitoring activities, the Bureau examines and evaluates procedures, records, and 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 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 the IDEA are carried out and that each educational program for children with disabilities administered in the state meets the educational requirements of the state (34 CFR §300.600(a)(1) and (2)).

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

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 identified as significant for educational outcomes for students. Through this process, the Bureau uses data to inform the monitoring process, thereby implementing a strategic approach to intervention and commitment of resources that will improve student outcomes. A detailed description of the Bureau's monitoring processes is provided in *Focused Monitoring, Continuous Improvement Monitoring, Verification Monitoring: Work Papers and Source Book for Exceptional Student Education Programs (2005)*. The protocols used by Bureau staff when conducting procedural compliance reviews are available in *Compliance Manual: Work Papers and Source Book for Exceptional Student Education Programs (2005)*. These documents will be made available on the Bureau's website at www.firn.edu/doe/commhome/mon-home.htm.

Key Data Indicators

Four key data indicators were utilized during the 2005 school year and their sources of data are as follows:

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

District Selection

In making the decision to include Hillsborough County in this year's focused monitoring visits, the data reviewed was related to the FCAT participation from Survey 3 and the assessment files of the 2003-04 school year. The participation rate was calculated in a manner consistent with the data reported in the local education agency (LEA) profile. The discrepancy between the district's participation rate and the previously set state goal of 85% participation was determined for each grade level and subject area (4, 5, 8, and 10). The sum of these discrepancies for Hillsborough County approached the highest rate for all districts in the state for the 2003-04 school year. Participation rates for the district ranged from a low of 61% in reading and 60% in math in the 9th grade to a high of 83% in reading and math in the 3rd grade. The district's current 2005 LEA profile and the listing of districts rank ordered on data related to the key data indicator, which was used for district selection, are included as appendix A. The most current LEA profiles for all Florida school districts are available on the web at <http://www.firn.edu/doe/commhome/datapage.htm>.

Sources of Information

On-Site Monitoring Activities

The Bureau conducted the on-site focused monitoring visit from March 28 - April 1, 2005. Six Bureau staff members, and nine peer monitors conducted site-visits to the following 15 schools and one Department of Juvenile Justice (DJJ) facility:

- Egypt Lake Elementary School
- East Bay High School
- Foster Elementary School
- Grady Elementary School
- Greco Middle School
- King High School
- Middleton Middle School
- Monroe Middle School
- Roosevelt Elementary School
- Shaw Elementary School
- Sligh Middle School
- Tampa Bay Charter School

- Thomas Center
- Van Buren Middle School
- Waters Career Center
- Youth Environmental Services (DJJ)

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

Interviews

A total of 161 interviews, including 11 district-level staff, 55 school-level administrators or other support staff (e.g., guidance counselors), 58 ESE teachers or other service providers, and 37 general education teachers were conducted.

Focus Group Interviews

In conjunction with the 2005 Hillsborough County focused monitoring visit, two focus groups for students with disabilities were conducted. Ten students participated in the focus group for students pursuing a standard diploma and eight students participated in the focus group for students pursuing a special diploma.

Student Case Studies

The selection of students for case studies at each school site is based on criteria that have been identified as characteristic of students who may have the cognitive ability to participate in statewide assessments but who have not participated in the FCAT. As part of this process, the student's records are reviewed, teachers are interviewed regarding the implementation of the student's IEP, and the student's classroom may be observed. Fifty-three in-depth case studies were conducted in Hillsborough County.

Classroom Visits

Classroom visits are conducted in conjunction with individual student case studies as well as during general observations of classrooms that include exceptional students. In addition to implementation of a student's IEP, curriculum and instruction, classroom management and discipline, and classroom design and resources are observed during general classroom visits. Teachers of the classes visited are interviewed regarding practices related to students with disabilities. A total of 76 classrooms (39 ESE and 37 general education) were visited during the focused monitoring visit to Hillsborough County.

Off-Site Monitoring Activities

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

Parent Surveys

The parent survey was sent to parents of the 32,637 students with disabilities for whom complete addresses were provided by the district. A total of 3,267 parents (PK, n = 302; K-5, n = 1,615; 6-8, n = 729; 9 – 12, n = 621) representing 10% of the sample, returned the survey. Surveys were returned as undeliverable from 2,140 families, representing 7% of the sample. Parents represented the following students with disabilities: autistic, deaf or hard of hearing, developmentally delayed, dual-sensory impaired, educable mentally handicapped, emotionally handicapped, hospital/homebound, language impaired, orthopedically impaired, other health impaired, profoundly mentally handicapped, severely emotionally disturbed, specific learning disabled, speech impaired, trainable mentally handicapped, traumatic brain injury, and visually impaired.

Surveys were sent to parents of the 12,719 students identified as gifted for whom complete addresses were provided by the district. A total of 3,163 parents (KG-5, n = 606; 6-8, n = 945; 9 - 12, n = 612), representing 25% of the sample, returned the survey. Surveys were returned as undeliverable from 193 families, representing 2% 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 and other service providers, both general education and ESE, were provided an opportunity to respond. A total of 5,279 teachers, representing approximately 44% of ESE and general education teachers in the district, returned the survey. Data are from 181 (77%) of the district's 236 schools.

Student Surveys

A sufficient number of surveys were provided to allow all students with disabilities, grades 9-12, to respond. Instructions for administration of the survey by classroom teachers, including a written script, were provided for each class or group of students. Since participation in this survey is not appropriate for some students whose disabilities might impair their understanding of the survey, professional judgment is used to determine appropriate participants. Surveys from 1,575 students, representing approximately 13% of students with disabilities in grades 9-12 in the district, were returned. Data are from 29 (49%) of the district's 59 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. In Hillsborough County, 45 IEPs for students with disabilities and ten educational plans (EPs) for gifted students were reviewed for compliance. Eighteen of the IEPs represented transition IEPs. In addition, 15 matrix of services documents were reviewed during the on-site visit. Approximately, an additional 370 records were reviewed on-site in conjunction with student case studies and to collect information related to additional compliance areas designated by the Bureau.

Bureau staff review selected district forms and notices 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 sent to the district ESE director. Data for the report are compiled from sources that have been previously discussed in this document. 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, 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 CIP. The plan must provide for findings to be addressed in a timely manner, with compliance and procedural issues regarding IEPs, EPs, and direct services to individual students to be resolved by a date designated by the Bureau, not to exceed 90 days. Other issues may be required to be resolved over a period of time not to exceed one year. All system improvement plans will be expected to extend for a period of at least two years, in order to provide an assurance of the ongoing effectiveness of the district's strategies for improvement. 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, it is forwarded to the district and the plan is posted on the website noted above. Corrective actions are monitored through the submission of semiannual status reports of progress to be submitted to the Bureau on May 30th and November 30th of each year for the duration of the system improvement plan.

Reporting of Information

The data generated through the surveys, focus group interviews, individual interviews, case studies, and classroom visits are summarized in this report. In addition, the results from the review of student records and district forms are presented in the 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. For the participation of students with disabilities in statewide assessment these include the following:

- decision-making
- access to the general curriculum
- student preparation
- parental involvement
- stakeholder opinion related to the indicator

In accordance with the Department's agreement with the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP), additional areas addressed during all monitoring visits include the following:

- the provision of counseling as a related service
- the communication needs of students with disabilities not eligible for programs for students who are speech or language impaired
- school to post-school transition

In addition, information related to services provided to ESE students in DJJ facilities and charter schools, services for gifted students, the results of reviews of student records, and the results of forms reviews also are reported.

To the extent possible, this report focuses on systemic issues rather than on isolated instances of noncompliance or need for improvement. In accordance with established Bureau monitoring procedures, a finding of a systemic violation will be made if evidence of such a violation is found in 25% or more of the pertinent data sources. In addition to noncompliance and/or concerns regarding specific requirements, promising practices reported by district and school staff or observed by Bureau and peer monitors are reported. Findings are presented in a preliminary report, and the district has the opportunity to clarify items of concern. In a collaborative effort between the district and Bureau staff, system improvement areas are identified. Findings are addressed through the development of strategies for improvement, and evidence of change will be identified as a joint effort between the district and the Bureau. Strategies that are identified as long-term approaches toward improving the district's issue related to the key data indicator are also addressed through the district's continuous improvement plan (CIP).

Results

General Information

This category provides demographic and background information specific to the district as well as information regarding the identification of students with disabilities who have been excluded

from taking the general statewide assessment (FCAT). Based on the 2005 LEA profile, Hillsborough County School District has a total school population (PK-12) of 188,610 students with 15% of students being identified as students with disabilities (including 2% identified as eligible for the program for speech impaired only), and 4% identified as gifted. Hillsborough County is considered a “very large” district and is one of seven districts in this enrollment group. Hillsborough County School District is comprised of 129 elementary schools, 40 middle schools, 21 high schools, three alternative schools, six ESE center schools, 21 charter schools and ten DJJ facilities.

The percentage of students with disabilities in the Hillsborough School District who participated in the FCAT or an alternate assessment, by grade level and subject, for the 2002-03 and 2003-04 school years is provided in the table below.

Grade/Subject	2002-03		2003-04	
	FCAT	AA	FCAT	AA
3 rd /math	85%	12%	83%	12%
3 rd /reading	84%	12%	83%	12%
4 th /math	84%	12%	80%	15%
4 th /reading	85%	12%	79%	15%
5 th /math	85%	12%	82%	14%
5 th /reading	84%	12%	81%	14%
8 th /math	70%	12%	72%	20%
8 th /reading	70%	21%	72%	20%
9 th /math	57%	24%	60%	26%
9 th /reading	57%	24%	61%	26%
10 th /math	60%	22%	63%	25%
10 th /reading	61%	22%	65%	25%

Based on the established criteria for exemption from the FCAT under State Board of Education rule, students eligible for the specific learning disability (SLD), emotionally handicapped/ severely emotionally disturbed (EH/SED), or language impaired (LI) programs, among others, would not be expected to be alternately assessed. The number of students in each of these programs, the number alternately assessment, and the resulting alternate assessment rates for the 2003-04 school year for students with these programs reported as their primary exceptionality are as follows:

Exceptionality	Number of Students	Number Alternately Assessed	Percentage Alternately Assessed
Emotionally Handicapped	1,919	186	10%
Specific Learning Disability	9,395	551	6%
Language Impaired	1,606	68	4%

Table includes students in grades 3-10.

Decision-making

This category refers to the process by which the decision is made to exempt a student from the FCAT and, for students alternately assessed, the reason the general assessment is not appropriate, and the process through which an appropriate alternate assessment is selected for the student.

Requirements

Section 300.347(a)(5)(ii) of the Code of Federal Regulations requires that an IEP must include "...if the IEP team determines that a child will not participated in a particular state or district-wide assessment of student achievement (or part of an assessment), a statement of (A) Why that assessment is not appropriate for the child; and (B) How the child will be assessed."

State Board Rule 6A-1.0943(1)(a), Florida Administrative Code (FAC), *Statewide Assessment for Students with Disabilities*, states "... Students may be excluded from statewide or district assessment programs if the following criteria are met: 1. The student's demonstrated cognitive ability prevents the student from completing required coursework and achieving the Sunshine State Standards...even with appropriate and allowable course modifications, and 2. The student requires extensive direct instruction to accomplish the application and transfer of skills and competencies needed for domestic, community living, leisure, and vocational activities."

Rule 6A-1.0943(1)(b), FAC, also requires that "Students who are excluded from statewide or district assessment will be assessed through an alternate assessment procedure identified by the IEP team. The alternate assessment procedure shall be recorded on the student's IEP."

Data

Most staff report they have had on-going training provided by their district representative on the criteria for exemption from student, including the use of the alternate assessment checklist developed by the DOE for use as a tool in the decision-making process. Forty-nine of 89 (55%) staff interviewed reported using the five question checklist to make the decision as to whether a particular student would take FCAT or be assessed using an alternate assessment. The checklist was attached to almost all of the IEPs reviewed on-site. Some IEP team participants reported that the teams would discuss the student's ability to take the test, their diploma option, past grades, and behavioral challenges, if any, and then determine if the student "should take the FCAT." The checklist would then be filled out to reflect the decision that had been made.

Although students do not take the FCAT until third grade, other district-wide assessments are administered in the lower grades. The IEPs of some elementary schools students in kindergarten through second grade indicated that they being alternately assessed on district-wide assessments due to behavioral concerns.

All students in the standard diploma focus group at East Bay High reported they were given multiple opportunities to pass the FCAT and were encouraged to work towards a standard diploma. Of the ten students in this focus group, four had passed both portions of the FCAT and one had passed only the math section. In the special diploma focus group three of eight students reported having taken the FCAT. The same number indicated that they had attended their IEP meeting in the past year. Among the group there was confusion regarding whether the student

could attend the IEP team meeting if their parent did not, with some students believing this was not allowed.

Findings

- Findings of Noncompliance
 - Decisions regarding participation of some students in statewide assessment are based on the perceived anxiety level or projected performance level of the student rather than on the criteria in Rule 6A-1.0943, FAC.
- Areas of Concern
 - For some students in kindergarten through second grade decisions regarding district-wide assessments are based on behavioral concerns rather than cognitive ability. Although there is no state criteria for exemption from district-wide testing below third grade it may be to the students' benefit to take the general district-wide assessments in order to be exposed to testing situations.
- Corrective Actions
 - The district is required to develop and implement a system of staff training and district self-monitoring to ensure that the criteria for exclusion from the FCAT is followed.
- Recommended Actions
 - Provide technical assistance and/or guidance to teachers in grades K-2 on decisions regarding district-wide assessment.
- Promising Practices
 - Staff across the district reported a strong commitment on the part of school- and district-level staff to include students with disabilities in statewide assessment.

Access to the General Curriculum

This category refers to the manner in which students with disabilities are provided access to the general curriculum as well as the resources provided to promote this access. Access refers to the types of settings and course content available to students with disabilities and may be a factor affecting the decision-making process regarding participation in statewide assessment.

Requirements

In accordance with 34 CFR §300.26(b)(3), "...specially-designed instruction means adapting, as appropriate to the needs of an eligible child, the content, methodology, or delivery of instruction (i) To address the unique needs of the child that result from the child's disability; and (ii) to ensure access of the child to the general curriculum, so that he or she can meet the educational standards within the jurisdiction of the public agency that apply to all children."

"General curriculum" is defined in *Appendix A to Part 300—Notice of Interpretation* to Title 34 (p. 12470) as the curriculum that is used with nondisabled children. In Florida, the curriculum used with nondisabled children is the general SSS.

In developing an IEP for a student with a disability, 34 CFR 300.347(a) states that the IEP must include, "... a statement of the child's present levels of educational performance, including—(i) how the child's disability affects the child's involvement and progress in the general curriculum..." The IEP also must include "...a statement of measurable annual goals, including benchmarks or short-term objectives, related to—(i) meeting the child's needs that result from the child's disability to enable the child to be involved in and progress in the general curriculum..."

Regarding instructional and testing accommodations, 34 CFR 300.347 (a) requires that the IEP include "(3)...a statement of the special education and related services and supplementary aids and services to be provided to the child, or on behalf of the child, and a statement of the program modifications or supports for school personnel that will be provided for the child— (i) to advance appropriately toward attaining the annual goals; (ii) To be involved and progress in the general curriculum in accordance with paragraph (a)(1) of this section and to participate in extracurricular and other nonacademic activities; and (iii) to be educated and participate with other children with disabilities and nondisabled children in the activities described in this section;... and (5)(i) a statement of any individual modifications in the administration of State or district-wide assessments of student achievement that are needed in order for the child to participate in the assessment..."

Section 1008.22(3)(c)8., F.S., requires that district school boards provide instruction to prepare students to demonstrate proficiency in the skills and competencies necessary for successful grade-to-grade progression and high school graduation.

Section 1008.22(3)(c)6, F.S., requires that the district notify the parent of a student who is excluded from the general state-wide assessment of the implications of such nonparticipation. In addition, if accommodations or modifications are made to the student's instruction that would not be allowable on the state-wide assessment tests, the district must notify the parent of the implications of such accommodations or modifications. The parent must acknowledge in writing that he/she understands the implications of such accommodations or modifications, and provide signed consent for the student to receive them.

When determining the most appropriate setting or placement for a student to be provided access to the general curriculum, 34 CFR §300.550 requires that "Each public agency shall ensure (1) that to the maximum extent appropriate, children with disabilities, including children in public or private institutions or other care facilities, are educated with children who are nondisabled; and (2) That special classes, separate schooling or other removal of children with disabilities from the regular educational environment occurs only if 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."

Data

Staff at all schools visited reported that students generally are served in ESE classes if they are one year or more below grade level, and that parental choice is heavily weighted in the placement decision. Few interview respondents indicated that IEP teams considered the supports that would be needed to maintain a student in the general education setting prior to placing the

student in an ESE class. For some case study students there was evidence of removal from the general education setting for students performing less than one year behind grade level expectations, with no evidence of significantly disruptive behaviors.

With the exception of Grady Elementary School, in the schools visited students served at the separate class level go to “special area” classes or electives with their nondisabled peers. At Grady Elementary this was reportedly not possible, due to scheduling issues. At Middleton High School it was reported that the only elective class available to the deaf/hard of hearing students was art. These students take art throughout high school; teachers at the school expressed a desire to expand the options for these students.

Teachers at Roosevelt Elementary, Foster Elementary, Shaw Elementary, Sligh Middle, Greco Middle and East Bay High who teach students in ESE classes reported that they teach the general SSS to the extent possible; not all were able to describe significant differences between instruction in an ESE class and instruction in a general education class, with supports. Of the teachers who responded to the survey, 91% reported that their school ensures that the general education curriculum is taught in ESE classes to the maximum extent possible.

It was widely reported throughout the district that students with disabilities as well as their nondisabled peers are grouped using the norm-referenced test (NRT) scores from the math section of the FCAT; these scores were used to group students in classes other than math class. Teachers expressed concern that students who are relatively weak in math but strong in other areas, or the reverse, were not being grouped in the most effective ways.

Regarding the amount of time spent with general education students, 92% of teachers reported that their school places students with disabilities into general education classes whenever possible, 83% of parents reported being satisfied with the amount of time their child spends in general education classes, and 75% of students reported that their time with general education peers is sufficient.

Of the students who responded to the survey, 83% reported getting the help they need to do well in school, 75% reported that general education teachers encourage students to ask for help if they need it, 66% reported that general education teachers give students extra help, 63% reported having a say in the decision about what classes they would take, and 50% reported receiving accommodations for taking the FCAT.

Of the teachers who responded to the survey, 96% reported providing students with disabilities with appropriate accommodations, 93% reported that students with disabilities feel comfortable when taking classes with general education students, and 88% reported that support facilitation and/or consultation by ESE teachers are available to support students with disabilities in general education classes.

District staff indicated that they are concentrating on placing students in less restrictive settings and are reducing the use of pull-out or separate class placement models. Planning for the 2005-06 school year includes preparing teachers for more effective instruction and inclusive settings through the district’s “Improving Outcomes for ESE Students” training presentation.

Findings

- Findings of Noncompliance
 - Many students at Grady Elementary are removed from the general education environment for “special area” classes due to scheduling issues, not because the IEP team has determined that placement in the general education setting for these classes can not be successful, even with supplemental supports and services.
 - Students at Middleton High School who are deaf or hard of hearing are not provided access to elective courses other than art.
 - IEP teams do not always consider the supports and services needed to maintain a student in the general education setting prior to placement in an ESE class.

- Areas of Concern
 - Students throughout the county are grouped for reading, math, social studies and science using NRT math scores from the FCAT.

- Corrective Actions
 - District and/or school staff are required to review the staffing plan and course options at Grady Elementary school and Middleton High School; based on the results, a plan will be developed to ensure appropriate access to the general education setting for all students with disabilities, including elective periods.
 - Incorporate decision-making and placement decisions into the district’s existing IEP training to ensure that placement decisions result in students with disabilities only being removed from the general education setting when education in regular classes with the use of supplementary aids and services cannot be achieved satisfactorily.

- Recommended Actions
 - Continue to provide “Improving Outcomes for ESE Students” in-service training to both ESE and general education teachers.
 - Explore ways to group students other than using NRT math scores (for classes other than math).

- Promising Practices
 - Staff report effective use of FUSE (Florida Uniting Students in Education) program throughout Hillsborough County.
 - Participating staff report effective use of support facilitation and co-teaching at Van Buren Middle School, Monroe Middle School, and Middleton High School.
 - District staff report implementation of “Improving Outcomes for ESE Students” training.

Student Preparation

This category refers to the activities and materials available to assist students in preparing for meaningful participation in statewide assessments, whether the general statewide assessment (FCAT) or an alternate assessment. The lack of student preparation could negatively impact the rate of participation in the FCAT, as well as performance, in that IEP team decisions may be influenced by perceptions of how well students have been prepared or their expected level of performance.

Requirements

Section 1008.22(3)(c)8., F.S., requires that district school boards provide instruction to prepare students to demonstrate proficiency in the skills and competencies necessary for successful grade-to-grade progression and high school graduation.

Data

The majority of teachers interviewed indicated that ESE students in general education classes receive the same FCAT preparation as nondisabled students. ESE teachers reported using general education materials on grade level with their students who spend a majority of the day in their classes. Of the teachers who responded to the surveys, 96% reported that their school provides students with appropriate testing accommodations, 94% indicated that ESE teachers were provided with FCAT preparation materials and that their school aligns the curriculum for students with the standards that are tested on the FCAT, and 93% reported that extra help is provided to students who need to retake the FCAT.

Of the students who responded to the survey, 68% reported that teachers help prepare them for the FCAT; 67% of the students reported that they work on the skills needed to pass the FCAT in their reading/language arts class, and 62% reported that in their math class they work on the kinds of problems that are on the FCAT. Seventy-five percent of parents who responded to the survey reported being satisfied with their child's academic progress. FCAT Explorer, River-Deep Math program, Roadmap to FCAT, Extended Learning Program, test-taking skills, and writing preparation were reported to be used for FCAT preparation with all students. At the Dorothy Thomas Center students participated in "FCAT Fridays," during which students spent half days with whichever teacher they would be taking the FCAT with. Students use these half days to work with FCAT preparation materials.

The students who participated in the standard diploma focus group felt they were being well prepared for passing the FCAT. They reported having the opportunity to participate in after school tutoring, intensive reading and math classes and ample opportunity to work in the Plato Lab. Two students in the special diploma focus group stated that they felt the reading portion of the FCAT was "easy," and that they wanted an opportunity to pursue a standard diploma. Several students in this group stated they felt prepared for the reading portion of the FCAT but they had not been exposed to many of the skills required for the math portion.

Teachers at the high schools, who teach students who take an alternate assessment, report being well trained in using several different assessments. Although the Brigance was the main assessment used, some teachers reported using Performance Assessment for Students with Disabilities (PASS-D), Life Centered Career Education (LCCE), and the Kaufman Test of Educational Achievement (KTEA-Brief). Most teachers reported using the results of these tests to plan for future instruction and assist in writing appropriate IEP goals and objectives for individual students.

Findings

- Findings of Noncompliance
 - None noted.

- Areas of Concern
 - Some students at East Bay High School who are pursuing a special diploma expressed a desire to pursue a standard diploma, but reported that they do not feel prepared to take the math portion of the FCAT.
- Corrective Actions
 - None noted.
- Recommended Actions
 - Ensure that students are involved in all diploma option decisions, and that students who participate in the general statewide assessment (FCAT) are provided appropriate instruction in the standards assessed.
- Promising Practices
 - Teachers and students at all schools reported ample opportunities for students with disabilities to participate in FCAT preparation activities.
 - Teachers working with students on alternate assessment report using those assessments to plan for instruction and to develop individual IEP goals and objectives.

Parental Involvement

This category refers to parental involvement in the decision-making process regarding participation in statewide assessment as well as the determination of appropriate instructional and testing accommodations.

Requirements

When developing an IEP for a student with a disability, 34 CFR 300.345(a) requires that “Each public agency shall take steps to ensure that one or both of the parents...are present at each IEP meeting or are afforded the opportunity to participate...” In addition, 34 CFR 300.346(a)(1) requires that “... the IEP team shall consider— (i) the strengths of the child and the concerns of the parents for enhancing the education of their child...”

Section 1008.22(3)(c)(6), F.S., *Student Assessment Program for Public Schools*, states that “Participation in the testing program is mandatory for all students attending public school, including students served in [DJJ facilities].... If a student does not participate in the statewide assessment, the district must notify the student’s parent and provide the parent with information regarding the implications of such nonparticipation. If modifications are made in the student’s instruction to provide accommodations that would not be permitted on the statewide assessment test, the district must notify the student’s parent of the implications of such instructional modifications. A parent must provide signed consent for a student to receive instructional modifications that would not be permitted on the statewide assessments and must acknowledge in writing that he or she understands the implications of such accommodations.”

Data

Of the 45 IEPs selected at random for a desk review all 45 (100%) had documentation that the parents had been invited and 22 (49%) of the parents attended the IEP meetings. IEPs that were developed with the parent in attendance were most likely to explicitly address the concerns of the parent.

Of the parents who responded to the survey, 93% reported meeting with their child's teacher to discuss the child's needs and progress, 92% reported having participated in IEP team meetings, 91% report being comfortable talking about their child with school staff, 85% reported that their input is considered in the development of their child's IEP, and 71% reported talking about the FCAT and/or FCAT accommodations at the IEP meeting.

All staff interviewed indicated that parents were encouraged to participate in their student's education through participation in the IEP process. Some teachers and administrators indicated that parent's preference played a key role in whether their child would be granted an exemption from taking the FCAT and take an alternate assessment. The district is encouraged to continue to provide guidance on how to include parents in the IEP process and the benefits of a regular diploma while educating parents about the state board rules governing the exemption criteria.

Findings

- Findings of Noncompliance
 - None noted.

- Areas of Concern
 - Through record reviews it is evident that the concerns of the parents for enhancing their child's education are not always considered during the development of the IEP.

- Corrective Actions
 - None required.

- Recommendations
 - Include in the notice of conference a way for the parents to provide input into the IEP process if they are unable to attend the meeting.
 - Continue to inform parents about the state board rule exemption criteria.

- Promising Practices
 - IEPs reviewed consistently included documentation of efforts to facilitate parental participation.

Stakeholder Opinions Related to the Key Data Indicator

This section provides information related to the opinions of district staff as to why they believe the number of ESE students participating in statewide assessments is low. When asked their opinion on the likely contributors to the relatively low FCAT participation rate for students with disabilities in Hillsborough County, most respondents reported factors that would not be expected to affect participation rate if the appropriate exemption criteria were applied, but that might have an effect if anticipated student performance were the criteria.

The following factors were cited:

- relatively high proportion of students with significant disabilities whose parents have requested assignment to McDill Air Force Base in order to access the services offered by the district
- high number of DJJ facilities in the district (13)
- data entry errors
- high number of struggling students eligible for free and/or reduced lunch (i.e., low socioeconomic status (SES) students)
- high number of ESOL (English Speakers of Other Languages) students

Services to ESE Students in DJJ Facilities

This section provides information related to the services provided to exceptional education students in DJJ facilities.

Requirements

Rule 6A-6.05281(1)(c), FAC, requires that all ESE students placed in a DJJ program be provided a free appropriate public education (FAPE) consistent with state board rules pertaining to special programs for exceptional students.

Data

Bureau staff conducted a site-visit to Youth Environmental Services (YES), which is a level 6 facility. This facility served 10 students with disabilities and no gifted students at the time of the visit. A full range of diploma options is available to students with disabilities, including standard diploma, special diploma, General Educational Development diploma (GED), and vocational certification. The IEP team, including the student, parents, the ESE teacher, and district staff meet together to review the student's previous IEP and to see if additional testing is necessary for the student. Staff reported that they review the records when students arrive at the facility, and if the goals and objectives are appropriate a new IEP is not developed. This has been noted as a problem because the service delivery model on the IEP may differ from the services at the DJJ, which leads the IEP to be incorrect. It was reported that FCAT participation decisions have been made by the student's former IEP team, prior to the student's arrival at the facility, and that the facility will generally honor that decision.

It was reported that the curriculum for students with disabilities is both meaningful and appropriate for students. There are no separate ESE classes at YES; all students are taught in the same classes and exposed to the general education curriculum. However, all general education teachers work closely with the ESE teacher, so that they are knowledgeable on the accommodations that students receive. The Executive Director reported there are many vocational experiences available to all students. Students can receive instruction in small engine repair, horticulture, and minor car repair, such as oil changes, tire repairs and changing air filters. ESE students were observed in some of these programs during the visit.

The ESE teacher reported that he provides support facilitation for ESE students who need extra support. The ESE teacher also administers the FCAT to students with disabilities and provides any required accommodations (e.g., extended time; separate setting).

Findings

- Findings of Noncompliance
 - IEPs are not always reviewed and revised to ensure that they accurately reflect the individual needs of the students and the services and placement that will be provided to meet those needs.

- Areas of Concern
 - None noted.

- Corrective Actions
 - The district is required to develop and implement a system of self-monitoring to ensure that the IEPs of students in DJJ facilities are reviewed and revised in accordance with all requirements.

- Promising Practices
 - Extensive training provided to all staff at the facility.
 - Comprehensive and individualized services provided to students, including counseling.

Services to ESE Students in Charter Schools

This section provides information related to the services provided to ESE students in charter schools.

Requirements

In accordance with 34 CFR 300.312, “(a) Children with disabilities who attend charter schools and their parents retain all rights under this part.”

Section 300.241, Title 34, CFR, requires that school districts “(a) Serve children with disabilities attending those schools [charter schools] in the same manner as it serves children with disabilities in its other schools; and (b) Provide funds under Part B of the Act to those schools in the same manner as it provides those funds to its other schools.”

Data

Bureau staff conducted a site-visit to the Tampa Bay Academy Charter School. This charter school specializes in services for severely emotionally disturbed students (SED) and profoundly deaf students (D/HH). The facility originally was a private school for SED and D/HH students that included both residential and day services. The day program is now operated as a charter school. At the time of our visit the school included 24 ESE teachers and/or speech/language pathologists and 175 students with disabilities (including 67 day students).

There are two staffing specialists employed by the school, and they work closely with the district’s staffing specialist. The latter serves as the LEA representative at IEP team meetings. School staff reported receiving substantial support from the district, and described relations between the two as very good. The school was originally granted a three-year charter, but now is working under a ten-year agreement. In part because of the very unique needs of the students at

this school, all staff, including administrators, teachers, and the various support positions, are required to participate in extensive regularly scheduled in-service training activities.

There is a comprehensive behavioral support system in place at the school, and all classes operate under a point system. Prior to a student being enrolled, parents must sign an agreement indicating that they will participate in the behavioral program, including participating in daily written communication with school staff through the point sheets and providing transportation for any child who is assigned to after-school detention. Paraprofessionals are trained as group advisors, and they work closely with the classroom teachers. Three counselors are available to work with the 67 day students, with additional counselors available through the therapeutic residential program and the group home. All students participate daily in a Positive Peer Culture course.

It was reported that the program is designed to enable students to return to a traditional school campus as soon as possible, but that many students and their families feel secure at the school and resist leaving. In order to foster a smooth transition back into a student's home zone school, beginning at least six months prior to the anticipated transition the faculty at Tampa Bay works closely with the student's family and the receiving school.

Findings

- Findings of Noncompliance
 - None noted.

- Areas of Concern
 - None noted.

- Corrective Actions
 - None required.

- Promising Practices
 - Extensive training provided to all staff at the facility.
 - Comprehensive and individualized services provided to students, including counseling.

Counseling as a Related Service

This section provides information related to the provision of counseling as a related service, including psychological counseling, to ESE students who need it in order to receive FAPE.

Requirements

Section 1003.01(3)(a), F.S., defines "exceptional student" as any student who has been determined eligible for a special program in accordance with the rules of the State Board of Education. ESE students include gifted students as well as students with disabilities. "Special education services" are defined as specially designed instruction and such related services as are necessary for an exceptional student to benefit from education. (S. 1003.01(3)(b), F.S.)

In accordance with 34 CFR 300.346(2)(i) the IEP team must “In the case of a child whose behavior impedes his or her learning or that of others, consider, if appropriate, strategies, including positive behavioral interventions, strategies, and supports to address that behavior.”

Section 300.24, Title 34, CFR, defines related services as “...developmental, corrective, and other supportive services as are required to assist a child with a disability to benefit from special education, and includes...psychological services,...[and] counseling services...” “Counseling services” are services provided by qualified social workers, psychologists, guidance counselors, or other qualified personnel. (34 CFR 300.24(b)(2) “Psychological services” includes the planning and management of a program of psychological services, including psychological counseling for children and parents. (34 CFR 300.24(b)(9)

Data

District staff report that they have contracts to provide counseling services to students through the Mental Health Corporation, the Children’s Board, Children’s Services of Hillsborough, University of South Florida (USF) College of Medicine, and the USF Clinical Psychology Department. The Family and School Support (FASS) program provides counseling for students who can not afford counseling provided by other agencies. Most staff throughout the district reported that student’s who need educationally relevant counseling to benefit from special education services would have it addressed on their IEPs. However, through record reviews and case studies it was noted that not all SED students at Van Buren Middle School (6), Sligh Middle School (2), King High School (2), Foster Elementary (1), and Middleton High School (1), had counseling on their IEP or were being provided counseling as a related service.

Many EH students throughout the district are served in more restrictive settings through the SED program. It was reported by district staff that if an EH student is served at a school where there is an SED program, they are more likely to be receiving counseling. It also was reported that during the 2005-06 school year the district hopes to increase counseling services by utilizing social workers and psychologists already in the schools. Currently counseling is being provided at over 60 school sites.

Findings

- Findings of Noncompliance
 - Some SED students at Foster Elementary, Middleton High, Sligh Middle, King High and Van Buren Middle School are not receiving counseling as a related service.
- Areas of Concern
 - Counseling for ESE students other than those eligible as SED students is available on a limited basis, and receipt may be based on the school the student attends rather than the individual needs of the student.
- Corrective Actions
 - IEP teams for the identified SED students are required to reconvene to address the need for counseling as a related service.

- Recommendations
 - Must provide counseling services for any ESE student whose IEP team deems necessary to benefit from special education services.
- Promising Practices
 - Counseling is being provided on-site at approximately 60 school locations throughout the district.
 - Wide array of community resources utilized to provide psychological counseling services to students with disabilities.

Speech and Language Services as Related Services

This section provides information related to the speech and language services provided to ESE students.

Requirements

Rule 6A-6.03411 (1)(f), FAC, requires that all ESE students be provided a free appropriate public education consistent with state board rules pertaining to special education, specially designed instruction, and related services.

Currently, in Florida speech and language therapy are available for students who meet eligibility criteria for programs for students who are speech impaired or language impaired. In addition, students eligible for the programs for autism, traumatic brain injury, developmental delay, and deaf or hard of hearing may be eligible under the speech and language programs. However, speech and language services are not included in the list of related services included under Section 1003.01, F.S.

In accordance with 34 CFR 300.24, related services are “...developmental, corrective, and other supportive services as are required to assist a child with a disability to benefit from special education, and include speech-language pathology and audiology services....” In addition, to the need for speech or language services as related services, the IEP team must “consider the communication needs of the child.” during the development of the IEP (34 CFR 300.346(2)(iv).

Data

Of the 42 records sent to the Bureau for review, 19 indicated a need for communication to be addressed; these students were receiving services either from a speech language pathologist or an ESE teacher. Of the records reviewed on-site for this element, there was evidence of a possible need in the communication domain in 30 IEPs; 28 of the records included documentation of the need being addressed.

The majority of administrators and staff indicated that students who have communication needs would have them addressed on their IEP’s and either they would receive services through a speech language pathologist (SLP) or their ESE teacher would provide them with these services.

Findings

- Findings of Noncompliance
 - None noted.

- Areas of Concern
 - None noted.
- Corrective Actions
 - None required.
- Promising Practices
 - Staff report ample opportunities for SLPs and ESE teachers to address the communication needs of students with disabilities.

Transition Services

This section provides information related to the process of planning for the school to post-school transition of students with disabilities. This includes the participation in the planning process of the student, the parents, and any outside agencies.

Requirements

In accordance with 34 CFR 300.347 (b)(1), beginning at age 14, and updated annually, IEP teams are required to provide "...a statement of the transition service needs of the student under the applicable components of the student's IEP that focuses on the student's courses of study ..." and, at the age of 16, provide "...a statement of needed transition services for the student, including, if appropriate, a statement of the interagency responsibilities or any needed linkage" (34 CFR 300.347 (b)(2)).

Data

Three of the IEPs sent to the Bureau for review prior to the visit were transition IEPs for students age 16 or older, for whom agency participation seemed warranted; appropriate agencies were invited to each of these meetings. A targeted sample of 11 transition IEPs for students identified as trainable mentally handicapped were reviewed on-site at King High School and East Bay High School. There was no evidence of district attempts to involve an agency representative in 10 (91%) of the meetings. Three of these students (27%) were 21 or 22 year old graduating seniors, and there was no indication of agency representatives being invited to participate in the most recent transition IEP meetings for these students.

District staff reported that a case manager is assigned to each student with a disability. The case manager oversees the IEP process for the student, and is responsible for inviting agency representatives and the transition specialist to transition IEP team meetings as appropriate. The parent or adult student must sign a release of information form before the transition specialist or ESE teacher shares information with an agency. If the agency representative does not attend the IEP meeting, either the transition specialist or ESE teacher is responsible for following-up with the agency. In contrast with the policies described by district staff, teachers at East Bay and King High Schools reported that agency representatives generally are not invited to participate in transition IEP team meetings. This assertion was supported by the targeted record reviews noted above. Staff at the high schools visited reported that counselors from the Division for Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) contact students' parents directly; the transition specialist is available to facilitate communication if he or she knows that the agency is unable to reach the family, but this contact was not reported to be the responsibility of the IEP team or its designee.

Through classroom observations and interviews at East Bay High School the vocational opportunities for students with disabilities were observed to be extensive and well-developed. Vocational programs are open to all students and include, but are not limited to: culinary arts, aqua-culture, agriculture, horticulture, cosmetology, auto mechanics, ROTC, and woodworking. The vocational programs at King High School also were reported to be accessible to all students.

Findings

- Findings of Noncompliance
 - Agency participation in transition planning was not evident in the IEPs of trainable mentally handicapped students who were in their last school year of eligibility under the IDEA.

- Areas of Concern
 - Roles and responsibilities are not clear to all staff involved with ensuring agency participation.

- Corrective Actions
 - The district shall develop and implement a plan to ensure that agencies are invited to participate in transition planning for students who may be expected to need such assistance, and that an IEP team member or designee provides oversight to ensure the students' needs are met. The plan must include a self-assessment component.

- Recommendations
 - Clarify roles and responsibilities for inviting and ensuring participation of agencies.

- Promising Practices
 - Extensive vocational programs at East Bay and King High Schools
 - Transition specialist assists students with disabilities with job placements at East Bay High School
 - ROTC program at East Bay High School

Services to Gifted Students

This section provides information related to the manner in which gifted students are identified, evaluated, and provided with appropriate services in the district.

Requirements

In accordance with section 1003.57, F.S., districts are required to "...provide for an appropriate program of special instruction, facilities, and services to exceptional students...." An exceptional student is a student who has been determined eligible for a special program in accordance with State Board of Education rules, and includes students who are gifted as well as students with disabilities (Section 1003.01(3)(a), F.S.).

Data

In Hillsborough County there are approximately 7,800 students identified as gifted served at approximately 175 schools. Screening procedures reportedly used throughout the district include nominations by students, teachers, and parents. All standardized test scores are reviewed and students who are Limited English Proficient (LEP) or low SES are considered for eligibility under the district's Plan B. All teachers throughout the district are encouraged to participate in staff development activities related to gifted students and this is incorporated into their evaluations. The district primarily uses the K-BIT and the Slosson for screening purposes.

Of the parents of gifted students who responded to the survey, 89% reported satisfaction with their child's academic progress, with the gifted teachers' subject area knowledge, and with the general education teachers' subject area knowledge. Regarding whether they felt their child was academically challenged at school, 86% felt the gifted classes were academically challenging and 68% felt that the general education classes were. Seventy-nine percent reported satisfaction with how quickly services were initiated following the initial request for evaluation.

In elementary schools in Hillsborough County most gifted students are served in a pull-out resource model with the primary focus on math and science. It was noted in at least one elementary school that teachers did not think they could provide gifted services in any other areas other than math and science, although at another elementary staff reported that highly gifted students are sometimes placed in gifted language arts programs. Middle school gifted students in Hillsborough County are provided services through co-teaching, and honors courses. High school students are served through consultation, honors, AP and IB programs. Survey results indicated 82% of the parents are satisfied with the gifted services their child is receiving.

Of ten EP's randomly selected and sent to the Bureau for a desk review ten (100%) did not indicate that the results of district or state wide testing had been discussed and seven (70%) did not address the students' needs beyond the general curriculum. Individual or non-systemic findings were identified for three additional elements of the EP process.

Hillsborough County has chosen disproportionate representation as its indicator for its CIP for gifted. Through data monitoring, staff development, and the provision of technical assistance, the district is working toward having the racial/ethnic distribution of students identified as gifted reflect the racial/ethnic distribution of the district population by ensuring that policies, practices, and procedures are implemented in an unbiased manner.

Findings

- Findings of Noncompliance
 - Gifted services are delivered primarily in the areas of math and science; services are not individualized to address the students' specific areas of need beyond the general curriculum.
 - Systemically, EPs did not include documentation of district or state wide testing and did not address students' needs beyond the general curriculum (see record review section).

- Areas of Concern

- None noted.
- Corrective Actions
 - Expand gifted services to address students' individual needs.
- Recommendations
 - Revise EP forms to directly request information on district- or state-wide testing and the needs of the student beyond the general curriculum.
- Promising Practices
 - At Roosevelt Elementary gifted services for second graders has been expanded to include instruction in language arts.

Review of Student Records

This section provides information related to the findings of noncompliance in Hillsborough County records reviewed by Bureau staff. A total of 45 student records of students with disabilities and ten records of students identified as gifted, randomly selected from the population of ESE students in the district, were reviewed. Records represented forty-three schools, and 18 of the records were transition IEPs for students ages 14 or older. Targeted or partial reviews of additional records were conducted on-site in conjunction with student case studies and to collect information related to additional compliance areas designated by the Bureau. In addition to IEP reviews, the Bureau conducted reviews of 15 matrix of services documents for students reported at the 254 or 255 funding level through the Florida Education Finance Program (FEFP). Any services claimed on the matrix must be documented on the IEP and must be in evidence in the classroom.

To be determined systemic in nature, an item must be found noncompliant in at least 25% of the records reviewed. In Hillsborough County, at least twelve of the IEPs and three of the EPs must have been noncompliant on a given item to be considered a systemic finding. Student- and item-specific feedback on the record reviews was provided to Monroe County staff to assist in the provision of targeted technical assistance on IEP development.

Findings

- Finding(s) of Noncompliance
 - On IEPs, systemic findings of noncompliance were in the areas of:
 - report of progress does not describe the extent to which progress is sufficient to enable the student to achieve the goal by the end of the year (22)
 - lack of evidence the team considered the results of the student's performance on state or district wide assessment (20)
 - lack of or inadequate short term objectives or benchmarks (20)
 - lack of or inadequate explanation of the extent to which the student will not participate with non-disabled students in the general education classroom (17)
 - lack of or inadequate report of progress (16)
 - lack of appropriate team members attending meeting (14)
 - lack of measurable goals (14)

- statement of students' present level of educational performance does not adequately describe how the student's disability effects the students involvement and progress in the general curriculum (12)
 - For eight IEPs more than 50% of the annual goals were not measurable.
 - For 12 IEPs of students eligible as EH/SED there was no evidence that the students' social/emotional needs were being addressed.
 - For 12 IEPs of students eligible as SED there was no evidence that the students were receiving counseling as a related service.
 - Four IEPs were not current on the day of the on-site visit.
 - One IEP did not include prior written notice of change of placement.
 - One IEP was not current at the beginning of the school year.
 - The services identified on five of the six matrix of services documents reviewed were not in evidence on the students IEPs (40%), although provision of the services was confirmed through classroom visits.
 - Individual or non-systemic findings were noted in 23 additional components of the IEPs.
 - On EPs, systemic findings of noncompliance were in the areas of:
 - lack of evidence of state or district wide test results discussed
 - lack of evidence that needs beyond the general education curriculum were discussed
 - Individual or non-systemic findings were noted on three additional components of the EPs.
- Areas of Concern
 - No other areas of concern
 - Corrective Actions
 - The district must provide an amendment to the data provided to the DOE through the Automated Student Information System database for surveys 2 and 3 for the 2004-05 school year for any matrix of services documents found to be in error.
 - The IEP teams for 36 students must reconvene to address specified findings of noncompliance.
 - An adjustment of federal funds will be made by the DOE for three students whose IEPs were not current.
 - The district will be required to target the areas noted above in its existing IEP training procedures, and to develop and implement a system of self-assessment to ensure compliance with required elements. This system must include the requirement that district and/or school staff periodically review at least 30 IEPs and five EPs to determine compliance with these requirements.
 - Recommended Actions
 - Utilize the student- and item-specific feedback on the record reviews provided to assist in the provision of targeted technical assistance on IEP development.

Review of District Forms

This section provides information related to district forms used to document specific procedures regarding the provision of specially designed instruction and related services to students with disabilities. Forms representing the fourteen areas identified below were submitted to Bureau staff for a review to determine compliance with federal and state laws. The district was notified of the specific findings via a separate letter dated March 21, 2005. A detailed explanation of the specific findings is included as appendix D.

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

*indicates findings that require immediate attention

+ indicates recommended changes

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 CIP. 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.

Recommendations and Technical Assistance

As a result of the focused monitoring activities conducted in Hillsborough County, the Bureau has identified specific findings related to the percentage of students with disabilities who participate in the FCAT. 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

- Provide training on alternate assessments and how to use them to measure progress of students.
- Increase training for general education teacher of the differentiated needs of students who are twice exceptional (gifted and student with a disability).

Technical Assistance

Florida Inclusion Network

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

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

Project CENTRAL

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

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

Student Support Services Project

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

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

Alternate Assessment Project

Website: <http://www.firn.edu/doe/bin00014/essproj.htm>

The project provides support to schools and districts to implement alternate assessment for those students with disabilities who are not included in the general state and district testing programs. Project participants have the opportunity to attend workshops on alternate assessment throughout the school year.

Florida's Positive Behavioral Supports Project

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

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

Bureau of Exceptional Education and Student Services

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

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

Eileen Amy, Administrator
Eileen.Amy@fldoe.org

Kim Komisar, Program Director
Kim.Komisar@fldoe.org

April Katine, Program Specialist
April.Katine@fldoe.org

Barbara McAnelly, Program Specialist
Barbara.Mcanelly@fldoe.org

Angela Nathaniel, Program Specialist
Angela.Nathaniel@fldoe.org

Denise Taylor, Program Specialist
Denise.Taylor@fldoe.org

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

Karen Denbroeder, Administrator
Karen.Denbroeder@fldoe.org

Marie LaCap, Program Specialist
Marie.Lacap@fldoe.org

Virginia Sasser, Program Specialist
Virginia.Sasser@fldoe.org

Clearinghouse Information Center
cicbiscs@FLDOE.org
(850) 245-0477

ESE Program Development and Services
(850) 245-0478
Evy Friend, Administrator
Evy.Friend@fldoe.org

**Behavior/Discipline
EH/SED**
Lee Clark, Program Specialist
Lee.Clark@fldoe.org

Mentally Handicapped/Autism
Sheryl Sandvoss, Program Specialist
Sheryl.Sandvoss@fldoe.org

Assistive Technology
Karen Morris, Program Specialist
Karen.Morris@fldoe.org

Gifted
Donnajo Smith, Program Specialist
Donnajo.Smith@fldoe.org

Speech/Language
Lezlie Cline, Program Director
Lezlie.Cline@fldoe.org

Appendix A:

District Data

**FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
BUREAU OF EXCEPTIONAL EDUCATION AND STUDENT SERVICES****2005 LEA PROFILE****JOHN WINN, COMMISSIONER**

DISTRICT:	HILLSBOROUGH	PK-12 POPULATION:	188,610
ENROLLMENT GROUP:	GREATER THAN 100,000	PERCENT DISABLED:	15%
		PERCENT GIFTED:	4%

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, their enrollment group (districts of comparable size), and the state. Where appropriate and available, comparative data for general education students are included.

Data presented as indicators of educational benefit (*Section One*)

- Standard diploma rates for students with disabilities receiving standard diplomas through meeting all graduation requirements, GED Exit Option, and FCAT waivers
- Dropout rates
- Post-school outcome data
- Third grade promotion and retention, including good cause promotions

Note: FCAT participation and performance data formerly included in the LEA profile will be published separately in Fall 2005.

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

- Regular class, resource room, and separate class placement, ages 6-21
- Early childhood setting or home, part-time early childhood/part-time early childhood special education setting and early childhood special education setting, ages 3-5
- 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 percentage of all disabilities and as a percentage of total PK-12 population

LEA PROFILE 2005

Three of the indicators included in the profile, 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 through the Florida Education and Training Placement Information Program (FETPIP).

DISTRICTS IN HILLSBOROUGH'S ENROLLMENT GROUP:

BROWARD, DADE, DUVAL, HILLSBOROUGH, ORANGE, PALM BEACH, PINELLAS



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 progression, school completion, and post-school outcomes.

STANDARD DIPLOMA STUDENTS MEETING ALL GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS:

The number of students with disabilities graduating with a standard diploma (withdrawal code W06) by earning required credits, maintaining required GPA and passing FCAT divided by the total number of students with disabilities who completed their education (withdrawal codes W06-W10, W27, WGD, WFW, WFT) as reported in end of year (survey 5). The resulting percentages are reported for the three-year period from **2001-02** through **2003-04**.

	2001-02	2002-03	2003-04
Hillsborough	56%	49%	44%
Enrollment Group	47%	43%	41%
State	48%	45%	42%

STANDARD DIPLOMA THROUGH GED EXIT OPTION:

The number of students with disabilities in a GED Exit Option Model who passed the GED Tests and the FCAT or HSCT and were awarded a standard high school diploma (withdrawal code W10) divided by the total number of students with disabilities who completed their education (withdrawal codes W06-W10, W27, WGD, WFW, WFT) as reported in end of year (survey 5). The resulting percentages are reported for the three-year period from **2001-02** through **2003-04**.

	2001-02	2002-03	2003-04
Hillsborough	<1%	<1%	1%
Enrollment Group	<1%	<1%	1%
State	1%	1%	1%

STANDARD DIPLOMA THROUGH FCAT WAIVER:

The number of students with disabilities graduating with a standard diploma through the FCAT waiver (withdrawal code WFW) divided by the total number of students with disabilities who completed their education (withdrawal codes W06-W10, W27, WGD, WFW, WFT) as reported in end of year (survey 5). The resulting percentages are reported for **2002-03** and **2003-04**.

	2002-03	2003-04
Hillsborough	13%	15%
Enrollment Group	11%	16%
State	9%	14%

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, gifted students, all PK-12 students, students identified as EH/SED, and students identified as SLD for the years **2001-02** through **2003-04**.

	Students with Disabilities			Gifted Students			All Students		
	2001-02	2002-03	2003-04	2001-02	2002-03	2003-04	2001-02	2002-03	2003-04
Hillsborough	5%	5%	3%	<1%	<1%	<1%	2%	3%	2%
Enrollment Group	5%	4%	5%	<1%	<1%	<1%	3%	3%	3%
State	5%	4%	5%	<1%	<1%	<1%	3%	3%	3%

	EH/SED			SLD		
	2001-02	2002-03	2003-04	2001-02	2002-03	2003-04
Hillsborough	10%	12%	5%	4%	4%	3%
Enrollment Group	8%	7%	8%	5%	4%	5%
State	7%	7%	7%	5%	4%	5%

POSTSCHOOL OUTCOME DATA:

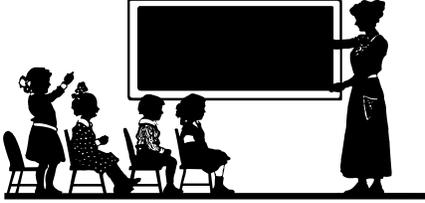
The Florida Education and Training Placement Information Program (FETPIP) is an interagency data collection system that obtains follow-up data on former students. The most recent FETPIP data available reports on students who exited Florida public schools during the **2002-03** school year. The table below displays percent of students with disabilities and students identified as gifted exiting school in 2002-03 who were found employed between October and December 2003 or in continuing education (enrolled for the fall or preliminary winter/spring semester) in 2003.

	Students with Disabilities		Gifted Students	
	Employed	Cont. Ed.	Employed	Cont. Ed.
Hillsborough	42%	21%	46%	68%
Enrollment Group	40%	23%	30%	69%
State	44%	20%	37%	72%

THIRD GRADE PROMOTION AND RETENTION RATE:

The number of third grade students promoted, promoted with cause, and retained divided by the total year enrollment as reported in end of year (survey 5). The percent of students promoted with cause is a subset of total promoted. Total enrollment is the count of all students who attended school at any time during the school year. The results are reported for third grade students with disabilities and all third grade students for **2003-04**.

	2003-04					
	Students with Disabilities			All Students		
	Promoted	Promoted with Cause	Retained	Promoted	Promoted with Cause	Retained
Hillsborough	87%	41%	13%	92%	17%	8%
Enrollment Group	81%	31%	19%	88%	11%	12%
State	82%	30%	18%	89%	11%	11%



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, RESOURCE ROOM AND SEPARATE CLASS PLACEMENT, AGES 6-21:

The number of students with disabilities ages 6-21 in regular class, resource room, and separate class placement divided by the total number of students with disabilities ages 6-21 reported in December (survey 9). Regular class includes students who spend 80 percent or more of their school week with nondisabled peers. Resource room includes students spending between 40 and 80 percent of their school week with nondisabled peers. Separate class includes students spending less than 40 percent of their week with nondisabled peers. The resulting percentages are reported for the three years from **2002-03** through **2004-05**.

	Regular Class			Resource Room			Separate Class		
	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05
Hillsborough	41%	45%	50%	31%	27%	23%	24%	24%	22%
Enrollment Group	46%	48%	52%	27%	25%	22%	23%	23%	22%
State	48%	50%	55%	26%	24%	21%	22%	22%	20%

EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION SETTINGS, AGES 3-5:

The number of students with disabilities ages 3-5 who are served in early childhood settings, part-time early childhood and part-time early childhood special education settings, and early childhood special education settings divided by the total number of students with disabilities ages 3-5 reported in December (survey 9). Students in early childhood settings receive all (100%) of their special education and related services in educational programs designed primarily for children without disabilities or in their home. Students in part-time early childhood and part-time early childhood special education settings receive special education and related services in multiple settings. Students in early childhood special education settings receive all (100%) of their special education and related services in educational programs designed primarily for children with disabilities housed in regular school buildings or other community-based settings. The resulting percentages are reported for the three years from **2002-03** through **2004-05**.

	Early Childhood Setting or Home			Part-Time Early Childhood/ Part-Time Early Childhood Special Education Setting			Early Childhood Special Education Setting		
	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05
Hillsborough	5%	6%	6%	70%	71%	71%	23%	23%	22%
Enrollment Group	6%	6%	6%	51%	52%	51%	38%	38%	38%
State	7%	7%	7%	57%	57%	56%	31%	31%	33%

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 **2002-03** through **2004-05**.

	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05
Hillsborough	79%	80%	75%
Enrollment Group	63%	65%	62%
State	61%	62%	57%

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 **2003-04**.

		2003-04							
		In-School Suspensions		Out-of-School Suspensions		Expulsions		Alternative Placement*	
		Students with Disabilities	Nondisabled Students						
Hillsborough Enrollment Group State	Hillsborough	16%	12%	14%	6%	<1%	<1%	<1%	<1%
	Enrollment Group	14%	9%	15%	7%	<1%	<1%	<1%	<1%
	State	14%	9%	15%	7%	<1%	<1%	<1%	<1%

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



SECTION THREE: PREVALENCE

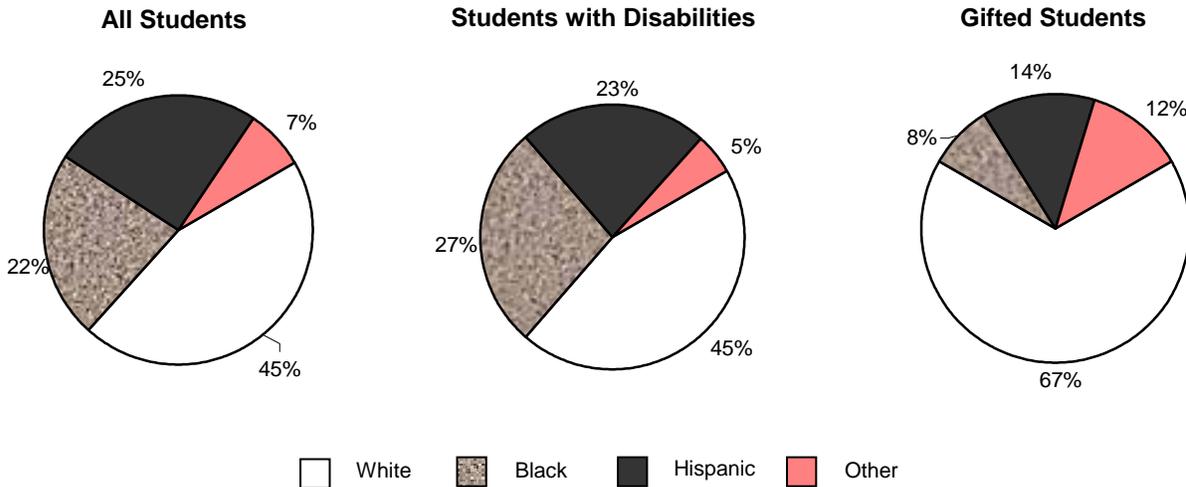
Prevalence refers to the proportion of the PK-12 population identified as exceptional at any given point in time. This section of the profile provides prevalence data by demographic characteristics.

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 2004** (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	49%	50%	63%	45%	45%	67%
Black	24%	28%	10%	22%	27%	8%
Hispanic	23%	19%	20%	25%	23%	14%
Asian/Pacific Islander	2%	<1%	4%	3%	1%	6%
Am Ind/Alaskan Native	<1%	<1%	<1%	<1%	<1%	<1%
Multiracial	3%	2%	3%	4%	4%	6%

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 2004** (survey 2).

	State		District	
	All Students	Gifted Students	All Students	Gifted Students
Free/Reduced Lunch	46%	22%	50%	22%
LEP	11%	3%	15%	3%

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 2004** (survey 2).

	All Students		SLD		EH/SED		EMH	
	State	District	State	District	State	District	State	District
White	49%	45%	51%	48%	47%	40%	32%	28%
Black	24%	22%	24%	23%	39%	43%	51%	53%
Hispanic	23%	25%	22%	25%	12%	13%	14%	16%
Asian/Pacific Islander	2%	3%	<1%	<1%	<1%	<1%	<1%	<1%
Am Ind/Alaskan Native	<1%	<1%	<1%	<1%	<1%	<1%	<1%	<1%
Multiracial	3%	4%	2%	3%	2%	4%	1%	2%

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/SED, EMH, and speech impaired (SI) for the district and 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 2004** (survey 2).

	All Students		All Disabled	
	State	District	State	District
SLD	7%	6%	46%	55%
EH/SED	1%	2%	9%	10%
EMH	1%	<1%	7%	4%
SI	2%	2%	14%	10%



John Winn, Commissioner

**Florida Department of Education
Bureau of Exceptional Education and Student Services
2005 Focused Monitoring
Hillsborough County School District**

Districts Rank-Ordered on FCAT Participation for Students with Disabilities

Based on data from Survey 3 and the FDOE assessment files (2003-04), the districts' participation rates in the general statewide assessment at identified grade levels and subject areas were compared to 85% and the sum of the discrepancies were used to rank order the districts.

District	Total Discrep.	Rank
Madison	-135.00	1
Hillsborough	-77.00	2
Indian River	-66.00	3
Pasco	-66.00	4
Orange	-61.00	5
Pinellas	-61.00	6
Lee	-60.00	7
Putnam	-60.00	8
Marion	-52.00	9
Duval	-48.00	10
Hernando	-46.00	11
Palm Beach	-45.00	12
St. Lucie	-45.00	13
Baker	-44.00	14
Collier	-44.00	15
Nassau	-44.00	16
Taylor	-43.00	17
Citrus	-41.00	18
Lafayette	-33.00	19
Monroe	-31.00	20
St. Johns	-30.00	21
Glades	-28.00	22
Brevard	-27.00	23
Broward	-27.00	24
Okaloosa	-27.00	25
Flagler	-25.00	26
Gadsden	-23.00	27
Highlands	-22.00	28
Escambia	-21.00	29
Wakulla	-21.00	30
Hamilton	-20.00	31
Martin	-19.00	32
Miami Dade	-18.00	33
Leon	-15.00	34

District	Total Discrep.	Rank
Osceola	-14.00	35
Columbia	-13.00	36
Gulf	-12.00	37
Jackson	-11.00	38
Volusia	-5.00	39
Clay	-2.00	40
Dixie	-1.00	41
Levy	-1.00	42
Alachua	0.00	43
Sarasota	0.00	44
Polk	1.00	45
Charlotte	4.00	46
Hendry	6.00	47
Jefferson	6.00	48
Manatee	6.00	49
DeSoto	10.00	50
Calhoun	12.00	51
Lake	14.00	52
Seminole	14.00	53
Okeechobee	18.00	54
Santa Rosa	18.00	55
Gilchrist	22.00	56
Hardee	23.00	57
Liberty	25.00	58
Sumter	26.00	59
Washington	28.00	60
Suwannee	31.00	61
Holmes	32.00	62
Walton	48.00	63
Franklin	50.00	64
Bradford	55.00	65
Union	75.00	66
Bay	-12.00	67
District Total	-31.00	

Appendix B:
ESE Monitoring Team Members

**Florida Department of Education
Bureau of Exceptional Education and Student Services
2005 Focused Monitoring
Hillsborough County School District**

ESE Monitoring Team Members

Department of Education Staff

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

April Katine, Program Specialist, Team Leader
Kim Komisar, Program Director
Anitra Moreland, Program Specialist
Barbara McAnelly, Program Specialist
Angela Nathaniel, Program Specialist
Demetria Harvell, Program Specialist

Peer Reviewers and Contracted Staff

Joan Mayer, Seminole County School District
Ann Dodd, Seminole County School District
Lisa Rowland, Gilchrist County School District
Jim Fowler, Broward County School District
Willis Henderson, Escambia School District
Ron Cooley, Broward School District
Kim Dotts-Hoehnle, P.K. Yonge School
Cathy Hedbawny, Jackson School District
Angelyn Vaughan, Okaloosa School District

Appendix C:
Survey Results

**Florida Department of Education
Bureau of Exceptional Education and Student Services
2005 Focused Monitoring
Hillsborough County School District**

Parent Survey Report: Students with Disabilities

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

The parent survey was sent to parents of the 32,637 students with disabilities for whom complete addresses were provided by the district. A total of 3,267 parents (PK, n = x; K-5, n = X; 6-8, n = X; 9-12, n = X), representing 10% of the sample, returned the survey. Surveys from 2,140 families were returned as undeliverable, representing 7% of the sample. Parents represented the following students with disabilities: educable mentally handicapped, trainable mentally handicapped, orthopedically impaired, speech impaired, language impaired, deaf or hard of hearing, visually impaired, emotionally handicapped, specific learning disabled, hospital/homebound, profoundly mentally handicapped, dual-sensory impaired, autistic, severely emotionally disturbed, traumatic brain injured, developmentally delayed, and other health impaired.

	% YES
Overall, I am satisfied with:	
• the way I am treated by school personnel.	85
• the amount of time my child spends with general education students.	83
• the level of knowledge and experience of school personnel.	80
• the exceptional education services my child receives.	79
• the way special education teachers and general education teachers work together.	79
• the effect of exceptional student education on my child's self-esteem.	78
• how quickly services are implemented following an IEP (Individual Educational Plan) decision.	77
• my child's academic progress.	75
My child:	
• has friends at school.	88
• is learning skills that will be useful later in life.	83
• spends most of the school day involved in productive activities.	81
• is happy at school.	81
• receives all the special education and related services on his/her IEP.	78

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

- all of my child's needs. 88
- whether my child needed speech/language services. 79
- ways that my child could spend time with students in general education classes. 77
- whether my child should get accommodations (special testing conditions), for example, extra time. 77
- whether my child needed services beyond the regular school year. 73
- whether my child would take the FCAT (Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test). 71
- whether my child needed transportation. 67
- * which diploma my child may receive. 65
- the specific skills my child needs to work on in preparation for the FCAT. 64
- whether my child needed physical and/or occupational therapy. 63
- * the transition services my child needs to achieve his/her goals. 63
- whether my child needed psychological counseling services. 62
- * my child's goals after high school. 60
- * the requirements for different diplomas. 59

My child's special education teachers:

- expect my child to succeed. 88
- set appropriate goals for my child. 87
- are available to speak with me. 87
- encourage students to ask for help if they need it. 86
- give students with disabilities extra time or different assignments, if needed. 83
- call me or send me notes about my child. 79
- individualized instruction for my child. 79
- give homework that meets my child's needs. 76

My child's general education teachers:

- expect my child to succeed. 83
- are available to speak with me. 82
- encourage students to ask for help if they need it. 79
- set appropriate goals for my child. 78
- give homework that meets my child's needs. 75
- call me or send me notes about my child. 74
- give students with disabilities extra time or different assignments, if needed. 70
- individualized instruction for my child. 64

My child's school:

- makes sure I understand my child's IEP and the services my child will receive. 85
- encourages me to participate in my child's education. 84
- sends me information written in a way I understand. 84
- encourages acceptance of students with disabilities. 81

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

	% YES
• handles discipline problems appropriately.	80
• does all it can to keep students from dropping out of school.	78
• wants to hear my ideas.	77
• offers students with disabilities the classes they need to graduate with a standard diploma.	77
• addresses my child's individual needs.	76
• explains what I can do if I want to make changes to my child's IEP.	75
• involves students with disabilities in clubs, sports, or other activities.	74
• provides students with disabilities updated books and materials.	73
• * offers a variety of vocational courses, such as computers and business technology.	71
• informs me about all of the services available to my child.	70
• sends me information about activities and workshops for parents.	68
• * provides information to students about education and jobs after high school.	62
• * informed me, beginning when my child turned 14, that one purpose of the IEP meeting was to discuss a plan for my child's transition out of school.	62

Parent Participation

• I meet with my child's teachers to discuss my child's needs and progress.	93
• I have attended my child's IEP meetings.	92
• I am comfortable talking about my child with school staff.	91
• My input is considered in the development of my child's IEP.	85
• I participate in school activities with my child.	80
• I have heard about the Florida Diagnostic and Learning Resources System ("FDLRS") and the services they provide to families of children with disabilities.	47
• I attend meetings of the PTA/PTO.	45
• I attend meetings of organizations for parents of students with disabilities.	36
• I have used parent support services in my area.	36
• I attend School Advisory Committee meetings concerning school improvement.	35

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

**Florida Department of Education
Bureau of Exceptional Education and Student Services
2005 Focused Monitoring
Hillsborough County School District**

Teacher Survey Report: Students with Disabilities

In order to obtain the perspective of teachers who provide services to students with disabilities, the Florida Department of Education, Bureau of Exceptional Education and Student Services, contracted with the University of Miami to develop and administer a teacher survey in conjunction with the Bureau's focused monitoring activities.

A sufficient number of surveys were sent to each school in the district for all teachers and other service providers to participate. A total of 5,279 teacher surveys representing approximately 44% of ESE and general education teachers in the district were returned. Data are from 181 (77%) of the district's 236 schools.

% **Always, Almost Always,
Frequently combined**

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

- modifies and adapts curriculum for students as needed. 94
- ensures that students with disabilities feel comfortable when taking classes with general education students. 93
- places students with disabilities into general education classes whenever possible. 92
- addresses each students' individual needs. 92
- ensures that the general education curriculum is taught in ESE classes to the maximum extent possible. 91
- implements support facilitation and/or consultation by ESE teachers for students in general education classes. 88
- gives ESE teachers access to adequate instructional materials, including technology. 87
- encourages collaboration among ESE teachers, GE teachers and service providers. 87
- offers teachers professional development opportunities regarding curriculum and support for students with disabilities. 85
- implements co-teaching for some or all classes. 84
- provides adequate support for GE teachers who teach students with disabilities. 81

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

- provides students with appropriate testing accommodations. 96
- aligns curriculum for students with the standards that are tested on the FCAT. 94
- provides ESE teachers with FCAT test preparation materials. 94
- gives students in ESE classes updated textbooks. 89
- provides extra help or remediation before or after school. 86

**% Always, Almost Always,
Frequently combined**

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

- conducts ongoing assessments of individual students' performance. n/a
- provides positive behavioral supports. n/a
- develops IEPs according to student needs. 97
- makes an effort to involve parents in their child's education. 96
- ensures that classroom material is culturally appropriate. 94
- allows students to make up credits lost due to disability-related absences. 94
- ensures that classroom material is grade- and age- appropriate. 93
- tracks student attendance to identify students with attendance problems. 93
- encourages participation of students with disabilities in extracurricular activities. 91
- uses a child study team to develop strategies for students identified as having an attendance problem. 91
- ensures that students are taught strategies to manage their behavior as needed. 89
- provides social skills training to students as needed. 87
- provides adequate counseling services for students who need it. 85
- implements dropout prevention activities. 79

The items in the following section relate primarily to middle and high schools. If any items did not apply, respondents marked N/A.

My school:

- implements an IEP transition plan for each student. 94
- encourages students to aim for a standard diploma when appropriate. 93
- provides extra help to students who need to retake the FCAT. 93
- informs students through the IEP process of the different diploma options and their requirements. 92
- provides students with information about options after graduation. 91
- teaches transition skills for future employment and independent living. 80
- provides students with job training. 77
- coordinates on-the-job training with outside agencies. 75

**Florida Department of Education
Bureau of Exceptional Education and Student Services
2005 Focused Monitoring
Hillsborough County School District**

Student Survey Report: Students with Disabilities

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

In conjunction with the 2005 Hillsborough County School District monitoring activities, a sufficient number of surveys were provided to allow all students with disabilities, grades 9-12, to respond. Instructions for administration of the survey by classroom teachers, including a written script, were provided for each class or group of students. Since participation in this survey is not appropriate for some students whose disabilities might impair their understanding of the survey, professional judgment is to be used to determine appropriate participation.

Surveys were received from 1,575 students, representing approximately 13% of the students with disabilities in grades 9-12 in the district. Data are from 29 (49%) of the district's 59 schools with students in grades 9-12.

	% Yes
I am taking the following ESE classes:	
• English	74
• Math	66
• Social Studies	51
• Science	47
• Learning Strategies or Unique Skills	28
• Electives (physical education, art, music)	26
• Vocational (woodshop, computers)	17
At my school:	
• ESE teachers believe that ESE students can learn.	88
• ESE teachers give students extra help, if needed.	84
• ESE teachers encourage students to ask for help if they need it.	82
• ESE teachers teach students in ways that help them learn.	81
• ESE teachers understand ESE students' needs.	79
• ESE teachers teach students things that will be useful later on in life.	75
• ESE teachers give students extra time or different assignments, if needed.	74
• ESE teachers provide students with updated books and materials.	65
I am taking the following general education/mainstream classes:	
• Electives (physical education, art, music)	63
• Science	49
• Vocational (woodshop, computers)	49

	% Yes
I am taking the following general education/mainstream classes: (continued)	
• Math	47
• Social Studies	43
• English	37
At my school:	
• general education teachers believe that ESE students can learn.	78
• general education teachers encourage students to ask for help if they need it.	75
• general education teachers teach students things that will be useful later on in life.	69
• general education teachers give students extra help, if needed.	66
• general education teachers teach ESE students in ways that help them learn.	65
• general education teachers provide students with updated books and materials.	65
• general education teachers understand ESE students' needs.	63
• general education teachers give students extra time or different assignments, if needed.	53
At my school, ESE students:	
• are encouraged to stay in school.	84
• get the help they need to do well in school.	83
• fit in at school.	81
• can take vocational classes such as computers and business technology.	80
• participate in clubs, sports, and other activities.	80
• get information about education after high school.	77
• spend enough time with general education students.	75
• get work experience (on-the-job training) if they are interested.	73
• are treated fairly by teachers and staff.	71
Diploma Option	
• I know what courses I have to take to get my diploma.	80
• I know the difference between a standard and a special diploma.	79
• I agree with the type of diploma I am going to receive.	78
• I will probably graduate with a standard diploma.	73
• I had a say in the decision about which diploma I would get.	64
IEP	
• I had a say in the decision about which classes I would take.	63
• I was invited to attend my IEP meeting this year.	59
• I attended my IEP meeting this year.	46
• I had a say in the decision about special testing conditions I might get for the FCAT or other tests.	43
• I had a say in the decision about whether I need to take the FCAT or a different test.	30
FCAT	
• I took the FCAT this year.	70
• Teachers help ESE students prepare for the FCAT.	68

	% Yes
FCAT (continued)	
• In my English/reading classes, we work on the kinds of skills that are tested on the reading part of the FCAT.	67
• In my math classes, we work on the kinds of problems that are tested on the math part of the FCAT.	62
• I received accommodations (special testing conditions) for the FCAT.	50

**Florida Department of Education
Bureau of Exceptional Education and Student Services
2005 Focused Monitoring
Hillsborough County School District**

Parent Survey Report: Gifted Students

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

The parent survey was sent to parents of the 12,719 students identified as gifted for whom complete addresses were provided by the district. A total of 3,163 parents (KG-5, n = X; 6-8, n = X; 9 - 12, n = X), representing 25% of the sample, returned the survey. Surveys from 193 families were returned as undeliverable, representing 2% of the sample.

	%Yes
Overall, I am satisfied with:	
• the effect of gifted services on my child's self-esteem.	90
• my child's academic progress.	89
• gifted teachers' subject area knowledge.	89
• general education teachers' subject area knowledge.	89
• gifted teachers' expertise in teaching students identified as gifted.	84
• the gifted services my child receives.	82
• how quickly services were implemented following an initial request for evaluation.	79
• general education teachers' expertise in teaching students identified as gifted.	77
In general education classes, my child:	
• has friends at school.	97
• is learning skills that will be useful later on in life.	92
• is usually happy at school.	90
• has his/her social and emotional needs met at school.	88
• has creative outlets at school.	82
• is academically challenged at school.	68
In gifted classes, my child:	
• has friends at school	98
• is learning skills that will be useful later on in life.	94
• is usually happy at school.	94
• has his/her social and emotional needs met at school.	91
• is academically challenged at school.	86
• has creative outlets at school.	83

	%Yes
My child's general education teachers:	
• expect appropriate behavior.	98
• are available to speak with me.	93
• provide coursework that includes representation of diverse ethnic, racial, and other groups.	88
• set appropriate goals for my child.	82
• have access to adequate instructional materials, including technology.	82
• give homework that meets my child's needs.	77
• relate coursework to students' future educational and professional pursuits.	75
• call me or send me notes about my child.	71
My child's gifted teachers:	
• expect appropriate behavior.	98
• are available to speak with me.	92
• set appropriate goals for my child.	88
• have access to adequate instructional materials, including technology.	84
• give homework that meets my child's needs.	83
• provide coursework that includes representation of diverse ethnic, racial, and other groups.	83
• relate coursework to students' future educational and professional pursuits.	79
• call me or send me notes about my child.	68
My child's home school:	
• treats me with respect.	94
• sends me information written in a way I understand.	89
• handles discipline problems appropriately.	89
• encourages me to participate in my child's education.	86
• provides students identified as gifted with appropriate books and materials.	83
• wants to hear my ideas.	75
• addresses my child's individual needs.	74
• makes sure I understand my child's EP or IEP.	70
• involves me in developing my child's Educational Plan (EP or IEP).	69
• informs me about all of the services available to my child.	65
• implements my ideas.	63
• sends me information about activities and workshops for parents.	63
• explains what I can do if I want to make changes to my child's EP or IEP.	60
My child's 2nd school:	
• treats me with respect.	93
• handles discipline problems appropriately.	90
• provides students identified as gifted with appropriate books and materials.	86
• encourages me to participate in my child's education.	82
• sends me information written in a way I understand.	82
• addresses my child's individual needs.	77
• wants to hear my ideas.	71

	%Yes
My child's 2nd school:	
• informs me about all of the services available to my child.	66
• involves me in developing my child's Educational Plan (EP or IEP).	66
• makes sure I understand my child's EP or IEP.	66
• implements my ideas.	64
• explains what I can do if I want to make changes to my child's EP or IEP.	62
• sends me information about activities and workshops for parents.	57
Students identified as gifted:	
• are provided with information about options for education after high school.	81
• have the option of taking a variety of vocational courses.	80
• are provided with career counseling.	70
• are provided with the opportunity to participate in externships or mentorships.	47
Parent Participation	
• I participate in school activities with my child.	89
• I have attended one or more meetings about my child during this school year.	86
• I am a member of the PTA/PTO.	74
• I attend School Advisory Committee meetings concerning school improvement.	22
• I have used parent support services in my area.	9
• I belong to an organization for parents of students identified as gifted.	6

Appendix D:
Review of District Forms

This forms review was completed as a component of the focused monitoring visit to be conducted the week of March 28, 2005. The following district forms were compared to the requirements of applicable State Board of Education rules, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), and applicable sections of Part 300, Title 34 Code of Federal Regulations (34 CFR 300). The review includes required and recommended revisions based on programmatic or procedural issues and concerns. The results of the review are detailed below and list the applicable sources used for the review.

The following are forms submitted by the district:

<p>Individual Educational Plan (IEP) Meeting (non-computerized) Form <i>Individual Education Plan (IEP) Form SB89050 – SB89059 Rev. 3/02</i> 34 CFR 300.347</p>
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The following must be addressed:

- A statement providing an understanding and consent of the parent for students receiving instructional accommodations not permitted on the statewide assessment and implications of such accommodations must be provided with the IEP or be a part of the IEP.

<p>Individual Educational Plan (IEP) Meeting (non-computerized) Form <i>Individual Education Plan (IEP) Form Plan A (Alternate) SB89060-SB8906 and SB89050</i> 34 CFR 300.347</p>
--

The following must be addressed:

- A statement of the extent, if any, to which the student will not participate with nondisabled students in the general education classroom, must be included.
- A statement providing an understanding and consent of the parent for students receiving instructional accommodations not permitted on the statewide assessment and implications of such accommodations must be provided with IEP or be a part of the IEP.
- A statement of the transition service needs of the student related to applicable components of the IEP that focuses on the course of study must be included for all students beginning at age 14.
- A statement of the needed transition services including, when appropriate, a statement of the interagency responsibilities or any needed linkages must be included for all students beginning at age 16.
- A statement that the student has been informed of his or her rights that will transfer to the student on reaching the age of majority must be included beginning at least one year before the student reaches the age of majority.
- While not required to be on the IEP, the following areas must have documentation of consideration by the IEP team:
 - Results of most recent state and district-wide assessments; and,
 - Skills needed to be remediated in order to pass the Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test (FCAT).

<p>Individual Educational Plan (IEP) Meeting (computerized) Form <i>Individual Educational Plan (IEP) Form 13 or Younger, Electronic IEP Template</i> 34 CFR 300.347</p>

The following must be addressed:

- A statement providing an understanding and consent of the parent for students receiving instructional accommodations not permitted on the statewide assessment and implications of such accommodations must be provided with the IEP or be a part of the IEP, if the student is receiving accommodations not allowed on the FCAT.
- A statement of how the student’s progress toward annual goals will be measured and how the student’s parents will be regularly informed at least as often as parents are informed of the progress of nondisabled students must be included.
- While not required to be on the IEP, the following areas must have documentation of consideration by the IEP team:
 - Results of recent state and district-wide assessments; and,
 - Skills needed to be remediated in order to pass the Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test (FCAT).

Recommendation:

- It is recommended that the present level of performance pre-printed language include “how the student’s disability affects the student’s involvement and progress in the general curriculum,” to ensure it is addressed.

Individual Educational Plan (IEP) Meeting (computerized)

Form Transition *Individual Education Plan (TIEP) Form Electronic TIEP Template*

34 CFR 300.347

The following must be addressed:

- An explanation of the extent, if any, to which the student will not participate with nondisabled students in the general education classroom must be included for all students removed from the general education classroom for only part of the school day.
- A statement providing an understanding and consent of the parent for students receiving instructional accommodations not permitted on the statewide assessment and implications of such accommodations must be provided with the IEP or be a part of the IEP, if the student is receiving accommodations not allowed on the FCAT.
- A statement of how the student’s progress toward annual goals will be measured and how the student’s parents will be regularly informed at least as often as parents are informed of the progress of nondisabled students must be included.
- While not required to be on the IEP, the following areas must have documentation of consideration by the IEP team:
 - Results of recent state and district-wide assessments; and,
 - Skills needed to be remediated in order to pass the Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test (FCAT).

Recommendation:

- It is recommended that the present level of performance pre-printed language include “how the student’s disability affects the student’s involvement and progress in the general curriculum,” to ensure it is addressed.

Educational Plan

Form *Educational Plan Form SB89396 – SB89399*

State Board of Education Rule 6A-6.03191

The following must be addressed:

- A frequency must be included for the provision of specially designed instruction
- While not required to be included as part of the EP, the following areas must have evidence of consideration by the EP team:
 - The student’s needs resulting from giftedness;
 - Results of recent evaluations of the student, including class work and state and district assessments; and,
 - language needs of a student with limited English proficiency.

Recommendation:

- It is recommended that the present level of performance pre-printed language include “strengths and interests, needs beyond the general curriculum, results of the student’s performance on state and district assessments, and evaluation results,” to ensure that these are addressed.

Parent Notification of Individual Educational Plan (IEP) Meeting

Form *Prior Parent Notification Form SB89002 MO 12 ESE*

34 CFR 300.345

This form contains the components for compliance.

Notice and Consent for Initial Placement

Form *Prior Parent Notification Form SB89002 MO 12 ESE*

34 CFR 300.503 and 300.505

The following must be addressed:

- A statement of where a copy of the procedural safeguards may be obtained must be included.

Informed Notice and Consent for Evaluation

Form *Informed Parent Consent for Evaluation Form SB34501*

34 CFR 300.503 and 300.505

The following must be addressed:

- A description of any options the district considered and the reasons why those options were rejected must be included.
- A description of each evaluation procedure, test, record, or report the district used as a basis for the proposal must be included, not just the screening information.

Recommendation:

- It is recommended that the protections statement include “of the Individuals with Disabilities ACT (IDEA),” following “Procedural Safeguards”.

Informed Notice of Consent for Reevaluation

Form *Informed Parental Consent for Reevaluation and Informed Notice that Additional Data for Reevaluation are not Warranted Form SB34504*

34 CFR 300.503 and 300.505

The following must be addressed:

- The statement of “review of existing data” must be expanded to include a description of each evaluation procedure, test, record, or report the district used as a basis for the proposal.
- A statement that the parents of a child with a disability have protections under the Procedural Safeguards of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) must be included.
- A description of any options the district considered and the reasons why those options were rejected must be included.

Notice of Change in Placement Form

Form *Notice of Intent to Change Exceptional Student Education Eligibility and Placement Form SB89035*

34 CFR 300.503 and 300.505

The following must be addressed:

- A statement of where a copy of the procedural safeguards may be obtained must be included.

Notice of Change in FAPE

Form *Notice of Intent to Change Exceptional Student Education Eligibility and/or Prior Placement Form SB89035*

34 CFR 300.503 and 300.505

The following must be addressed:

- A statement of where a copy of the procedural safeguards may be obtained must be included.

Informed Notice of Refusal

Form *Notice of Refusal To Take A Specific Action SB89026*

34 CFR 300.503

The following must be addressed:

- A statement of where a copy of the procedural safeguards may be obtained must be included.

Documentation of Staffing Form

Form *Eligibility Staffing Report Form SB89001 MO-1 and Informed Notice of Eligibility/Ineligibility and Initial Consent for Educational Placement Form SB89006 MO-10/13*

34 CFR 300.534 and 300.503

The following must be addressed:

- “Approved” by the ESE Director/Designee must be changed to “Reviewed”.
- A statement of where a copy of the procedural safeguards may be obtained must be included on the SB89006 form.

Notice of Dismissal

Form *Notice of Intent to Change Exceptional Student Education Eligibility and/or Prior Placement Form SB89035*

34 CFR 300.503 and 300.505

The following must be addressed:

- A statement of where a copy of the procedural safeguards may be obtained must be included.
- A statement clearly indicating that dismissal was based on the results of the reevaluation process.

Notice of Ineligibility

Form *Eligibility and Assignment Staffing Form 003-1992-ESE*

34 CFR 300.503 and 300.505

The following must be addressed:

- A statement of where a copy of the procedural safeguards may be obtained must be included.

Procedural Safeguards

Form *Department of Education Procedural Safeguards Adaptation*

Section 1415, Title 20, USC and 34 CFR 300.503 – 529 and 300.560 - 577

The following must be addressed:

- Under the Due Process Hearing Rights section a statement must be added that indicates within 10 days of receiving the request for due process hearing, a prehearing conference will be scheduled by the Division of Administrative Hearings (DOAH). Prior to attending the prehearing conference, the party requesting the due process hearing has to submit to the Administrative Law Judge (ALJ) a brief summary of the facts believed to be needed for the ALJ to reach a decision. The summary should also include a proposed solution(s) to the problem(s) and the reason(s) they believe they are entitled to their proposed solution(s).
- In the section for private school students, a section must be added addressing Opportunity Scholarships with statements to include:
 - As a parent who utilizes the Opportunity Scholarship Program, when you elect to place your child in a private school, funding shall be consistent with section 1002.38(6), Florida Statutes; and specially designed instruction and related services shall be consistent with the requirements of 34 CFR 300.450-300-457 and paragraph (3)(o) of Rule 6A-6.03411, Florida Administrative Code.

Confidentiality of Information**Form** *Procedural Safeguards***Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act, Part 99 34 CFR 300.503****Recommendation:**

- It is recommended that the district indicate within the annual written notice it is to inform eligible student or the parent or guardian of their rights as defined in Section 1002.22(3), Florida Statutes (FS), and 34 CFR 99.7.

Services Plan**Form** *Individual Education Plan Form 001-1990, 039-1998, 022-2000, 025-1992-ESE***34 CFR 300.455****The following must be addressed:**

- A statement of program modifications to include beginning date, frequency, location and duration must be added.
- A statement of the extent, if any, to which the student will not participate with nondisabled student in general education classroom, must be included for all students participating for any time period with nondisabled students, not just those removed for more than 50% of the day.
- Beginning at age 14, a statement of the transition service needs of a student related to applicable components of the Services Plan that focus on the student's course of study must be added.
- Beginning at age 16, a statement of needed transition services including, when appropriate a statement of the interagency responsibilities or any needed linkages must be added.
- Beginning at least one year before the student reaches the age of majority; a statement that the student has been informed of his or her rights that will transfer to the student on reaching the age of majority must be added.
- While not required to be on the services plan, the following area must have documentation of consideration by the committee: the results of state and district assessments in the development of the services plan.

Appendix E:
Glossary of Acronyms

**Florida Department of Education
Bureau of Exceptional Education and Student Services
2005 Focused Monitoring
Hillsborough County School District**

Glossary of Acronyms

Bureau	Bureau of Exceptional Education and Student Services
CFR	Code of Federal Regulations
CIP	Continuous Improvement Plan
DJJ	Department of Juvenile Justice
DNE	Did Not Enter
DOE	Department of Education
EH	Emotionally Handicapped
EMH	Educable Mentally Handicapped
EP	Educational Plan (for gifted students)
ESE	Exceptional Student Education
F.S.	Florida Statutes
FAC	Florida Administrative Code
FAPE	Free Appropriate Public Education
FCAT	Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test
FIN	Florida Inclusion Network
FUSE	Florida Uniting Students in Education
GE	General Education
GED	General Educational Development diploma
IDEA	Individuals with Disabilities Education Act
IEP	Individual Educational Plan (for students with disabilities)
K-BIT	Kaufman Brief Intelligence Test
LCCE	Life Centered Career Education
LEA	Local Educational Agency
LEP	Limited English Proficient
LI	Language Impaired
NRT	Norm Referenced Test
OCR	Office for Civil Rights
OSEP	Office of Special Education Programs (USDOE)
PASS-D	Performance Assessment for Students with Disabilities
PMH	Profoundly Mentally Handicapped
SED	Severely Emotionally Disturbed
SI	Speech Impaired
S/L	Speech and Language
SLD	Specific Learning Disability
SSS	Sunshine State Standards
TMH	Trainable Mentally Handicapped
UM	University of Miami