

FINAL REPORT OF CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT MONITORING  
OF EXCEPTIONAL STUDENT EDUCATION PROGRAMS IN

# **OKEECHOBEE COUNTY**

NOVEMBER 22 - 24, 2004



FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION  
BUREAU OF EXCEPTIONAL EDUCATION AND STUDENT SERVICES  
ESE PROGRAM ADMINISTRATION AND QUALITY ASSURANCE

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## Okeechobee County School District Continuous Improvement Monitoring System Improvement Strategies

This section includes the issues identified by the Bureau as most significantly in need of improvement. The district is required to provide system improvement strategies to address identified findings, which may include an explanation of specific activities the district has committed to implementing, or it may consist of a broader statement describing planned strategies. For each issue, the plan also must define the measurable evidence of whether or not the desired outcome has been achieved. Target dates that extend for more than one year should include benchmarks in order to track interim progress. Findings identified as “ESE” are those findings that reflect issues specific to ESE students. Findings identified as “All” are those findings that reflect issues related to the student population as a whole, including ESE students.

Category	Findings	ESE	All	System Improvement Strategy	Evidence of Change (Including target date)
Continuous Improvement Plan: Students with Disabilities	The district selected increasing the number of students graduating with a standard diploma as the key indicator.  Progress noted and verified.	X		The district will continue to address this issue through its continuous improvement plan.	The district will continue to provide semiannual reports of progress.
Continuous Improvement Plan: Students Identified as Gifted	The district selected improvement of 8 <sup>th</sup> grade reading scores as the key indicator.  Progress noted and verified.	X		The district will continue to address this issue through its continuous improvement plan.	The district will continue to provide semiannual reports of progress.
Department of Juvenile Justice Facility	All students at Warrington and Blue Water DJJ are served through a consultative model and all students are pursuing a standard diploma; both service delivery and diploma option reported to be based on administrative convenience rather than on the needs of	X		A review of the service delivery options and diploma decision process will be conducted by staff from the DJJ and the district. A plan for ensuring that placement and diploma option decisions are based on the individual needs of the students will be developed and implemented. This will include provision of appropriate	Report of district self-assessment of a random sampling of 10 students served at Warrington and Blue Water DJJ reveals that the range of service delivery models available and the diploma options pursued

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Department of Juvenile Justice Facility (continued)	individual students.  12 matrix of services documents inaccurately reported			instruction in accordance with the students' diploma decisions.  Evidence of corrections to the reported matrix levels of identified students have been submitted to the Bureau.	are appropriate to the individual needs of the students, for 100% of students reviewed.  November 2005 May 2006
Provision of Counseling to Students with Disabilities	Some students identified as SED were not receiving counseling and/or counseling was not indicated on their IEP	X		IEPs of SED students will be reviewed to ensure that counseling as a related service is documented on the IEP and provided to the students.	Report of district self-assessment of a random sampling of 20 SED students reveals 100% compliance with requirements related to the provision of counseling as a related service.  November 2005 May 2006
Provision of Communication Services to Students with Communication Needs	No findings of noncompliance in this area.	X			
Provision of Transition Services to Students with Disabilities	No findings of noncompliance in this area.	X			

Category	Findings	ESE	All	System Improvement Strategy	Evidence of Change (Including target date)
Record Reviews	<p>A funding adjustment will be required for one IEP that lacks informed notice of change of placement.</p> <p>Two IEPs for students with disabilities were required to be reconvened.</p> <p>Six matrix of services were found to be inaccurately reported (other than DJJ).</p> <p>Systemic findings of noncompliance on IEPs were related to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• short term objectives or benchmarks</li> <li>• extent to which the student will not participate with nondisabled students in the general education class</li> <li>• prior written notice of a change of FAPE</li> <li>• correspondence between annual goals and short term objectives and needs identified on the present level of educational performance</li> <li>• course of study statement for students 14 years and older</li> </ul> <p>Systemic findings of</p>	X		<p>IEP teams for identified students were reconvened to address findings of noncompliance. Documentation of the meetings was provided to the Bureau.</p> <p>The district will target the systemically noncompliant components of IEPs and EPs in its staff training, and conduct quarterly self-assessments of the results of the training through record reviews.</p> <p>Self-reviews of matrix of services documents from all schools, including DJJ facilities, will be conducted quarterly; corrections will be implemented as needed to ensure accurate data submission to the DOE.</p>	<p>Report of district self-assessment of a random sampling of 20 IEPs and 5 EPs reveals 100% compliance with requirements related to targeted components.</p> <p>November 2005 May 2006</p>

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Record Reviews (continued)	noncompliance on EPs were related to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>description of the purpose of the meeting provided on the notice</li> <li>student outcomes</li> <li>present level of performance</li> </ul>				
Special Category Records and Procedures	Findings were in the areas of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Part C to B</li> <li>temporary assignment</li> </ul>	X		In collaboration with Bureau staff the district will review and revise it's procedures for the temporary placement of transferring students. Training on the implementation of the revised procedures will be provided to targeted staff, with quarterly self-assessment conducted by district staff.  In collaboration with the district's Part C provider, procedures for the transition of students from early intervention programs to PreK Part B services will be reviewed and revised to ensure that services for eligible students are provided no later than the students' third birthdays.	Report of district self-assessment of a random sampling of 10 temporarily placed transferring students and 5 children transitioning from Part C to Part B services reveals 100% compliance with all requirements.  November 2005 May 2006
Forms Review	Forms used to document the following activities must be revised: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>10 forms need corrections</li> </ul>	X		The district will revise the identified forms and submit them to the Bureau for review.	All forms have been corrected and submitted to the Bureau as of May 2005

































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**APPENDIX A:**

**LEA Profile**





















**APPENDIX B:**

**Continuous Improvement Plans and Status Reports**



**FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION  
DIVISION OF PUBLIC SCHOOLS AND COMMUNITY EDUCATION  
Bureau of Instructional Support and Community Services**

**Continuous Improvement/Self Assessment Monitoring Plan  
2002-2003**

<b>District:</b> Okeechobee	<b>District Contact:</b> Cathleen J. Blair, Director of Exceptional Student Education	<b>Indicator:</b> Standard Diploma Rate																								
<b>Purpose:</b> Qualified students with disabilities receiving standard diplomas will increase.																										
<b>Baseline Data</b>	<b>Improvement Strategies</b>	<b>Evidence of Change</b>																								
<p>Number of students by exceptionality graduating with a standard diploma compared to all exit options (special, certificate of completion, dropout, GED)</p> <table border="0"> <tr> <td colspan="3">2001-02</td> </tr> <tr> <td>SLD</td> <td>13 of 23</td> <td>57%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>ED</td> <td>2 of 8</td> <td>25%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>HI</td> <td>1 of 2</td> <td>50%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>EMD</td> <td>0 of 6</td> <td>0%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>TMD</td> <td>0 of 8</td> <td>0%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>SED</td> <td>0 of 1</td> <td>0%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Total</td> <td>16 of 48</td> <td>33%</td> </tr> </table>	2001-02			SLD	13 of 23	57%	ED	2 of 8	25%	HI	1 of 2	50%	EMD	0 of 6	0%	TMD	0 of 8	0%	SED	0 of 1	0%	Total	16 of 48	33%	<p>Increase number of students exiting school with a standard diploma by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*increasing student participating in the general education curriculum through support and expansion of initiatives that provide resources for schools to implement service delivery models and effective instructional strategies. Promote successful participating in the general education curriculum in order to exit school with a standard diploma.</li> <li>*expanding staff development efforts to teachers on instructional accommodations and modifications for students with disabilities on statewide tests necessary for exiting school with a standard diploma.</li> <li>*continuing to support and expand initiatives that promote access to the general curriculum through the use of assistive technology.</li> <li>*providing information and education to parents, students and staff of curriculum course and assessment options that will impact receipt of a standard diploma.</li> <li>*Continuing to support the efforts of elementary and middle levels to integrate SLD and ED students in general curriculum.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Goal:</b></p> <p>The percent of students with disabilities exiting school with a standard diploma will increase by ten percent over baseline by 2004-05.</p> <p><b>Benchmarks:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*In 2002-03, the percent of students with disabilities exiting school with a standard diploma will increase to 36%.</li> <li>*In 2003-04, the percent of students with disabilities exiting school with a standard diploma will increase to 39%.</li> </ul>
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**APPENDIX C:**

**ESE Monitoring Team Members**







**APPENDIX D:**

**Survey Results**





**2004 Parent Survey Report  
Students with Disabilities  
Okeechobee County**

Responding to the need to increase the involvement of parents and families of students with disabilities in evaluating the educational services provided to their children, the Florida Department of Education, Bureau of 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 1,634 students with disabilities for whom complete addresses were provided by the district. A total of 175 parents (PK, n = 12; K-5, n = 85; 6-8, n = 36; 9 - 12, n = 42) representing 11% of the sample, returned the survey. Surveys from 104 families were returned as undeliverable, representing 6% 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, autistic, developmentally delayed, and other health impaired.

**% Always/Almost  
Always/Frequently**

**Overall, I am satisfied with:**

- the way I am treated by school personnel. 86
- the level of knowledge and experience of school personnel. 76
- how quickly services are implemented following an IEP (Individualized Educational Plan) decision. 75
- the exceptional education services my child receives. 75
- the way special education teachers and regular education teachers work together. 74
- the amount of time my child spends with regular education students. 73
- my child's academic progress. 66
- the effect of exceptional student education on my child's self-esteem. 65

**My child:**

- has friends at school. 86
- is happy at school. 77
- is learning skills that will be useful later on in life. 76
- spends most of the school day involved in productive activities. 75
- receives all the special education and related services on his/her IEP. 73

Starred items are for parents of students in grades 8 and above.

**% Always/Almost  
Always/Frequently**

**At my child’s IEP meetings we have talked about:**

- all of my child’s needs. 85
- whether my child should get accommodations (special testing conditions), for example, extra time. 64
- ways that my child could spend time with students in regular classes. 60
- whether my child would take the FCAT (Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test). 48
- \* which diploma my child may receive. 46
- whether my child needed speech/language services. 45
- whether my child needed services beyond the regular school year. 45
- \* the requirements for different diplomas. 38
- whether my child needed physical and/or occupational therapy. 34
- whether my child needed psychological counseling services. 36
- whether my child needed transportation. 32

**My child’s teachers:**

- are available to speak with me. 82
- expect my child to succeed. 82
- set appropriate goals for my child. 75
- give students with disabilities extra time or different assignments, if needed. 74
- call me or send me notes about my child. 73
- give homework that meets my child’s needs. 66

**My child’s school:**

- encourages me to participate in my child’s education. 78
- makes sure I understand my child’s IEP. 78
- sends me information written in a way I understand. 74
- addresses my child’s individual needs. 73
- encourages acceptance of students with disabilities. 72
- does all it can to keep students from dropping out of school. 71
- provides students with disabilities updated books and materials. 71
- wants to hear my ideas. 68
- informs me about all of the services available to my child. 66
- \* offers a variety of vocational courses, such as computers and business technology. 65
- offers students with disabilities the classes they need to graduate with a standard diploma. 64
- explains what I can do if I want to make changes to my child’s IEP. 64
- involves students with disabilities in clubs, sports, or other activities. 63
- \* provides information to students about education and jobs after high school. 61
- sends me information about activities and workshops for parents. 56

Starred items are for parents of students in grades 8 and above.

**% Always/Almost  
Always/Frequently**

- \* 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 high school. 51

**Parent Participation**

- I have attended my child’s IEP meetings. 91
- I meet with my child’s teachers to discuss my child’s needs and progress. 85
- I am comfortable talking about my child with school staff. 84
- I participate in school activities with my child. 66
- I attend meetings of the PTA/PTO. 28
- I have heard about the Florida Diagnostic and Learning Resources System (“FDLRS”) and the services they provide to families of children with disabilities. 22
- I attend School Advisory Committee meetings concerning school improvement. 22
- I attend meetings of organizations for parents of students with disabilities. 22
- I have used parent support services in my area. 17

Starred items are for parents of students in grades 8 and above.







**APPENDIX E:**

**Forms Review**













**APPENDIX F:**

**Glossary of Acronyms**



