

FINAL REPORT OF FOCUSED MONITORING OF  
EXCEPTIONAL STUDENT EDUCATION PROGRAMS IN

# OSCEOLA COUNTY

APRIL 23 - 26, 2001



FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION  
BUREAU OF INSTRUCTIONAL SUPPORT AND COMMUNITY SERVICES



**CHARLIE CRIST**  
COMMISSIONER

## FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

SHAN GOFF, CHIEF  
BUREAU OF INSTRUCTIONAL SUPPORT  
AND COMMUNITY SERVICES

July 10, 2002

Mr. Blaine A. Muse, Superintendent  
Osceola County School District  
817 Bill Beck Boulevard  
Kissimmee, Florida 34744-4495

Dear Superintendent Muse:

We are pleased to provide you with the final copy of your monitoring report from our visit on April 23-26, 2001. This report reflects revisions made after the preliminary report, based upon written correspondence from and telephone conversations with your staff.

Please note the following:

- Any forms the district develops to respond to findings of noncompliance must be submitted to the Bureau for review within 30 days of development.
- Quarterly summaries of the activities related to implementation of the system improvement measures as stated in this report, beginning September 1, 2002 and extending until the end of the 2002-03 school year unless otherwise noted must be submitted to the Bureau.
- The district's progress related to system improvement measures via the continuous improvement monitoring process will be reviewed.

Copies of this report are also being sent to the chairperson of the Osceola County School District and the principals of the schools visited.

If my staff can be of any assistance as you continue to implement the system improvement measures, please contact Eileen L. Amy, Program Administration and Evaluation Administrator at 850-488-1570 or via electronic mail at [Shan.Goff@FLDOE.ORG](mailto:Shan.Goff@FLDOE.ORG) or [Eileen.Amy@FLDOE.ORG](mailto:Eileen.Amy@FLDOE.ORG).

Blaine A. Muse  
July 10, 2002  
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Thank you for your continuing commitment to improve services for exceptional education students in Osceola County.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Shan Goff". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Shan" written in a larger, more prominent script than the last name "Goff".

Shan Goff, Chief  
Bureau of Instructional Support  
and Community Services

Enclosure

cc: Penny Collins  
Joe Williams  
Betty Coxe  
Eileen Amy  
Iris Anderson

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## INTRODUCTION

The Florida Department of Education, through the Bureau of Instructional Support and Community Services, in carrying out its role of leadership, resource allocation, technical assistance, monitoring, and evaluation is required to: examine and evaluate procedures, records, and programs in each school district of the state to determine compliance with state law and State Board of Education Rules; provide information and assistance to the superintendents and other district personnel in correcting deficiencies; and otherwise assist the districts in operating effectively and efficiently (Section 229.565, Florida Statutes, and Rule 6A-1.0453, Florida Administrative Code). Additionally, the Florida Department of Education, as the State Educational Agency, is required to supervise school district implementation of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and its implementing regulations in Part 300 of Title 34 of the Code of Federal Regulations.

## METHOD

With guidance from a work group charged with the responsibility of recommending revisions to the Bureau's monitoring system, substantial revisions were initiated during the 2000-2001 school year. Three types of monitoring processes have been established as part of a comprehensive system of monitoring and oversight including Focused Monitoring; Continuous Improvement/Self Assessment Monitoring; and Random Monitoring. Focused monitoring is the first type to be piloted by the Bureau and is the foundation for the activities and outcomes described in this report.

The revised monitoring system reflects the Department's commitment to providing assistance and service 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 and state laws, rules, and regulations. In addition, the monitoring system serves 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 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 ("triggers") that are identified as having significance in terms of educational outcomes for students. Through this process the Bureau uses such data to inform the monitoring process, thereby implementing a strategic approach to subsequent intervention and commitment of resources.

The monitoring restructuring work group recommended four "triggers" or data elements to examine for the 2000-2001 pilot year and for the next several years. Those data elements included: percentage of students with disabilities participating in regular education classes (i.e., spending at least 80% of the school day with their non-disabled peers); dropout rate for students with disabilities; percentage of students with disabilities

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exiting with a standard diploma; and, participation of students with disabilities in statewide assessments. The Bureau analyzed data related to these triggers and districts were selected to be monitored based on the results. Each district selected for monitoring was examined based on one selected trigger and eight topical areas. These topical areas are used to organize this report and are discussed in further detail on page 3.

Osceola County School District was selected as one of four pilot sites to be monitored based on the results of a review of data submitted electronically to the Department of Education Information Database in surveys 2, 3, 5, and 9 and from the assessment files. The trigger identified for Osceola County School District as a result of this review was the participation of students with disabilities in statewide assessments. In addition to the data related to the trigger, the following information for the school years 1997-98 through 1999-00 was also examined in preparation for the monitoring visit: participation rate and student performance on state assessments; retention rate; separate class placements for students identified as educable mentally handicapped; discipline rates; and, prevalence data. The performance of students who are gifted was also examined.

A profile containing data indicators that describe measures of educational benefit, the status of the Osceola County School District with respect to placement of students with disabilities in the least restrictive environment, and student membership in programs for students with disabilities and those identified as gifted was developed and is included as Appendix A. The information is presented for Osceola County School District, districts of comparable enrollment size, and the state. Where appropriate and available, comparative data for non-disabled students are included. The intent of the profile is to provide a tool that will help target areas that hold potential for the greatest improvement, thereby improving outcomes for exceptional students in the district.

### Parent Survey

In order to provide maximum opportunity for input from parents, a survey was mailed on April 27, 2001, to the parents of 5,140 students with disabilities and 321 gifted students currently enrolled in Osceola County's programs. The survey has been used for the past two years in 26 school districts as part of the ongoing monitoring of Exceptional Student Education (ESE) programs. The survey was designed for the Bureau by the University of Miami research staff to capture parent perceptions on a number of factors. Responses were received from a total of 866 parents of exceptional education students. Seven hundred ninety (790) were from parents of students with disabilities (62 pre-k; 427 grades k-5; 184 grades 6-8; and 117 grades 9-12) and 76 gifted students (25 grades k-5; 30 grades 6-8; and 21 grades 9-12). Results of the survey will be discussed, as appropriate, in the body of this report. Data from the survey responses are included as Appendix B.

### On-Site Monitoring Activities

The on-site visit in Osceola County was conducted during the week of April 23, 2001. Persons conducting the on-site activities included: four Department of Education (DOE) staff accompanied by a consultant assisting the Department in restructuring monitoring; four peer monitors; and two consultants with two observers from the University of Miami

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(see Appendix C). Peer monitors are ESE personnel from other districts who have been trained to assist with the DOE's monitoring of school districts. Each of the persons who served as peer monitors during this review previously participated in a minimum of two other monitoring visits during prior years.

On-site monitoring activities consisted of: student record reviews; interviews with school and district staff; a parent focus group interview; student focus group interviews; and student case studies. These activities were used to inform the following topical areas, which are defined as:

### **Participation in Statewide Assessments (Trigger)**

- Students with disabilities are included in district and statewide assessments with accommodations leading to graduation with a standard diploma.

### **General Supervision: (34 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) 300.600)**

- Effective general supervision is ensured through the district's development and utilization of mechanisms and activities, in a coordinated system, that results in all eligible exceptional education students having an opportunity to receive a free appropriate public education in the least restrictive environment.

### **Parent Participation: (34 CFR 300.345 )**

- Provision of a free appropriate public education to children and youth with disabilities is facilitated through parent involvement in special education services.

### **Least Restrictive Environment: (34 CFR 300.130 and 300.550 – 300.556 )**

- Children with disabilities are educated and participate in activities and services with their nondisabled peers.

### **Gifted Services**

- Students identified as gifted receive exceptional student education services and are afforded rights under state law.

### **Child Find: (34 CFR 300.125 and 300.530)**

- Children with disabilities are identified and their needs are determined based on information from an appropriate evaluation.

### **Part C to Part B: (34 CFR 300.132)**

- Transition planning results in needed supports and services, available and provided, as appropriate, to a child and the child's family when the child exits the Part C program.

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### **Secondary Transition:** (34 CFR 300.29 and 300.347 (b)(1)(2))

- The transition services needs of students with disabilities, beginning at 16 and younger when appropriate, are considered by the IEP team through an outcome-oriented process which promotes movement from school to post-school activities. Beginning at 14, a course of study statement is included in the IEP development process.

### **Access to General Curriculum:** (34 CFR 300.138(a) and 300.347(a)(3))

- Students with disabilities are provided access to the general curriculum with modifications, accommodations, supplementary aids and supports in order to make satisfactory progress.

### System Improvement

Following the provision of the preliminary report, the district was charged with the responsibility of designing system improvement measures. The system improvement measures address each of the topical areas. Action steps will be identified by the district with corresponding target completion dates and measures that will be used to assess the effectiveness of the action steps.

### Sample

DOE provided a list of 75 randomly selected students with disabilities and requested that district personnel secure the records of the first 30 students on the list who were still enrolled in the district. This group of student names was identified as the "core sample." In addition, a "supplemental sample" of additional student records was identified. DOE provided a list of 15 randomly selected student names for the supplemental sample in each of the following areas: students identified as gifted; children served in the prekindergarten program for children with disabilities; students identified as eligible for low incidence programs; African-American students who were identified as EMH (Educable Mentally Handicapped); and students who were enrolled in a center school. District personnel secured the records for the first five names in each of those categories.

## DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

As reported for the 1999-00 school year, Osceola County School District has a total school population (PK-12) of 31,884 with 4587 (14%) being identified as students with disabilities and 409 (1%) as gifted. Osceola County is considered a "middle size" district and is one of fourteen districts in this enrollment group. Of the total Osceola school population: 52% are white; 9% are black; and 34% are Hispanic. Of the students with disabilities: 56% are white; 11% are black; and 31% are Hispanic. Racial/ethnic data for students with a primary exceptionality of SLD, EH, SED, and EMH are presented in Appendix A.

Osceola County School District is comprised of 42 schools of which four are charter schools. Currently, six applications for charter schools are pending. There are no "F"

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schools and three "A" schools in the district. Cornerstone Behavioral Center serves students with disabilities who have behavioral concerns and elementary general education students facing expulsion.

Gifted elementary students are transported to a center one day per week. Middle and high schools have their own gifted programs. Celebration School (K-12) does not transport its students since it has its own gifted program.

### **DATA PROFILE**

Osceola County was selected to be monitored based on the results of the review of the data that indicated a low percentage of students with disabilities participating in statewide assessments. According to the 1999-00 data (survey 3 and assessment files), at the middle school and secondary level, eighth (reading and math) and tenth (reading and math) grade students with disabilities participate in the FCAT at a lower rate than other districts in its enrollment group. It is noted that the participation rate of tenth graders is lower than the rate for fifth and eighth graders. Appendix A provides more detailed information.

### **RECENT MONITORING ACTIVITIES AND RESULTS**

Osceola County's exceptional student education program was last monitored by means of a self-assessment in November of 1997.

Osceola County was last monitored by the Department of Education, Office of Multicultural Student Language Education in November 1997 and received a report in 1999. The following findings were identified in the report.

- Students identified as limited English proficient (LEP) did not have equal access to Osceola's gifted program.
- The gifted Plan B program included eligibility criteria that required mastery in English.
- Some ESE referral/eligibility forms were available only in English.
- A LEP student placed in ESOL and EMH in 1996, received testing by an English speaking psychologist and no information was found to document that the student's native language was considered during the evaluation/eligibility determination.

The district was visited by the Auditor General during August through December, 2000. The draft report identified the findings related to inaccurate reports of matrix levels and failure to follow appropriate procedures for the appointment of some teachers as out-of-field.

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## **HISTORY OF COMPLAINT RESOLUTION**

Since 1990, there were 25 requests for due process hearing filed in Osceola County. The district requested five hearings and parents requested twenty. Due process hearings involved the following issues: suspension/expulsion/discipline; change of placement; access to student records; private or residential placement; independent educational evaluation; and, least restrictive environment. Of the hearings filed, seven cases resulted in a Final Order. The district prevailed in five cases; a parent prevailed in one case; and, one case resulted in a "Stipulated Order. "

Two complaints were filed since 1998 with the most recent being filed in April, 2001. There have been nine requests for mediation since 1992. Four of the nine were canceled. Of the five requests remaining, three reached complete agreement and two reached a partial agreement.

## **ORGANIZATION OF THE REPORT**

This report is organized by the topical areas identified on page three of the report. For each of the areas, this report will provide: background information; strengths identified in the district; concerns; findings of noncompliance; and plans for system improvement. Included in Appendix D is a glossary of acronyms used in the report.

This report focuses, to the extent possible, on systemic issues rather than on isolated instances of noncompliance. Systemic issues are those areas of noncompliance and concern that occur at a sufficient enough frequency that the review team could reasonably infer a systemic problem.

## **FINDINGS**

The results of the on-site monitoring activities (student record reviews, interviews with school and district staff, a parent focus group interview, student focus group interviews, and case studies) are provided in this section of the report.

Focus group interviews were held separately with students preparing for a special diploma (a total of 19 students: seven in the 9<sup>th</sup> grade, five in the 10<sup>th</sup> grade, six in the 11<sup>th</sup> grade, and one in the 12<sup>th</sup> grade) and students preparing for a standard diploma (a total of twelve students: seven in 10<sup>th</sup> grade, four in 11<sup>th</sup> grade, and one in 12<sup>th</sup> grade). The teacher of the students included in the standard diploma group encouraged the students to write down their thoughts on exceptional student education in preparation for the focus group.

Four family members representing seven students with disabilities participated in a parent focus group interview. The students that were represented ranged in grade levels from prekindergarten to high school graduate, and were identified as students with learning disabilities, speech impairments, and autism.

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The following types of school and district level staff were interviewed and the results of those interviews are incorporated into this report:

- District director
- District staffing specialists
- Child study representatives
- Regular education teachers
- Special education teachers
- Gifted service providers
- Curriculum specialist
- Prekindergarten specialist
- School Psychologists

The following school sites were visited in order to interview staff and conduct the case studies: St. Cloud High School; Celebration School; New Beginnings School; Gateway High School; and, Reedy Creek Elementary School.

### **Participation in Statewide Assessment**

#### Background Information

The position presented by the district level staff interviewed is that as few ESE students as possible are exempted from statewide assessments. The district ESE Director reported efforts to inform school staff regarding alternate assessments. Alternate assessments used include the Brigance, the Murdock, and Portfolio assessment.

Students participating in the focus group interviews reported taking the FCAT and indicated understanding that they are required to pass it in order to get a standard diploma. Students stated that they received accommodations in order to take the FCAT including extended time, the teacher reading the questions aloud, and an alternative setting.

Several students participating in the focus group described various accommodations that are not currently allowable that they would like to see offered in both the reading and math portions of the FCAT. With respect to the reading section, students stated that they would rather have the reading passages read aloud by the teacher. Although students felt that the extended time was useful to them on the math portion of the FCAT, several students stated that the extended time accommodation for the reading section was unnecessary, since they feel as though they are incapable of reading the passages regardless of the time allowed. One student said, "Having un-timed is nice, but I can sit there for three days and look at it; it just means it's longer and longer and more frustrating...After 5 or 10 minutes of reading, I just gave up. I just got frustrated and did the 'Christmas tree'" to record guesses.

In terms of the math portion, students suggested that teachers be allowed to help them set up the problems in addition to reading the problems aloud. A student stated, "I could do the math, but I just couldn't pick out what to do. A lot of times they throw in a

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bunch of stuff you don't need... For a classroom test, the teachers can't give you the answer, but they help us pick out key words and show us what's in front of our faces."

Furthermore, students expressed their concern over the FCAT examination as a requirement for graduating with a standard diploma. A student said, "I don't think one test should determine whether you graduate ... one test shouldn't determine whether you graduate or not. Anybody can have trouble taking a test, and lock up."

Another student stated, "You have to keep taking it [FCAT] or change your diploma to a special diploma. They [students pursuing special diploma] don't have to take it to graduate."

Parents who participated in the focus group interview provided additional insight into the participation of students with disabilities in the FCAT. One parent stated that she had expectations for her son to graduate with a standard diploma, but he will be unable to do so because of the FCAT. She said, "Prior to the FCAT, I thought my son would graduate from high school because he functions very well in school with no behavior problems and has the IQ. However, with the FCAT... even the regular education students out there today, forget about the ESE students, are struggling with the test and [teachers] are teaching to the test. Now I'm not saying that we shouldn't raise the bar, but we're not all going to be high achievers or perfect."

### Strengths

None were identified.

### Concerns

Case studies and focus groups yielded the following concerns in the area of participation in statewide assessments.

- The results of the case studies yielded concerns about the participation of students with disabilities in statewide assessments. For an eleventh grade student who was not participating in the FCAT, the Brigance is used as the alternate assessment. According to the student's IEP, the decision was made based on the student's academic level. Upon further examination of the records, the student is receiving good grades in his special and general education classes. The special education teacher reported that there was no reason why this student could not take the FCAT.
- Results of the case studies also indicated that the same testing accommodations and modifications are listed for all ESE students.
- For another case study, it was noted that the student was not participating in the FCAT. The IEP stated that the student is not to be involved in the statewide assessment, "due to severe behaviors when presented with a test." The teacher agreed that the student would disrupt the classroom during testing. The student is taking the Brigance as the alternate assessment. There was concern that all

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appropriate accommodations had not been considered that could facilitate this student's participation in the FCAT.

- Students participating in the focus group recommended that teachers be given the proper materials so that they can prepare their students for the FCAT accordingly. A student said, "There was stuff on the math test that the teachers didn't go over in class. My teacher tried as hard as she could, she got practice books, but they were old, ... they were ratted out, you were scared to turn the page thinking it would turn to dust."

The review of the student records yielded further concerns.

- The statements of any individual accommodations in the administration of state or district-wide assessments were not consistent with those adaptations identified on the student's Individual Educational Plan (IEP) for use in completing classroom activities and testing.
- Many IEPs reflected an identical pattern of testing accommodations raising concerns regarding decision-making on an individual basis.

Findings of Noncompliance

Interviews with staff yielded the following areas of noncompliance.

- Based on the interviews with school staff, there appears to be a lack of awareness of the initiative to include ESE students in district and statewide assessments. Regular and special education teachers interviewed reported that participation in the FCAT is based on whether or not a student is seeking a standard diploma. It was reported that all students seeking a special diploma take the Brigance. This indicates that the decision to participate in the testing is not individualized, is based on the student's diploma track, and that the district's position on inclusion of ESE students has not been effectively communicated to school staff.

System Improvement: Participation in Assessment

<b>Action Steps</b>	<b>Contact Person</b>	<b>Target Completion Date</b>	<b>Measurable Results Indicating Effective Correction</b>
1. District trains high school administrators, test coordinator, RCS, and ESE staff on assessment procedures (decision-making, accommodations, recording, and IEP components).	D. Winget S. Harris	January 2002	Number of students with disabilities participating in FCAT and evidence that testing accommodations are based on the needs of students are higher than before the training.
2. On going training for school based RCS' and ESE staff.	D. Winget S. Harris	May 2002	
3. Random audit of assessment records.	D. Winget S. Harris	May 2002	

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### **General Supervision**

#### Background Information

Interviews with district and school level staff indicated that there was a clear understanding regarding procedures and information flow between school and district level. There was evident understanding regarding methods used to access guidance and assistance from the ESE Department.

Staff training in Osceola appeared to be available. The district ESE director reported attending, on a yearly basis, a national conference on legal issues. She updates district staff who, in turn, update resource compliance specialists (RCS). RCSs are responsible for ensuring compliance with policies and procedures and provide training at the school-based level.

District staff reported attending numerous conferences. Recent inservice training was provided on: increasing reading proficiency; building listening skills; and improving oral reading.

Numerous bilingual staff in the district provide assistance to students and their families.

Services to private schools, Department of Juvenile Justice and jails are in place.

ESE curriculum staff collaborate with general education curriculum staff. Curricular materials are related to the Sunshine State Standards and are distributed to teachers through the RCSs. Regular education teachers are involved in IEP meetings. There are a number of school sites with a co-teaching model in place. Special educators are informed about curriculum standards through inservice training, memoranda, and electronic mail.

On the elementary level, supplemental academic instruction (SAI) funds are used for extended school day services including before and after school and Saturday school. Between 3000 and 3500 youngsters are served in the district. The decision regarding who will participate in the extended school day program is made at the school level. Students with disabilities have access to the program. At the high school level, SAI funds support summer school for youngsters behind in meeting graduation requirements. Here again, students with disabilities may be included. SAI funds support ESE extended school services and provide assistance in reducing class size to elementary schools receiving a "D" grade.

Title I dollars are used to fund a prekindergarten position, teacher aides, computer assisted instruction, lab aides, reading teachers, and the Partners in Print initiative. Title I funds also support professional development.

Regular education teachers who work with ESE students provide information to the IEP team either through their attendance at meetings or by completing a written form that includes student academic performance and attendance records. All regular and

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special education teachers receive copies of IEPs and are made aware of any changes that might occur.

### Strengths

The district makes extensive efforts to have interpreters at the meetings when parents speak other languages.

The school-based resource compliance specialists ensure compliance, provide training, and coordinate with staff and families. Each school has a RCS on a full-time basis, representing a significant commitment of resources on the part of the district.

At Gateway High School, computerized systems like the electronic grade book assist teachers in keeping up-to-date on individual student instructional strategies and accommodations.

### Concerns

Through the case study and record review processes, concerns related to general supervision are noted.

- IEP goals and objectives were not always individualized for IEPs.
- The same assessment modifications were listed on IEPs for all students with disabilities.
- Through the record review process it was determined that one student was placed in a separate day facility due to social behavior problems and high number of referrals. A functional behavior assessment and a functional behavior plan need to be developed. The IEP was developed on 3/29/01. Due to the close proximity of the IEP date and the date of the monitoring visit, it is not identified as a non-compliance issue at this time. It was, however, an area of concern.
- Special education identified on IEPs needed to be expressed in more detail. "Academic instruction" or "direct instruction" were terms used to identify the special education service on many IEPs. These are vague terms that may also apply to students in regular education. "Communication" is another special education service identified on some IEPs. That terminology does not convey enough information about what service the student will receive.
- The statements regarding the results of the initial evaluation or most recent evaluation of the student being considered contained jargon and were not easily understandable by parents. "Reading 2.6" and "M 4.3," for example, are terms that are unclear.

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- During the parent focus group meeting, concerns were expressed about teachers teaching out-of-field and about high mobility/low retention rates among both ESE and regular education teachers.

### Findings of Noncompliance

Through the case study and interview processes, the following findings related to general supervision are noted.

- Although report cards and progress reports are sent to parent, the progress reports did not specifically address the likelihood of meeting the IEP goals by the end of the year.
- Some annual goals were not related to the present level of performance statements.
- The IEP of one student record reviewed through the case study process identified a one-to-one assistant as a supplementary aid or service on the IEP. Based on the interview with the teacher, the need for this one-to-one assistant was identified when the student was receiving services at his home high school. The student is currently receiving services at an alternative school without the one-to-one assistant being provided. There was no evidence that an IEP meeting was conducted to make a decision regarding this change of service.
- In another individual case, the student is receiving counseling services that were not reflected on the IEP.
- It was determined through the interviews with the staffing specialists and school level staff that there was not an adequate understanding of the requirements related to change of placement/FAPE procedures.

A review of the student records yielded non-compliance items related to general supervision. None of these items listed below are isolated cases but rather represent multiple instances. An example or explanation is provided for each compliance item, when appropriate.

- The notice for some IEP meetings did not accurately address the purpose of the meeting.  
Example: A notice stated that the purpose of the meeting was for reevaluation and did not indicate that the IEP would also be reviewed. Other notices failed to identify transition as being the purpose of the meeting even though the students were of "transition planning age." In another case, for a student who was temporarily placed and for whom a transition plan was developed, the purpose was not checked on the form.
- The person serving as the interpreter of instructional implications was not clearly identified.

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Explanation: If an ESE teacher is also serving in the capacity of an interpreter of educational testing, then this needs to be documented.

- Some IEPs either did not include or provided a vague statement indicating how the student's disability affects the student's involvement and progress in the general curriculum.  
Explanation: Statements indicating how the student's disability affects involvement and progress in the general curriculum need to be detailed. "Needs small group instruction and direct teaching" does not provide sufficient detail on how the student's disability affects participation.
- Some annual goals were not adequate or were not written in measurable terms.  
Examples:  
"Student will master objectives listed below with 80% accuracy."  
"Student will implement the following strategies to improve reading to maintain [passing grades]."  
"Student will express himself in an appropriate manner 8 out of 10 times."
- Some short-term objectives were not written in measurable terms; objectives and/or benchmarks were not consistent with the goal for some IEPs.
- The initiation and duration dates of modifications were not provided.
- The initiation and duration dates of services exceeded 365 days. IEPs must be reviewed at a minimum every twelve months.
- Frequency of services was not adequately described. "Weekly" communication does not provide enough detail and interviews with staff revealed differing definitions of what "weekly" meant. Weekly was defined as one time per week or more than once per week.
- Location of services was not adequately described on all IEPs reviewed. "Classroom" is not detailed enough, as the type of classroom (i.e., ESE, regular education, or resource) that the services will be delivered in cannot be determined.
- The IEP form and progress reports did not describe the extent to which progress is sufficient to enable the student to achieve the goal by the end of the year.  
Explanation: "Mastered" or "continuing" criteria found on progress reports did not provide sufficient information.
- There was insufficient evidence that the results of student performance on state or district-wide assessments were consistently considered by the team when developing the IEP.

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**The following non-compliance items were identified on specific student records. The items warrant funding adjustments.**

- Two IEPs reviewed were not current.

As part of the monitoring process, a review of the district’s forms was conducted. It was determined that the following forms need to be developed and/or revised: form documenting least restrictive environment; informed notice of refusal; notice of consent or placement; notice of conference; and informed notice and consent for evaluation. Specific revisions and further suggestions have been provided to the district under separate cover.

System Improvement: General Supervision

Action Steps	Contact Person	Target Completion Date	Measurable Results Indicating Effective Correction
1. 1. On going training regarding IEPs for school based RCS' and ESE staff.	D. Winget S. Harris	January 2002	Numbers of IEPs in compliance higher than before training, and schools demonstrate (by sending in student records) that they are using the forms correctly for more students after the training.
2. Random audit.	D. Winget S. Harris	May 2002	
3. Development of DOE forms (LRE, FAPE, Refusal, ESE Progress Report, Invitation, Re-evaluation, Conference Notes, & Eligibility)	D. Winget S. Harris	July 2001	

**Parent Participation**

Background Information

Parents are invited to all meetings. A notice to inform parents about an IEP meeting is sent two weeks in advance of the proposed meeting date. A second notice is sent one week before the meeting. If the parent cannot attend the meeting, it will be re-scheduled at the parent’s convenience. The school secretary will call the parents the day before the meeting, as a reminder. Copies of all paperwork are provided to the parent in person or by mail.

District staff have made a commitment to working with parents to resolve disagreements prior to formal interventions like mediation or due process. Disagreements are first handled at the school level where most of the problems are resolved.

Student progress is reported to parents through telephone contact, meetings, and mail. Social workers, counselors, teachers, and RCS’ typically communicate with parents.

Parents who participated in the focus group interview indicated that they received information from the district regarding their rights and responsibilities. Telephone

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interviews that were conducted as part of the case studies revealed that parents were given the opportunity to participate in the planning of their child's most recent evaluation. Parents reported that the most recent IEP meetings were scheduled at a mutually agreed upon time and place and that they understood their rights related to the IEP meeting process. A variety of educational options such as general education classes with support and services, special education classes, or separate school were considered at the IEP meeting.

### Strengths

The district's curriculum specialist reported implementing a family literacy initiative entitled "Partners in Print."

### Concerns

As a result of interviews, focus groups, and a review of student records, the following were identified as concerns in the area of parent participation.

- Some parents participating in the focus group said they did not understand information they were given and were not instructed on what it means. As one parent stated and others agreed, "During that time, we didn't know what we were doing... it's a need-to-know basis, no one is going to give you any choices, you're out in the woods, they throw you a pamphlet. We are not educators, we are parents... you believe that they have your child's best interest at heart and that they're doing everything possible for your child. Until something goes wrong, we don't do anything."
- Parents at the focus group interview suggested that the school district could help parents by setting a special appointment to meet with parents early on. One parent stated, "Parents don't know what [the] IEP is or that they have the right to get a copy of the IEP or that they can have input as to the plan... It's not that there's nothing available, but it's not easy to get to. The information is sometimes not forthcoming. They give you some choices, but don't mention all of them." Parents recommended that the district provide more information for parents of ESE children so that communication can be improved and anxiety subdued.
- Based on a review of the student records, the statement on IEP invitation notices that "you may bring other individuals at your discretion" does not completely portray the intent. It is recommended that the wording more clearly reflect that parents have the right to bring someone with special knowledge and expertise about their child to the meeting.

### Findings of Noncompliance

A review of the student records yielded non-compliance items related to parent participation. None of the items listed below are isolated cases, rather they represent multiple instances.

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- For non-English speaking parents, notices were not consistently provided in the parent's native language.
- Parent concerns for enhancing the education of their child were not consistently documented on all IEP's reviewed.  
Explanation: When parents state that they will be unable to attend the IEP team and that the meeting may proceed without them, their input needs to be solicited and incorporated into the development of the IEP for their child.

System Improvement: Parent Participation

Action Steps	Contact Person	Target Completion Date	Measurable Results Indicating Effective Correction
1. Develop dual invitation (English and Spanish) and reminder form.	D. Winget S. Harris	May 2002	Schools demonstrate (by sending in student records) that they are using Spanish forms for more students as appropriate.
2. Random audit of IEPs to determine that parent concerns were documented.	D. Winget S. Harris	May 2002	

**Least Restrictive Environment**

Background Information

IEPs identified accommodations and modifications, including seating preferences, shortened assignments, assistance with taking notes, and large print texts to be used with individual students in order to help maintain them in the least restrictive environment possible.

There is a separate alternative school for students with behavioral difficulties. Students have access to the general curriculum while in attendance and are involved in both a school-wide discipline program and an individual behavioral intervention plan. The focus of the school is to encourage students to make improvements in their behavior so that they return to their home school in a timely manner.

Most of the ESE students participating in the focus group interviews reported being involved with regular education students in extra-curricular activities outside of class. Several students in the special diploma group are involved in sports after school, including basketball and weightlifting. Students in the standard diploma group also participate in extra-curricular activities including wrestling, swim team and biking.

Strengths

Interviews with staff, focus group interviews, and record reviews revealed these strengths in the area of least restrictive environment:

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- The role of the RCS establishes support to general education teachers in maintaining exceptional education students in their classes.
- Most ESE students from the focus groups did not express specific concerns about placement or about interaction with regular education students. Most students said they felt as though they were treated the same as regular education students.
- Based on the review of the current and previous IEPs and interviews with teachers responsible for instruction, the individual case studies revealed that students who were participating in general education classes were making progress.

Concerns

Data provided through focus group interviews and interviews with staff indicated concerns in the area of least restrictive environment.

- Parents who participated in the focus group interview felt that it was important to mainstream their children as much as possible because they believed that once the children are labeled and receive full-time ESE, it is impossible to return to the mainstream. The feelings are expressed by one parent, “Once the kids are placed in ESE full-time, there’s no going back to mainstream. I know parents whose children have a mild disability and go into full ESE programs and never get out... It’s hard to take the ‘label’ off a child.”
- An ESE teacher assigned to a center school indicated that there are little or no opportunities for students to participate in activities with nondisabled peers.

Findings of Noncompliance

A review of the student records yielded one non-compliance item related to least restrictive environment. The item listed below is not an isolated case, rather it represents multiple instances.

- There was inadequate documentation of the explanation of the extent to which students will not participate with their nondisabled peers.

System Improvement: LRE

Action Steps	Contact Person	Target Completion Date	Measurable Results Indicating Effective Correction
1. Parent/family conferences- elementary and middle/high for information regarding placement options.	L. Schroder-King	February 2002	Schools demonstrate (by sending in student records) that they are documenting the explanation of the extent, if any to which the child will not participate with nondisabled children in the regular class and placement options.

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Action Steps	Contact Person	Target Completion Date	Measurable Results Indicating Effective Correction
2. Develop form documenting explanation of the extent, if any to which the child will not participate with nondisabled children in the regular class.	D. Winget S. Harris	July 2001	Same as above.

**Gifted Services**

Background Information

Elementary students are bused to a center to attend a class for the gifted one day per week. Middle school gifted students attend gifted class at their home school.

Strengths

Based on interviews and case studies, the following strengths in the area of gifted were identified:

- The district is beginning to see evidence that activities they have implemented during the past year to increase the number of limited English proficient students in the gifted program are meeting success.
- There was evidence of individualization of EPs for gifted students in the class.
- The general education teacher indicated that most of the general curriculum for her class is project-based and can be changed to meet the needs of each student.
- The team teaching approach implemented at one school visited appeared to be an effective way to help students who need more challenging assignments while not “overtly identifying” students who have different learning needs. Learning styles are considered when developing projects/assignments for gifted students.

Concerns

The case study and staff interviews conducted yielded the following concerns related to gifted students.

- The goals on EPs were not adequate and it was difficult to determine if they reflected the student’s strengths and weaknesses.  
Example: “higher level thinking skills through creative thinking skills/activities.”
- The service delivery model does not reflect a continuum of services.

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Gifted

Action Steps	Contact Person	Target Completion Date	Measurable Results Indicating Effective Correction
1. On going training regarding EP components and service delivery models for school-based RCS' and gifted staff.	D. Winget S. Harris	May 2002	Schools demonstrate (by sending in student records) that the more EPs contain strengths/weaknesses and that the continuum of services were considered appropriately for more gifted students after the training.
2. Random audit of EP documents.	D. Winget S. Harris	May 2002	

**Child Find**

Background Information

The student services department houses the psychologists in this district. Child study team packets are sent to the student services department for review.

The psychologists reported that training is provided by local universities or through conferences they choose to attend.

Strengths

Based on interview data, strengths were identified in the area of child find.

- Schools appear to be consistent in following the referral/evaluation process.
- Emphasis on addressing the unique needs of bilingual or LEP students was apparent.

Concerns

A review of case studies and focus group interviews revealed these concerns related to the area of child find.

- A student who was identified as educable mentally handicapped (EMH) and language impaired was dismissed from language services. There was a question regarding the appropriate eligibility criteria being met for EMH since the student's academic scores were in the average range. Also, the goals and objectives identified on the IEP were all related to written language, possibly indicating that the student continued to need language services.
- Several parents attending the focus group reported personally paying to have their children evaluated by independent professionals. Parents had gone to this expense either because the schools did not provide timely evaluation services or because the parents perceived that the evaluations were inadequate.

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Findings of Noncompliance

Based on case studies and record reviews, the following were identified as areas of noncompliance related to child find.

- The results of one case study showed no documentation as to how the child qualified for developmentally delayed services. A speech/language report was the only evaluation included in the student record.
- The review of student records revealed inadequate documentation regarding the parent's receipt of a copy of the evaluation report and the documentation of the determination of eligibility.

System Improvement

Action Steps	Contact Person	Target Completion Date	Measurable Results Indicating Effective Correction
1. Development of form documenting the parent's receipt of the evaluation report.	D. Winget S. Harris	July 2001	Schools demonstrate (by sending in student records) that they are documenting the parent's receipt of the evaluation report correctly.
2. Training for school-based RCS' on documenting the parent's receipt of the evaluation report.	D. Winget S. Harris	May 2002	

**Transition from Part C to Part B Programs**

Background information

The family care coordinators from the Part C Early Intervention Program contact the school district approximately six months prior to the child's third birthday. District staff participate in the transition planning conference with Early Intervention staff and the family.

Strengths

Parents appear to be highly involved in the Part C to Part B transition process and are consulted about their child's needs.

Concerns

No concerns were identified.

System Improvement: Transition from Part C to Part B Programs

None required.

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## Secondary Transition

### Background information

Students representing the special diploma group indicated during the focused interview that they have plans for the future including joining the military, enrolling in a police academy, attending a culinary arts class, becoming a cook, prekindergarten teacher or a mechanic. Several students stated they are currently working at local fast food restaurants, a machine shop, and feed store.

Most students in the standard diploma group reported wanting to go to college or attend a junior college before entering a 4-year college. Most students stated that they plan to work while they continue their education. Several students were employed in the community, stating that they are working at local fast food restaurants, at a department store giving demonstrations, doing landscaping, and volunteering at the Red Cross.

### Strengths

The following strengths were revealed for the area of secondary transition, based on student focus group data:

- Students in the special diploma group reported during the focus group interview that school prepares them to get a job by teaching them how to fill out job applications and develop resumes. Students are participating in vocational education courses such as auto mechanics, childcare, and speech. Students were familiar with the grade level and GPA requirements for the OJT (On-the-Job Training) program. Students also stated that the school has provided information about further job training.
- One student in the special diploma group is currently participating in the OJT program. The student works in a machine shop for approximately 25 hours within a 3-day period each week. Another student participates in an extended day program and had gotten a job through the school with the help of the childcare teacher.
- In the standard diploma group, students stated that their ESE teacher talks to them about college and has them complete assignments related to their future plans. Although students got their current jobs on their own, they reported that they could get a job through the school by applying at the career center.
- Students in the special diploma group stated that they were asked if they wanted to pursue a regular or special diploma indicating an awareness of the diploma options available to them.

### Concerns

None were noted.

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### Findings of Noncompliance

A review of the student records yielded non-compliance items related to transition. The items listed below are not isolated cases; rather, they represent multiple instances.

- Transition IEPs do not contain an adequate course of study statement, beginning at age 14.  
Example: Statements such as “required for diploma requirement” and “student will like to graduate, get a job and work” do not provide information about the course of study.
- Some transition IEPs did not provide evidence that an agency representative was invited to the transition meeting.

### System Improvement: Secondary Transition

Action Steps	Contact Person	Target Completion Date	Measurable Results Indicating Effective Correction
1. On going training for school-based RCS' and ESE staff regarding transition procedures (including course of study statement on IEPs and inviting agency representatives to appropriate meetings).	D. Winget S. Harris	January 2002	Schools demonstrate (by sending in student records) that they are including course of study statement on IEPs and inviting agency representatives to appropriate IEP meetings for more students after the training.
2. Random audit of transition procedures/documents.	D. Winget S. Harris	May 2002	
3. Development of invitation forms.	D. Winget S. Harris	July 2001	

## **Access to General Curriculum**

### Background Information

Several students in the special diploma group indicated during the focus group interview that they participate in regular education courses as well as ESE courses. Students in the standard diploma group stated they attend regular education classes. Students also reported that regular education teachers implement classroom accommodations (extra time on assignments, taking tests in the ESE classroom, and “unlimited” time on classroom tests) and those accommodations vary for individual students. Different teaching strategies are used and the teacher expectations for the achievement of ESE students varies.

ESE teachers meet with regular education teachers on either a daily or weekly basis to discuss integrated curriculum issues.

ESE youngsters are receiving modifications and accommodations in order to access regular education.

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Special educators are provided with the Sunshine State Standards, receive training related to curriculum, and have available to them materials and texts that correspond to the general education curriculum.

The results of the case studies yielded the following information:

- It was evident that IEP teams were considering involvement in the general curriculum.
- Academic curricula were based on the Sunshine State Standards.
- The same text book series were being used in regular and special education academic classes.

### Strengths

Based on interviews, case studies, and focus groups, the following strengths are identified in the area of access to the general curriculum

- Interviews with staff and implementation of case studies indicate that lesson plans are aligned to the Sunshine State Standards and textbooks are selected based on those standards.
- Students who participated in the focus group interview reported that their ESE teacher and some of their regular education teachers offered them a great deal of help. One student said, "If it wasn't for a lot of my teachers, I would have dropped out... We get a lot of help from our teachers and aides." "The [world history] teacher we have now gives me a lot of help, she explains the notes, she goes as far as she possibly can to get everyone to understand. She offers three different kinds of tests because she understands that kids perform differently on different types of tests. She gives us extra credit, and she offers, 'Do you want to take the test with the [ESE teacher]?" "[The teacher] goes above and beyond in everything, to get us what we need. She goes out of her way to help us."
- Parents who participated in the focus group interview did not express concerns about instructional adaptations and accommodations their children receive. Overall, parents felt that the availability of ESE services at each school depends on how the principal runs the school.

Individual case studies yielded strengths that should be noted.

- In one case study, a student taking an ESE math class is following the curriculum to prepare for GED testing.

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- In one case study, the alternative center school recognized that the student needs to take chemistry and facilitated meeting this requirement through making the course available on-line.

Concerns

None identified

Findings of Noncompliance

A review of the student records yielded one non-compliance item related to access to the general curriculum. The item listed below is not an isolated case; rather, it represents multiple instances.

- IEPs did not adequately provide statements indicating how the student’s disability affects the student’s involvement in the general curriculum.  
Examples:  
“It has been difficult for this student to learn in a regular classroom environment in academic areas.”  
“Needs to continue developing his writing skills covered by the 4<sup>th</sup> grade curriculum.”

System Improvement: Access to the general curriculum

<b>Action Steps</b>	<b>Contact Person</b>	<b>Target Completion Date</b>	<b>Measurable Results Indicating Effective Correction</b>
1. On going training for school-based RCS’ and ESE staff.	D. Winget S. Harris	January 2002	Schools demonstrate (by sending in student records) that they are including on IEPs statements indicating how the student’s disability affects the student’s involvement in the general curriculum for more students after the training.
2. Random audit.	D. Winget S. Harris	May 2002	

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SUMMARY

The purpose of the focused monitoring implemented in Osceola County School District was to examine educational benefits and desired outcomes for students with disabilities and gifted students. As described earlier in this report, the process was designed to provide a mechanism that would subsequently result in improved educational benefits and outcomes. The DOE and its work group identified key data indicators that describe measures of educational benefit. These indicators are the focus of the monitoring activities. The challenge for the Department was to customize a monitoring process that would not only continue to address areas of non-compliance, but would provide information about the performance of and outcomes for exceptional education students.

Following release of the preliminary report, the district was required to develop system improvement measures for each topical area of the report. The Bureau will monitor the implementation of these system improvement measures over time and provide technical support as needed and requested by the district.

It is expected that the results and findings from this monitoring will help the district address the extent to which desired outcomes for exceptional education students are considered and provide a framework for planning for the future.

## **APPENDIX A – LEA PROFILE**



**Florida Department of Education  
 Division of Public Schools and Community Education  
 Bureau of Instructional Support and Community Services  
 LEA Profile**

District: <b>Osceola</b>	PK-12 Population:	<b>31,884</b>
School Year: <b>1999-00</b>	Percent Disabled:	<b>14%</b>
	Percent Gifted:	<b>1%</b>

### **Introduction**

This profile contains a series of data indicators that describe measures of educational benefit, educational environment and prevalence for exceptional students. The data are presented for the district, districts of comparable size (enrollment group), and the state. Where appropriate and available, comparative data for general education students are included.

Data presented as indicators of educational benefit

- Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test (FCAT) Participation and Performance
- Standard diploma rate
- Dropout rate
- Retention rate

Data presented as indicators of educational environment

- Regular class placement
- Separate class placement
- Discipline rates

Data presented as indicators of prevalence

- Student membership by race/ethnicity
- Gifted membership by free/reduced lunch and Limited English Proficiency (LEP) status
- Student membership in selected exceptionalities by race/ethnicity

Four of the indicators included in the profile, Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test (FCAT) participation, graduation rate, dropout rate, and regular class placement, are also used in the selection of districts for focused monitoring. Indicators describing the prevalence and special class placement of students identified as educable mentally handicapped (EMH) are included to correspond with provisions of the Department's resolution agreement with the Office for Civil Rights. In districts where the data reveal a significant disproportionality of minority students in EMH programs or a high percentage of EMH students served in special classes, the district may be required to conduct a school level analysis of prevalence data for EMH students.

The LEA profile is intended to provide districts with a tool for use in planning for systemic improvement. Districts are asked to thoroughly review the data and select indicators that hold potential for the greatest program improvement. Once indicators have been selected, districts will develop a plan to conduct a local in-depth analysis that will be submitted with the district's entitlement grant application.

### **Data Sources**

The data contained in this profile were obtained from data submitted electronically by districts through the Department of Education Information Database in surveys 2, 9, 3 and 5 and from the assessment files. Data are included from school years **1997-98** through **1999-00**.

## 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 indications of consumer satisfaction. This section of the profile provides data on indicators of student performance and school completion.

### Participation Rate in Statewide Assessments

The number of students with disabilities taking the Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test (FCAT) divided by the number enrolled during survey 3 (February) of the same year. (Note: Only students with valid scores are included in the calculation of participation rates). The resulting percentages are reported for the three-year period from **1997-98** through **1999-2000**.

Grade 4 Participation FCAT - Reading		
1997-98	1998-99	1999-00
71%	78%	84%
83%	82%	83%
74%	76%	82%

Osceola  
Enrollment Group  
State

Grade 5 Participation FCAT - Math		
1997-98	1998-99	1999-00
76%	79%	86%
87%	84%	85%
77%	79%	84%

Grade 8 Participation FCAT - Reading		
1997-98	1998-99	1999-00
68%	67%	76%
80%	77%	79%
69%	70%	76%

Osceola  
Enrollment Group  
State

Grade 8 Participation FCAT - Math		
1997-98	1998-99	1999-00
67%	68%	78%
80%	77%	79%
69%	70%	76%

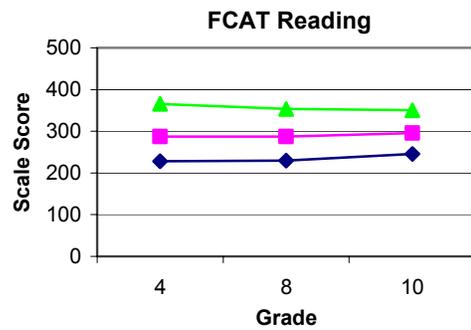
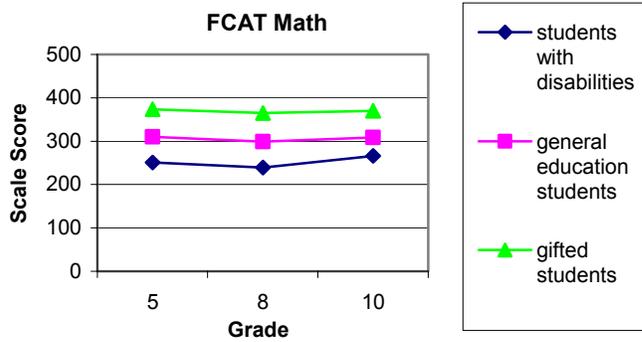
Grade 10 Participation FCAT - Reading		
1997-98	1998-99	1999-00
43%	46%	51%
62%	78%	61%
50%	66%	60%

Osceola  
Enrollment Group  
State

Grade 10 Participation FCAT - Math		
1997-98	1998-99	1999-00
45%	46%	51%
63%	59%	61%
51%	51%	59%

### Performance on Statewide Assessments

The following chart and table display the district's average scale score of all students with a valid score taking the FCAT in **1999-2000**. The averages are reported for students with disabilities, general education students, and gifted students. (Note: Tenth grade performance of gifted students may not be included due to small numbers.)



FCAT Math		
Average Scale Score		
Grade	Grade	Grade
5	8	10
251	239	266
310	299	309
374	365	370

students with disabilities  
 general education students  
 gifted students

FCAT Reading		
Average Scale Score		
Grade	Grade	Grade
4	8	10
228	229	245
287	287	296
365	353	350

The percent of students with disabilities at each achievement level on the **1999-2000** FCAT. For the calculation of school grades, high performing FCAT criteria are met when 50 percent or more students (included in the school grade) score at level 3 or above.

Grade 4 Achievement Level				
FCAT - Reading				
1	2	3	4	5
72%	12%	12%	4%	0%
59%	15%	18%	7%	<1%
65%	13%	15%	6%	<1%

Osceola  
 Enrollment Group  
 State

Grade 5 Achievement Level				
FCAT - Math				
1	2	3	4	5
66%	23%	8%	3%	<1%
54%	27%	13%	5%	<1%
58%	25%	11%	5%	<1%

Grade 8 Achievement Level				
FCAT - Reading				
1	2	3	4	5
74%	21%	4%	<1%	0%
67%	27%	4%	1%	<1%
72%	24%	3%	<1%	<1%

Osceola  
 Enrollment Group  
 State

Grade 8 Achievement Level				
FCAT - Math				
1	2	3	4	5
70%	19%	10%	1%	0%
63%	18%	14%	3%	1%
69%	16%	11%	2%	<1%

Grade 10 Achievement Level				
FCAT - Reading				
1	2	3	4	5
81%	16%	<1%	2%	0%
72%	23%	<1%	5%	0%
76%	19%	<1%	3%	0%

Osceola  
 Enrollment Group  
 State

Grade 10 Achievement Level				
FCAT - Math				
1	2	3	4	5
62%	20%	15%	3%	0%
59%	22%	12%	6%	<1%
65%	19%	11%	4%	<1%

### Standard Diploma Graduation Rate for Students with Disabilities

The number of students with disabilities graduating with a standard diploma (withdrawal code W06) divided by the total number of students with disabilities who completed their education (withdrawal codes W06-10, W27). The resulting percentages are reported for the three-year period from **1997-98** through **1999-2000**.

	1997-98	1998-99	1999-00
Osceola	61%	56%	36%
Enrollment Group	60%	68%	57%
State	59%	66%	56%

### Retention Rate

The number of students retained divided by the survey 2 (October) enrollment. The results are reported for students with disabilities and all PK-12 students for **1999-2000**.

		1999-00	
		Students with Disabilities	All Students
Osceola		<1%	6.9%
Enrollment Group		<1%	6.7%
State		<1%	6.8%

### 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). Total enrollment is the count of all students who attended school at any time during the school year. The resulting percentages are reported for students with disabilities, gifted students, and all PK-12 students for the years **1998-99** through **1999-2000**.

		1998-99			1999-00		
		Students with Disabilities	All Students	Gifted Students	Students with Disabilities	All Students	Gifted Students
Osceola		7%	6%	3%	5%	6%	<1%
Enrollment Group		6%	not avail.	<1%	6%	5%	<1%
State		7%	5%	1%	6%	5%	<1%

## Educational Environment

Educational environment refers to the extent to which students with disabilities receive special education and related services in classes or schools with their nondisabled peers. This section of the profile provides data on indicators of educational placement.

### Regular Class Placement of Students with Disabilities

The number of students with disabilities ages 6-21 who spend 80 percent or more of their school week in regular classes divided by the total number of students with disabilities reported in survey 9 (December). The resulting percentages are reported for the three years from **1997-98** through **1999-2000**.

	1997-98	1998-99	1999-00 *	
	Age 3-21	Age 3-21	Age 3-5	Age 6-21
	Osceola	51%	53%	<1%
Enrollment Group	54%	54%	8%	56%
State	53%	51%	7%	49%

\* 1999-00 percentages are separated due to change in placement categories for 3-5.

### Separate Class Placement of EMH Students

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 survey 9 (December). The resulting percentages are reported for **1999-2000**.

	1999-00
Osceola	41%
Enrollment Group	60%
State	61%

### Discipline Rates

The number of students who served in-school or out-of-school suspension, were expelled, or moved to alternative placement at any time during the school year divided by the survey 2 (October) enrollment. The resulting percentages are reported for students with disabilities and nondisabled students for **1999-2000**.

		1999-2000							
		In-School Suspensions		Out-of-School Suspensions		Expulsions		Alternative Placement *	
		Students with Disabilities	Nondisabled Students						
Osceola	Enrollment Group	10%	3%	22%	11%	<1%	<1%	<1%	<1%
	State	11%	7%	12%	6%	<1%	<1%	<1%	<1%
		14%	9%	15%	7%	<1%	<1%	<1%	<1%

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

## Prevalence

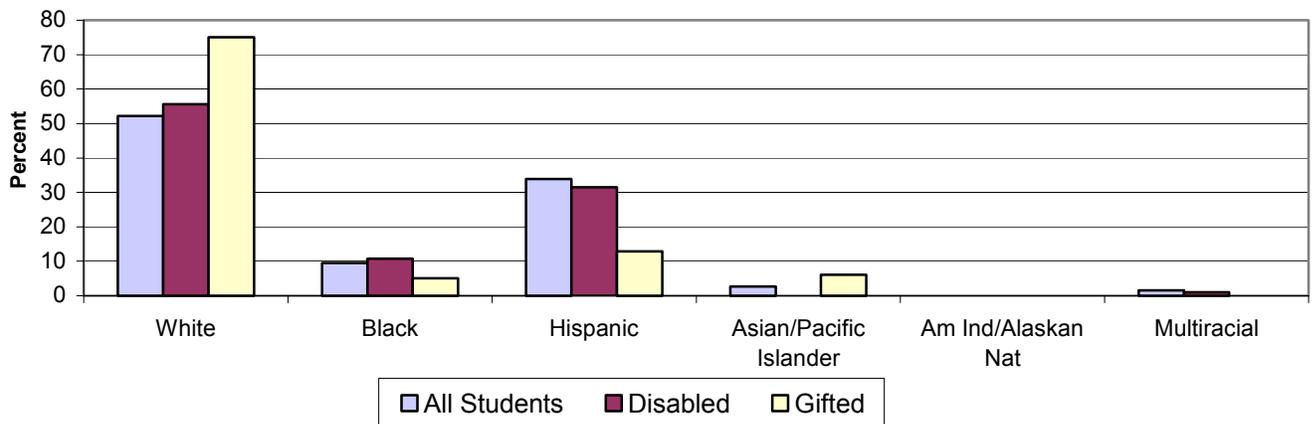
Prevalence refers to the proportion of the PK-12 population identified as exceptional at any given point in time. This section of the profile provides prevalence data by demographic characteristics.

### 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 1999. White students make up 54 percent of both the total population and the disabled population and 68 percent of the gifted population. Statewide, there is a larger percentage of black students in the disabled population than in the total PK-12 population (29 percent vs. 25 percent) and a smaller percentage of black students in the gifted population (10 percent vs. 25 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	54%	54%	68%	52%	56%	75%
Black	25%	29%	10%	9%	11%	5%
Hispanic	18%	14%	16%	34%	31%	13%
Asian/Pacific Islander	2%	<1%	4%	3%	<1%	6%
Am Ind/Alaskan Nat	<1%	<1%	<1%	<1%	<1%	<1%
Multiracial	1%	<1%	1%	2%	1%	<1%

### District Student Membership by Racial/Ethnic Category



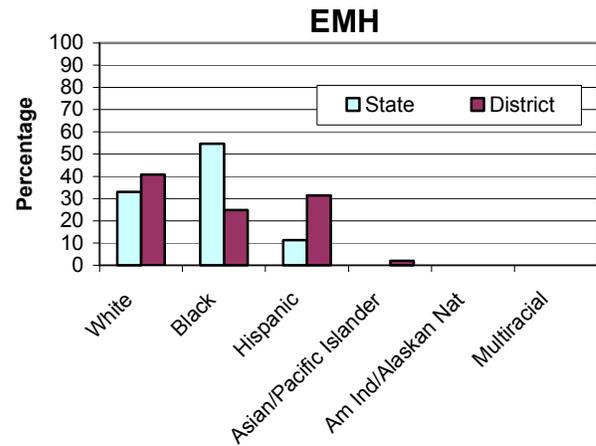
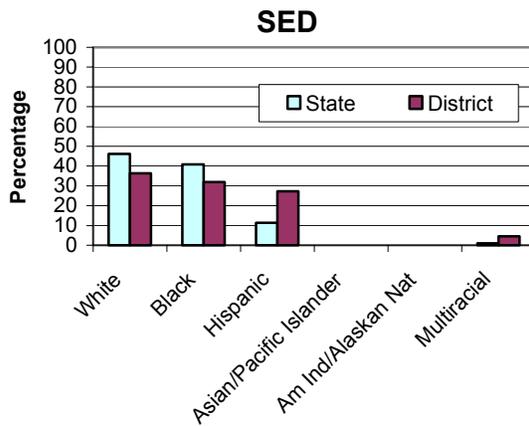
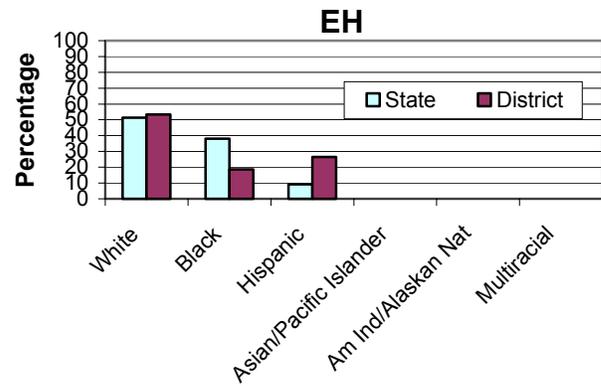
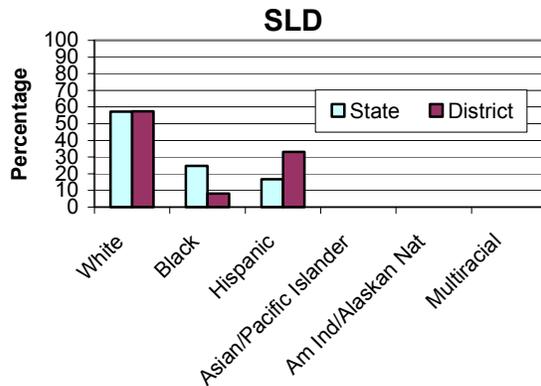
### Free/Reduced Lunch and LEP

The percent of all students and all students who are gifted in the district and the State on free/reduced lunch. The percent of all students and all students who are gifted in the district and the state who are identified as Limited English Proficient (LEP). These percentages are based on data reported in Survey 2 (October 1999).

	State		District	
	All Students	Gifted Students	All Students	Gifted Students
Free / Reduced Lunch	43%	19%	44%	21%
LEP	10%	2%	19%	<1%

## Selected Exceptionalities by Racial/Ethnic Category

Racial/ethnic data for students with a primary exceptionality of specific learning disabled (SLD), emotionally handicapped (EH), severely emotionally disturbed (SED), and educable mentally handicapped (EMH) programs are presented below as reported in December 1999. Statewide, 57 percent of students identified as specific learning disabled are white, 25 percent are black, 17 percent are Hispanic, and less than one percent are reported in each of the other racial/ethnic categories. Data in the "Total" row show the percent of the total disabled population identified as SLD, EH, SED, and EMH for the state and district. Statewide, 45 percent of the students with disabilities are identified as specific learning disabled.



	SLD		EH		SED		EMH	
	State	District	State	District	State	District	State	District
White	57%	57%	51%	53%	46%	36%	33%	41%
Black	25%	8%	38%	19%	41%	32%	55%	25%
Hispanic	17%	33%	9%	27%	11%	27%	11%	31%
Asian/Pacific Islander	<1%	<1%	<1%	<1%	<1%	0%	<1%	2%
Am Ind/Alaskan Nat	<1%	<1%	<1%	<1%	<1%	0%	<1%	0%
Multiracial	<1%	<1%	<1%	<1%	1%	5%	<1%	<1%
<b>Total</b>	<b>45%</b>	<b>43%</b>	<b>8%</b>	<b>7%</b>	<b>2%</b>	<b>&lt;1%</b>	<b>8%</b>	<b>9%</b>

## **APPENDIX B – PARENT SURVEY RESPONSES**

## Osceola Parent Survey Report Students with Disabilities

**The Parent Survey was sent to parents of the 5,140 students with disabilities for whom complete addresses were provided by the district. A total of 790 parents, representing 15% of the sample, returned the survey.**

Item(s) for which the district response was high ( $\geq 75$  percentile) compared to other FL districts

- Overall, I am satisfied with the exceptional education services my child receives.
- I am satisfied with my child's academic progress.
- Homework assignments seem to meet my child's needs.
- Teachers expect my child to succeed.
- I receive information about parent support activities and meetings.
- Exceptional education services have had a positive effect on my child's self-esteem.

Item(s) for which the district response was low ( $\leq 25$  percentile) compared to other FL districts

- The school explained to me what I could do if I don't agree with the IEP/EP.
- I am comfortable talking about my child with school staff.
- I am a member of the PTA/PTO.
- I belong to an organization for parents of exceptional students.

\* Items for which response was above the 95<sup>th</sup> percentile (extremely positive) compared to other FL districts.

~ Items for which response was below the 5<sup>th</sup> percentile (extremely negative) compared to other FL districts.

**APPENDIX C – LIST OF MONITORING TEAM MEMBERS**

**Listing of Monitoring Team Members  
Osceola County School District**

**Department of Education Staff:**

Cathy Bishop, Program Supervisor, Program Administration and Evaluation  
Tury Lewis, Program Specialist IV, Program Administration and Evaluation  
Kelly Claude, Program Specialist IV, Program Administration and Evaluation  
Lezlie Cline, Program Specialist IV, Program Development and Services

**Peer Reviewers:**

Rosemary Ragle, Walton County Schools  
Clarice Kennedy, Putnam County Schools  
Dianne Fry, St. Lucie County Schools  
Cathy Nelson, Highlands County Schools

**Contracted Staff:**

Denise Stewart, Consultant  
Batya Elbaum, University of Miami  
Allison Esenkova, University of Miami

## **APPENDIX D – GLOSSARY OF ACRONYMS**

## GLOSSARY OF ACRONYMS

BUREAU	Bureau of Instructional Support & Community Services
CFR	Code of Federal Regulations
DOE	Department of Education
DJJ	Department of Juvenile Justice
EMH	Educable Mentally Handicapped
EH	Emotionally Handicapped
EP	Educational Plan
ESE	Exceptional Student Education
ESOL	English for Speakers of Other Languages
FAPE	Free Appropriate Public Education
FCAT	Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test
GED	Graduate Equivalency Diploma
GPA	Grade Point Average
HSCT	High School Competency Test
IDEA	Individuals with Disabilities Education Act
IEP	Individual Educational Plan
IQ	Intelligence Quotient
LEP	Limited English Proficiency
OJT	On-the-Job Training
OSEP	Office of Special Education Programs
Part B	Federal regulations governing ESE programs under IDEA for ages 3-21
Part C	Early Intervention Program, as regulated in IDEA, for ages birth to 3
Pre-K(PK)	Prekindergarten
RCS	Resource Compliance Specialist
SAI	Supplemental Academic Instruction
SED	Severely Emotionally Disturbed
SLD	Specific Learning Disability