

FINAL REPORT OF FOCUSED MONITORING OF
EXCEPTIONAL STUDENT EDUCATION PROGRAMS IN

SUWANNEE COUNTY

DECEMBER 1 - 3, 2004



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

This is one of many publications available through the Bureau of Exceptional Education and Student Services, Florida Department of Education, designed to assist school districts, state agencies which support educational programs, and parents in the provision of special programs. For additional information on this publication, or for a list of available publications, contact the Clearinghouse Information Center, Bureau of Exceptional Education and Student Services, Florida Department of Education, Room 628, Turlington Bldg., Tallahassee, Florida 32399-0400.

telephone: (850) 245-0477

FAX: (850) 245-0987

Suncom: 205-0477

e-mail: cicbiscs@fldoe.org

website: <http://myfloridaeducation.com/commhome/>

FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION



STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

F. PHILIP HANDY, *Chairman*

T. WILLARD FAIR, *Vice Chairman*

Members

DONNA G. CALLAWAY

JULIA L. JOHNSON

ROBERTO MARTÍNEZ

PHOEBE RAULERSON

LINDA K. TAYLOR

JOHN L. WINN
Commissioner of Education



July 29, 2005

Mr. Walter Boatright, Jr., Superintendent
Suwannee County School District
702 Second Street, NW
Live Oak, Florida 32064-1608

Dear Superintendent Boatright:

We are pleased to provide you with the Final Report of Focused Monitoring of Exceptional Student Education Programs in Suwannee County. This report was developed by integrating multiple sources of information including student record reviews; interviews with school and district staff; information from focus groups; and parent, teacher, and student survey data from our visit on December 1-3, 2004. The report includes a system improvement plan outlining the findings of the monitoring team. The final report will be placed on the Bureau of Exceptional Education and Student Services' website and may be viewed at www.firn.edu/doe/commhome/mon-home.htm.

Bureau staff have worked with Myra Brock, ESE Director, and her staff to develop a system improvement plan that includes strategies and activities to address the areas of concern and noncompliance identified in the report. We anticipate that some of the action steps that will be implemented will be long term in duration, and will require time to assess the measure of effectiveness. In addition, as appropriate, plans related to the district's continuous improvement monitoring may also relate to action steps proposed in response to this report. The system improvement plan has been approved and is included as a part of this final report.

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

BAMBI J. LOCKMAN
Chief

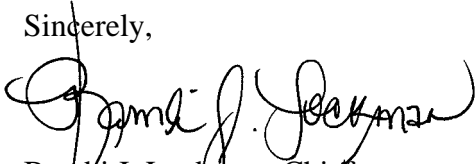
Bureau of Exceptional Education and Student Services

Superintendent Boatright
July 29, 2005
Page 2

If my staff can be of any assistance as you implement the System Improvement Plan, please contact Eileen L. Amy, ESE Program Administration and Quality Assurance Administrator. Mrs. Amy may be reached at 850/245-0476, or via electronic mail at Eileen.Amy@fldoe.org.

Thank you for your continuing commitment to improve services for exceptional education students in Suwannee County.

Sincerely,



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

Enclosure

cc: J. M. Holtzclaw, School Board Chairman
Members of the School Board
Andrew Decker, III, School Board Attorney
School Principals
Tina Kennon-McIntyre, ESE Director
Eileen Amy
Evy Friend
Kim Komisar

Suwannee County Final Monitoring Report
Focused Monitoring
December 1-3, 2004

Table of Contents

Executive Summary	1
Monitoring Process	11
Authority	11
Focused Monitoring	11
Key Data Indicators	11
District Selection.....	12
Sources of Information	12
On-Site Monitoring Activities	12
Interviews.....	12
Focus Group Interviews.....	13
Student Case Studies.....	13
Classroom Visits	13
Off-Site Monitoring Activities.....	13
Parent Surveys	13
Teacher Surveys.....	14
Student Surveys	14
Reviews of Student Records and District Forms	14
Reporting Process	15
Interim Reports	15
Preliminary Report.....	15
Final Report	15
Reporting of Information	17
Results.....	17
General Information.....	17
Access to the General Curriculum	18
Accommodations/Modifications/Supports	19
Decision-Making.....	20
Staff Development	21
Stakeholder Opinions Related to the Key Data Indicator.....	22
Additional Compliance Areas.....	22
Services to Gifted Students.....	23
Student Record Reviews	24
District Forms Review	26
System Improvement Plan	27

System Improvement Strategies	29
Recommendations and Technical Assistance	35
Recommendations.....	35
Technical Assistance.....	35
Appendix A: District Data	39
Appendix B: ESE Monitoring Team Members	51
Appendix C: Survey Results.....	55
Appendix D: Forms Review	67
Appendix E: Glossary of Acronyms.....	73

**Suwannee County School District
Focused Monitoring
December 1-3, 2004**

Executive Summary

The Florida Department of Education, Bureau of Exceptional Education and Student Services, (Bureau), in carrying out its roles of leadership, resource allocation, technical assistance, monitoring, and evaluation, is required to oversee the performance of district school boards in the enforcement of all laws and rules (Sections 1001.03(8) and 1008.32, Florida Statutes (F.S.)). In fulfilling this requirement the Bureau conducts monitoring activities of the exceptional student education (ESE) programs provided by district school boards in accordance with Sections 1001.42 and 1003.57, F.S. Through these monitoring activities, the Bureau examines and evaluates procedures, records, and programs of exceptional student education (ESE); provides information and assistance to school districts; and otherwise assists school districts in operating effectively and efficiently. One purpose of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) is to assess and ensure the effectiveness of efforts to educate children with disabilities (Section 300.1(d) of Title 34, Code of Federal Regulations (CFR)), and districts are required to make a good faith effort to assist children with disabilities to achieve their stated goals and objectives in the least restrictive environment (34 CFR 300.350(a)(2) and 300.556). In accordance with the IDEA the Department is responsible for ensuring that the requirements of the IDEA are carried out and that each educational program for children with disabilities administered in the state meets the educational requirements of the state (34 CFR 300.600(a)(1) and (2)).

During the week of December 1-3, 2004, the Florida Department of Education, Bureau of Exceptional Education and Student Services, conducted an on-site review of the exceptional student education (ESE) programs in Suwannee County Public Schools. Ms. Myra Brock, Exceptional Student Education Director of Procedures and Policy, served as the coordinator and point of contact for the district during the monitoring visit. In its continuing effort to focus the monitoring process on student educational outcomes, the Bureau has identified four key data indicators: percentage of students with disabilities participating in regular classes (i.e., spending at least 80% of the school day with their nondisabled peers); dropout rate for students with disabilities; percentage of students with disabilities exiting with a standard diploma; and, percentage of students with disabilities participating in statewide assessments. Suwannee County was selected for monitoring on the basis of the percentage of students with disabilities exiting with a standard diploma. The results of the monitoring process are reported under categories or related areas that are considered to impact or contribute to the key data indicator. In addition, information related to services for gifted students, records and forms reviews, and supplementary compliance issues are reported.

Summary of Findings

General Information

Suwannee County is a small district with a highly rural population. Of the students with disabilities who exited school in 2004, 11 graduated with a standard diploma by meeting all

requirements, 1 graduated with a standard diploma through the Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test (FCAT) waiver, 2 graduated through the GED exit option, and 25 graduated with a special diploma.

Access to the General Curriculum

Students with disabilities have access to general education classes and general education curriculum throughout all school levels. ESE teachers support students and teachers to ensure students with disabilities are successful in the general curriculum, although some general education teachers believe the support is not sufficient. A co-teaching model and the use of paraprofessionals in general education classrooms have been used to increase inclusive settings. During the past three years there has been a steady and significant increase in inclusive placements. There were no findings of noncompliance or concerns noted in this area.

Accommodations/Modifications/Supports

General education teachers work collaboratively with ESE teachers to provide supportive environments for students with disabilities in general education classes. Accommodations and modifications are provided to students as needed within the general education classes. There were no findings of noncompliance in this area.

Decision-Making

Individual educational plan (IEP) teams review school performance, test data, and FCAT scores, and consider student and parent input when making diploma option decisions. While there was evidence that students with disabilities are informed about diploma options at IEP meetings and that the majority of students agree with the diploma decision made, the majority of parents responding to the survey did not report being informed or discussing diploma options at the IEP meetings.

Staff Development

School staff are afforded opportunities to participate in multiple training activities relating to students with disabilities. Training topics include the decision-making process regarding diploma option, as well as instructional and behavioral issues. Staff reported on-going staff development in the area of inclusive practices as an area of need.

Stakeholder Opinions Related to the Key Data Indicator

District and school level staff reported that barriers to students with disabilities graduating with a standard diploma include: parents' ambitions for their children (i.e., staff reported that school staff often have different expectations and ambitions for the students than the parents do); the rigor of the FCAT; the rigor of specific courses in contrast with the academic or cognitive ability of some students; students being enrolled primarily in ESE classes early in their school careers limiting the likelihood they will successfully complete the course of study required for a standard diploma.

Additional Compliance Areas

School and district staff report that communication needs of students not eligible as speech impaired (SI) or language impaired (LI) generally are addressed through goals and objectives, and may be documented as a related service on the IEP. There was evidence of counseling as a

related service, including psychological counseling, being available to any student with a disability who needs it to receive FAPE. However, this is not routinely documented on the IEP. Transition service agencies are invited to transition IEP meetings in the district. Staff report that they have good cooperation from specific agencies. If an agency cannot participate in the meeting, information is provided to the student and parents.

Services to Gifted Students

Gifted services are provided across the district, but service delivery varies by grade. Services are provided through both pull out and inclusion models for primary and elementary students, pull out for middle school students and consultation for high school students. Under-representation of minority populations is an issue that the district is addressing. Parents are active participants in the gifted education process.

Student Record Reviews

Systemic findings were noted in four areas on IEPs and in two areas on educational plans (EPs). Individual or non-systemic findings were noted in 30 additional areas. Systemic findings related to matrix of services documents resulted in the district submitting corrections to its data reported to the DOE. The district will be required to address these issues in its system improvement plan (SIP) through staff development and periodic self-assessment.

District Forms Review

Nine forms required that additional information be added in order to meet state and federal compliance regulations. Four forms meet all compliance regulations and required no changes. One recommendation was made. The district will be required to make the necessary changes to the required forms to meet compliance regulations.

System Improvement Plan

In response to these findings, the district is required to develop a system improvement plan for submission to the Bureau. This plan must include activities and strategies intended to address specific findings, as well as measurable evidence of change. Compliance and procedural issues regarding the IEP and direct services to students are required to be resolved by a date, designated by the team leader, not to exceed 90 days. In addition, long-term and/or systemic issues may be required to be included in the district's continuous improvement plan. The district may be required to address an issue for an extended period of time, identifying benchmarks to reach acceptable changes. In developing the system improvement plan, every effort should be made to link the system improvement activities resulting from this focused monitoring report to the district's continuous improvement monitoring plan. The format for the system improvement plan, including a listing of the critical issues identified by the Bureau as most significantly in need of improvement, is provided with this executive summary.

During the process of conducting the focused monitoring activities, including daily debriefings with the monitoring team and district staff, it is often the case that suggestions and/or recommendations related to interventions or strategies are proposed. These recommendations as well as specific discretionary projects and Florida Department of Education (DOE) contacts available to provide technical assistance to the district in the development and implementation of the plan also are included as part of this report.

Suwannee County School District Focused Monitoring System Improvement Strategies

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

Category	Findings	ESE	All	System Improvement Strategy	Evidence of Change (Including target date)
Access to General Curriculum	There are no findings of noncompliance in this area.				
Accommodations/ Modifications/ Support	There are no findings of noncompliance in this area.				
Decision-Making	There are no findings of noncompliance in this area. Recommendations in this area are included in the <i>Recommendations and Technical Assistance</i> section of this report.			The district is encouraged to review the recommendations related to this area for inclusion in its system improvement plan.	
Staff Development	There are no findings of noncompliance in this area. Recommendations in this area are included in the			The district is encouraged to review the recommendations related to this area for inclusion in its system improvement plan.	

Category	Findings	ESE	All	System Improvement Strategy	Evidence of Change (Including target date)
Staff Development (continued)	<i>Recommendations and Technical Assistance</i> section of this report.				
Additional Compliance	Communication Communication needs of the student are not routinely documented on the IEP.	X		The district will target this element in its training on IEP development and conduct a self-evaluation using protocols developed by the Bureau to ensure compliance.	District report of self-assessment reveals compliance in targeted area for 100% of IEPs reviewed. December 2005 May 2006
	Counseling Counseling services provided to students with disabilities as a related service are not routinely documented on the IEP.	X		District staff will review the IEPs of students with disabilities who are being provided counseling to determine if it is included as a related service. If not, staff will determine if the student was referred based on educationally relevant concerns or for other reasons, and IEP teams will reconvene to address educationally relevant counseling as a related services when this need is indicated.	District report of self-assessment reveals compliance in targeted area for 100% of IEPs reviewed. December 2005 May 2006
	Transition No findings of noncompliance in this area.				
Gifted Services	There are no findings of noncompliance in this area.				
Record Reviews	Three IEPs were required to be reconvened due to a lack of a	X		The IEP teams for the identified students were	Documentation of the reconvened IEPs was

Category	Findings	ESE	All	System Improvement Strategy	Evidence of Change (Including target date)
Record Reviews (continued)	<p>majority of measurable annual goals.</p> <p>Systemic findings of noncompliance were noted in the following areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • lack measurable annual goals • lack of sufficient description of frequency of special designed instruction and/or related services • lack of results of student performance on state- or district-wide assessments • reports of progress lacked sufficient descriptions to determine progress toward the annual goal <p>Individual or non-systemic findings were noted in 30 additional areas on IEPs</p> <p>Systemic findings of noncompliance were noted in the following areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • lack of written notice of the meeting • lack of or inadequate statements of the students' 	X		<p>reconvened to develop measurable annuals goals.</p> <p>The identified noncompliant elements will be targeted in the district's IEP training.</p> <p>Pre-and post- training surveys will be conducted to determine perceived effectiveness of the training.</p> <p>Using protocols developed by the Bureau, school and/or district staff will conduct compliance reviews of a random sample of 25 IEPs developed by staff who participated in the training session.</p>	<p>submitted to the Bureau prior to the dissemination of this report.</p> <p>District report of self-assessment reveals compliance with all targeted elements for 100% of IEPs reviewed.</p> <p>December 2005 May 2006</p>

Category	Findings	ESE	All	System Improvement Strategy	Evidence of Change (Including target date)
Record Reviews (continued)	present levels of performance or strengths and needs beyond the general curriculum				
	<p>Four matrix of services documents required corrections.</p> <p>There were systemic findings related to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • reporting most current matrix level to DOE • ensuring the IEP supports the matrix of services document 	X		<p>Corrections on the identified records were submitted to the Bureau within the required timelines.</p> <p>Using protocols developed by the Bureau, district staff will conduct reviews of two IEPs per school for students reported through the FEFP at the 254 or 255 level of funding (first and last record from alphabetical list of 254/255 records). For students whose IEPs do not support the services on the matrix or for whom the services are not in evidence, the district will submit an amendment to the Automated Student Information System database for the open window of correction.</p>	<p>Results of the matrix self-assessment must be submitted by the district with its report of progress.</p> <p>December 2005</p>
Forms Review	<p>Specific forms required revision to include all required components:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Individual Educational</i> 	X			Revised forms must be submitted to the Bureau within 60 days of receipt of this report.

Category	Findings	ESE	All	System Improvement Strategy	Evidence of Change (Including target date)
Forms Review (continued)	<p><i>Plan forms*</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Informed Notice and Consent for Evaluation</i> • <i>Informed Notice and Consent for Reevaluation*</i> • <i>Notification of Change of Placement*</i> • <i>Notification of Change of FAPE (Free Appropriate Public Education)*</i> • <i>Informed Notice of Refusal*</i> • <i>Documentation of Staffing/Eligibility Determination*</i> • <i>Informed Notice of Dismissal*</i> • <i>Notice: Not Eligible for Exceptional Student Placement*</i> • <i>Annual Notice of Confidentiality*</i> 				

Monitoring Process

Authority

The Florida Department of Education, Bureau of Exceptional Education and Student Services, in carrying out its roles of leadership, resource allocation, technical assistance, monitoring, and evaluation is required to oversee the performance of district school boards in the enforcement of all laws and rules (Sections 1001.03(8) and 1008.32, Florida Statutes (F.S.)). In fulfilling this requirement, the Bureau conducts monitoring activities of the exceptional student education (ESE) programs provided by district school boards in accordance with Sections 1001.42 and 1003.57, F.S. Through these monitoring activities, the Bureau examines and evaluates procedures, records, and programs of exceptional student education (ESE); provides information and assistance to school districts; and otherwise assists school districts in operating effectively and efficiently. One purpose of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) is to assess and ensure the effectiveness of efforts to educate children with disabilities (Section 300.1(d) of Title 34, Code of Federal Regulations (CFR), and districts are required to make a good faith effort to assist children with disabilities to achieve their stated goals and objectives in the least restrictive environment (34 CFR §300.350(a)(2) and §300.556). In accordance with the IDEA the Department is responsible for ensuring that the requirements of the IDEA are carried out and that each educational program for children with disabilities administered in the state meets the educational requirements of the state (34 CFR §300.600(a)(1) and (2)).

The monitoring system established to oversee exceptional student education (ESE) programs reflects the Department's commitment to provide assistance and service to school districts. The system is designed to emphasize improved outcomes and educational benefits for students while continuing to conduct those activities necessary to ensure compliance with applicable federal and state laws, rules, and regulations. The system provides consistency with other state efforts, including the State Improvement Plan required by the IDEA.

Focused Monitoring

The purpose of the focused monitoring process is to implement a methodology that targets the Bureau's monitoring intervention on key data indicators identified as significant for educational outcomes for students. Through this process, the Bureau uses such data to inform the monitoring process, thereby implementing a strategic approach to intervention and commitment of resources that will improve student outcomes.

Key Data Indicators

Four key data indicators were recommended by the monitoring stakeholders' workgroup and were adopted for implementation by the Bureau. The key data indicators for the 2004 school year and their sources of data are as follows:

- percentage of students with disabilities participating in regular classes (i.e., spending at least 80% of the school day with their nondisabled peers) (Survey 9)
- dropout rate for students with disabilities (Survey 5)
- percentage of students with disabilities exiting with a standard diploma (Survey 5)

- participation in statewide assessments by students with disabilities (performance data from the assessment files and Survey 3 enrollment data)

District Selection

Districts were selected to be monitored based on a review of data from the 2002-03 school year that was submitted electronically to the Department of Education (DOE) Information Database for Surveys 2, 3, 5, 9, and from the assessment files. These data are compiled into an annual data profile for each district (LEA profile). The 2004 LEA profiles for all Florida School districts are available on the web at <http://www.firn.edy/doe/commhome/datapage.htm>.

In making the decision to include Suwannee County in the focused monitoring visits for 2004, Bureau staff reviewed data related to the percentage of students with disabilities exiting with a standard diploma. This review indicated that Suwannee County's rate of 33% during the 2002-03 school year approached the lowest rate for all districts in the state. The district's current 2004 LEA profile and the 2003 listing of districts rank ordered on data related to the key data indicator, which was used for district selection, are included as appendix A.

Sources of Information

On-Site Monitoring Activities

The on-site monitoring visit took place during the week of December 1, 2004. A team composed of four DOE staff and two trained peer monitors conducted site-visits to the following five school:

- Suwannee Elementary School
- Suwannee Middle School
- Branford Middle/High School
- Suwannee High School
- Douglas Alternative School

Peer monitors are exceptional student education personnel from other school districts who are trained to assist with the DOE's monitoring activities. A list of all participating monitors is provided as appendix B.

Interviews

Interviews with selected district- and school-level staff are conducted using protocols developed specifically to address the key data indicator. In addition to the protocol developed specifically to examine graduation with a standard diploma by students with disabilities, separate protocols are used to address services to gifted students, the provision of counseling as a related service, including psychological counseling, addressing the communication needs of students with disabilities, and transition services. In Suwannee County, interviews were conducted with 33 individuals, including eight district-level administrators or support staff (e.g., staffing specialists), ten school-based administrators or support staff (e.g., guidance counselors), seven ESE teachers, and eight general education teachers.

Focus Group Interviews

Focus groups for students are conducted by Department of Education staff to gather information related to students exiting with a standard diploma. In order to provide maximum opportunity for input about the district's ESE services, a minimum of two focus group interviews are conducted. Separate focus groups are held for students with disabilities pursuing a standard diploma and for students with disabilities pursuing a special diploma.

In conjunction with the 2004 Suwannee County monitoring activities, eight students participated in the focus group for students pursuing a standard diploma and seven students participated in the focus group for students pursuing a special diploma.

Student Case Studies

Student case studies are conducted for the purpose of performing an in-depth review of the services a student receives in accordance with his or her IEP. The on-site selection of students for the case studies at each school is based on criteria identified as characteristic of students who may have the cognitive ability to graduate with a standard diploma but who are pursuing a special diploma. As part of this process, the student's records are reviewed, teachers are interviewed regarding the implementation of the student's IEP, and the student's classroom may be observed. Nine in-depth case studies were conducted in Suwannee County.

Classroom Visits

Classroom visits are conducted in both ESE and general education classes. Some are conducted in conjunction with individual student case studies, while others are conducted as general observations of classrooms that include exceptional students. Curriculum and instruction, classroom management and discipline, and classroom design and resources are observed during general classroom visits. Teachers of the classes visited are interviewed regarding practices related to students with disabilities. A total of 11 ESE and general education classrooms were visited during the focused monitoring visit in Suwannee County.

Off-Site Monitoring Activities

Surveys are designed by the University of Miami research staff in order to provide maximum opportunity for input about the district's ESE services from parents of students with disabilities and students identified as gifted, ESE and general education teachers, and students with disabilities in grades 9-12. Results of the surveys are incorporated into the body of this report. Data from each of the surveys are included as appendix C. For the purposes of this report, responses of "always," "almost always," and "frequently" are combined into a single affirmative response.

Parent Surveys

Surveys are administered to parents of students with disabilities and parents of gifted students. The surveys that are sent to parents are printed in English, Spanish, and Haitian Creole where applicable. They include a cover letter and a postage paid envelope.

Surveys were sent to parents of the 796 students with disabilities for whom complete addresses were provided by the district. A total of 93 parents (PK, n = 12; K-5, n = 39; 6-8, n = 23; 9 - 12, n = 19) representing 12% of the sample, returned the survey. Surveys were returned as

undeliverable from 24 households, representing 3% of the sample. Parents represented the following students with disabilities: autistic, developmentally delayed, educable mentally handicapped, emotionally handicapped, language impaired, other health impaired, specific learning disabled, speech impaired, and trainable mentally handicapped.

Surveys were sent to parents of the 25 students identified as gifted for whom complete addresses were provided by the district. A total of 9 parents (KG-5, n = 4; 6-8, n = 4; 9 - 12, n = 1) representing 36% of the sample, returned the survey. No surveys were returned as undeliverable.

Teacher Surveys

In addition, surveys for all teachers are mailed to each school, with a memo explaining the key data indicator and the monitoring process. All teachers and other services providers, both general education and ESE, were provided an opportunity to respond. A total of 235 teachers, representing approximately 56% of ESE and GE teachers in the district, returned the survey. Data are from 8 (89%) of the district's 9 schools.

Student Surveys

A sufficient number of surveys were provided to allow all students with disabilities, grades 9-12, to respond. Instructions for administration of the survey by classroom teachers, including a written script, were provided for each class or group of students. Since participation in this survey is not appropriate for some students whose disabilities might impair their understanding of the survey, professional judgment is used to determine appropriate participants. Surveys from 111 students, representing approximately 46% of students with disabilities in grades 9-12 in the district, were returned. Data are from 3 (60%) of the district's 5 schools with students in grades 9-12.

Reviews of Student Records and District Forms

Prior to the on-site monitoring visit, Bureau staff members conduct a compliance review of student records that are randomly selected from the population of students with disabilities and students identified as gifted prior to the on-site monitoring visit. A total of 25 student records from 7 schools in Suwannee County were reviewed. The review included 13 records of students with disabilities excluding those eligible as speech impaired only, two records for students identified as speech impaired, and ten records for students identified as gifted. The records were sent to the DOE for review by Bureau staff prior to the on-site visit. The monitoring team also reviewed 47 records during the on-site visit to determine whether records were current, to review the IEP team decision regarding diploma options, to determine whether services identified on the matrix of services form were supported by the IEP and implemented in the classroom, and to review services to students identified as gifted.

In addition, Bureau staff review selected district forms and notices to determine if the required components are included. The results of the review of student records and district forms are described in this report.

Reporting Process

Interim Reports

Daily debriefing sessions are conducted by the monitoring team members in order to review findings, as well as to determine if there is a need to address additional issues or visit additional sites. Preliminary findings and concerns are shared with the ESE director and/or designee with the monitoring team leader during the monitoring visit. In addition, the district ESE director is invited to attend the final team debriefing with Bureau staff and peer monitors. During the course of these activities, suggestions for interventions or strategies to be incorporated into the district's system improvement plan may be proposed. Within two weeks of the visit, Bureau administrative staff conduct a telephone conference with the ESE director to review major findings.

Preliminary Report

Subsequent to the on-site visit, Bureau staff prepare a written report. The report is sent to the district ESE director. Data for the report are compiled from sources that have been previously discussed in this document. The director will have the opportunity to discuss with Bureau staff any concerns regarding the report before it becomes final.

The report is developed to include the following elements: an executive summary, a description of the monitoring process and the results section. Other appendices with data specific to the district accompany each report.

Final Report

Upon final review and revision by Bureau staff, the final report is issued. The report is sent to the district, and is posted to the Bureau's website at www.firn.edu/doe/commhome/mon-home.htm.

Within 30 days of the district's receipt of the final report, the system improvement plan, including activities targeting specific findings, must be submitted to the Bureau for review. In developing this plan, every effort should be made to link the system improvement plan for focused monitoring to the district's continuous improvement plan. The plan must provide for findings to be addressed in a timely manner, with compliance and procedural issues regarding IEPs, EPs, and direct services to individual students to be resolved by a date designated by the Bureau, not to exceed 90 days. Other issues may be required to be resolved over a period of time not to exceed one year. All system improvement plans will be expected to extend for a period of at least two years, in order to provide an assurance of the ongoing effectiveness of the district's strategies for improvement. In collaboration with Bureau staff, the district is encouraged to develop methods that integrate activities in order to utilize resources, staff, and time in an efficient manner in order to improve outcomes for students with disabilities. Upon approval of the system improvement plan, it is forwarded to the district and the plan is posted on the website noted above. Corrective actions are monitored through the submission of semiannual status reports of progress to be submitted to the Bureau on May 30th and November 30th of each year for the duration of the plan.

Reporting of Information

The data generated through the surveys, focus group interviews, individual interviews, case studies, and classroom visits are summarized in this report. In addition, the results from the review of student records, and form reviews are presented in the report. This report provides conclusions with regard to the key data indicator and specifically addresses related areas that may contribute to or impact the indicator. These areas include the following:

- general information
- access to the general curriculum
- accommodations/modifications/support
- decision-making
- stakeholder opinion related to the indicator

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

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

Information related to services for gifted students and the results of records and forms reviews also are reported.

To the extent possible, this report focuses on systemic issues rather than on isolated instances of noncompliance or need for improvement. Systemic issues are those that occur at a sufficient enough frequency that the monitoring team could reasonably infer a system-wide problem. Findings are presented in a preliminary report, and the district has the opportunity to clarify items of concern. In a collaborative effort between the district and Bureau staff, system improvement areas are identified. Findings are addressed through the development of strategies for improvement, and evidence of change will be identified as a joint effort between the district and the Bureau. Strategies that are identified as long-term approaches toward improving the district's issue related to the key data indicator are also addressed through the district's continuous improvement plan.

Results

General Information

This section provides information related to demographic and background information specific to the district. Based on the 2004 LEA profile, Suwannee County School District has a total school population (PK-12) of 5,851 with 14% of students being identified as students with disabilities, 4% identified as only speech impaired, and <1% identified as gifted. Suwannee County is considered a "small" district and is comprised of three elementary schools,

(Pre-K-5, K-2, and 3-5), a middle/high school 6-12, a middle school 6-8, a high school 9-12, and one alternative school/ pre-K center. Currently there are no Department of Juvenile Justice facilities or charter schools in the district.

Suwannee County is a rural community, with 50% of students on free or reduced lunch and 3% of students identified as limited English proficient. Interview respondents indicated that many generations of students have attended the schools within Suwannee County.

Of the students with disabilities who exited from the district during the 2002-03 school year, 11 (28%) met all requirements for a standard diploma, 1 (3%) met the requirements through a waiver of a passing score on the Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test (FCAT), and 2 (3%) graduated through the GED exit option (i.e., under-credited students who have passed the FCAT and who pass the GED examination).

Access to the General Curriculum

This section provides information related to the types of settings and curriculum available to students with disabilities and the effectiveness or quality of instruction. In accordance with 34 CFR §300.26(b)(3)(ii), "... specially designed instruction means adapting, as appropriate to the needs of an eligible child, the content, methodology, or delivery of instruction...to ensure access of the child to the general curriculum, so that he or she can meet the educational standards within the jurisdiction of the public agency that apply to all children." Access refers to the types of settings and course content available to students with disabilities and may be a factor affecting the decision-making process regarding diploma options. Lack of access to the general curriculum could negatively impact the rate of students who graduate with a standard diploma.

Students with disabilities have access to the general curriculum through enrollment in general education classes and through instruction in the general Sunshine State Standards (SSS) in ESE classrooms. District and school staff reported the use of consultation, support facilitation, co-teaching, resource services and self-contained or separate class as the level of services and supports available to students with disabilities based on their individual needs. Often school staff would use the terms consultation (i.e., teacher to teacher) and support facilitation (i.e., teacher to student) interchangeably, making it difficult to determine which specific service was being provided.

Co-teaching was observed in both the elementary and middle schools. Paraprofessionals also are available to provide assistance to general education teachers teaching students with disabilities and to the students themselves. The high school staff reported both consultative services and support facilitation for students with disabilities participating in general education classes. Students who responded to the survey and who participated in the focus groups both reported enrolling in relatively more general education electives than core academic courses.

At each of the traditional school campuses visited, students with significant cognitive impairments who are served at the separate level (less than 40% of the school day with nondisabled peers) are enrolled in at least one general education elective class. All of the students in the special diploma focus group reported being enrolled in at least one general

education course, and 39% of the students who responded to the survey reported being enrolled in vocational courses.

Data from survey nine collected in December of each school year reveals a steady increase over time of regular class placement for students with disabilities (80% or more of the day with nondisabled peers), from 43% in the 2002-03 school year to 70% at the time of this monitoring visit (2004-05 school year). During this same time period resource placement (40-79% of the school day with nondisabled peers) decreased from 30% to 9% and separate class placement decreased from 27% to 20%.

Regarding the amount of time students with disabilities spend with regular education peers, 60% of parents and 85% of students who responded to the survey indicated that they are satisfied with the amount of time. Of the teachers who responded, 73% indicated that students with disabilities participate in general education classes whenever possible.

In summary, students with disabilities have access to general education classes and general education curriculum throughout all school levels. ESE teachers support students and teachers to ensure students with disabilities are successful in the general curriculum, although some general education teachers believe the support is not sufficient. A co-teaching model and the use of paraprofessionals in general education classrooms have been used to increase inclusive settings. During the past three years there has been a steady and significant increase in inclusive placements. There were no findings of noncompliance or concerns noted in this area.

Accommodations/Modifications/Supports

This section provides information related to the accommodations, modifications and supports available to students with disabilities in general education classes in order for them to be successful. In accordance with 34 CFR §300.347(a), the IEP for a student with a disability must include “(3)...a statement of the special education and related services and supplementary aids and services to be provided the child or on behalf of the child, and a statement of the program modifications or supports for school personnel that will be provided for the child (i) to advance appropriately toward attaining the annual goals; (ii) to be involved and progress in the general curriculum...; and (iii) to be educated and participate with other children with disabilities and nondisabled children in the activities described in this section;... and (5)(i) a statement of any individual modifications in the administration of State or district-wide assessments of student achievement that are needed in order for the child to participate in the assessment...” Lack of necessary accommodations, modifications, and supports will affect student performance in the classroom as well as overall achievement. This in turn may negatively impact the likelihood of a student with a disability earning a standard diploma.

Specific instructional and testing accommodations reported by district and school staff include: extra time on assignments; reducing the number of items on tests; breaking lessons into smaller sections; placing lessons on CD or tape; use of materials geared to the instructional level of the student; assistive technology; interpreting services for deaf students; and, large type and/or Braille for visually impaired students. Additional instructional supports include the use of paraprofessionals in classrooms, ESE teachers in the general education classroom, and peer

tutoring. The use of accommodations was observed in all eleven class visits and during the nine individual student case studies.

Students in both focus groups reported receiving needed accommodations. Of students who responded to the survey, 91% reported that ESE teachers give students extra help, if needed, and 81% reported that ESE teachers give students extra time or different assignments, if needed. The affirmative response rates regarding general education teachers were 77% and 61%. In contrast, 51% of parents reported that the IEP team discussed whether the student should get accommodations.

All district and school staff reported that students with disabilities have access to intensive reading and math classes during the day. Students in the focus groups reported participating in literacy sessions and after-school tutoring. Learning strategies classes are offered to provide support to students with disabilities enrolled in general education core academic courses.

Some staff members reported having a paraprofessional or volunteer in all classrooms would be a great accommodation not just for students with disabilities, but for all of the students. Sixty-one percent of teachers who responded to the survey reported that the school encourages collaboration among ESE and general education teachers, and 54% indicated that the school provides adequate support to general education teachers who teach students with disabilities. This last response by approximately half of the teachers who responded to the survey is of concern.

In summary, general education teachers work collaboratively with ESE teachers to provide supportive environments for the students with disabilities in general education classes. Accommodations and modifications are provided to students as needed within the general education classes. There were no findings of noncompliance in this area.

Decision-Making

This section provides general information related to the process by which the diploma option decisions for students with disabilities are made. In accordance with 34 CFR 300.347(b)(1), “For each student with a disability beginning at age 14 (or younger, if determined appropriate by the IEP team), and updated annually, a statement of the transition service needs of the student under the applicable components of the student’s IEP that focuses on the student’s courses of study (such as participation in advanced-placement courses or a vocational education program)...” Rule 6A-1.0996(2)(a), Florida Administrative Code (FAC) prescribes the requirements for graduation for students with disabilities and requires, “The individual educational plan (IEP) committee shall document whether the student is pursuing a course of study leading toward a Standard or Special Diploma on the IEP developed during the student’s eighth grade year, or the IEP developed during the school year of the student’s fourteenth birthday, whichever occurs first. This decision shall be reviewed annually.”

Student academic performance was reported as a primary factor in the decision-making process regarding diploma option, as were parent and student input, FCAT performance, and additional information from psychological evaluations. The report of student input was supported by the

results of the student surveys (i.e., 71% indicate that they had a say in their diploma decision; 86% were in agreement with the diploma option being pursued). Of teachers who responded to the survey, 83% indicated that students are informed of diploma options at the IEP team meeting and 78% reported that students are encouraged to pursue a standard diploma. In contrast, 39% of parents who responded to the survey reported discussing diploma options at the IEP meeting and 34% reported discussing the specific requirements for different diploma options (these elements are to be responded to by parents of students in grade 8 or above).

District and school staff were unsure of the impact of the FCAT waiver on the standard diploma decision-making process. Twelve respondents either had no opinion, felt it was “to new”, or “do not think it has an impact” on the decision-making process. Only four staff members reported that it was an asset to the students and could impact the decision to have a student pursue a standard diploma. Neither of the student focus groups had any significant comments regarding the FCAT or the FCAT waiver.

In summary, IEP teams review school performance, test data, and FCAT scores, and consider student and parent input when making diploma option decisions. While there was evidence that students with disabilities are informed about diploma options at IEP meetings and that the majority of students agree with the diploma decision made, the majority of parents responding to the survey did not report being informed or discussing diploma options at the IEP meetings.

Staff Development

This category refers to any staff development activities that directly or indirectly target factors that promote students with disabilities pursuing a course of study leading to a standard diploma and obtaining that diploma. Interviews with district and school staff indicated that a variety of staff development opportunities are available regarding effective instruction and remediation of students with disabilities and other students who struggle to pass the FCAT, and that some of the training addresses the decision-making process for determining diploma option.

Of the teachers responding to the survey, 52% reported that the district offers professional development opportunities regarding curriculum support for student with disabilities. During the on-site interviews, 29 of 30 (97%) district and school level staff reported being offered opportunities for staff development related to ESE students. Training in inclusionary practices has been provided at every school in the district, with approximately half the interviewees reported participation in training offered by the Florida Inclusion Network (FIN). Other training topics offered include: Reading First; Differentiated Curriculum; Dealing with Difficult Students; and, any other training topics addressed by the Florida Diagnostic and Learning Resource System (FDLRS). During the interview process, several staff members reported that additional and/or on-going training in inclusive practices will be needed to continue to support the district’s efforts thus far.

One half of an afternoon each month is set aside for staff development. School staff reported that the ESE Director is supportive of school requests and provides training as needed during these staff development days. Nine school level staff members reported having participated in training directly related to making diploma option decisions. Thirteen district and school level staff

reported attending trainings with the ESE Director where diploma option information was reviewed, although it was not the specific emphasis of the training. Three school level staff indicated that additional inclusion training was needed for all teachers.

In summary, school staff are afforded opportunities to participate in multiple training activities relating to students with disabilities. Training topics include the decision-making process regarding diploma option, as well as instructional and behavioral issues. Staff identified training in inclusive practices as an on-going area of need.

Stakeholder Opinions Related to the Key Data Indicator

This category refers to respondents' views on issues directly related to the number of ESE students graduating with a standard diploma. When asked their opinion on the likely contributors to the relatively low standard diploma rate for students with disabilities in Suwanee County, the following factors were cited:

- parents' ambitions for their children (i.e., staff reported that school staff often have different expectations and ambitions for the students than the parents do)
- the rigor of the FCAT
- the rigor of specific courses in contrast with the academic or cognitive ability of some students
- students being enrolled primarily in ESE classes early in their school careers limits the likelihood they will successfully complete the course of study required for a standard diploma

Additional Compliance Areas

This section provides information related to supplementary categories of compliance. In addition to monitoring categories related to the 2004 focused visit, the Bureau also conducted interviews related to the provision of speech and language services to students with disabilities who have communication needs, the provision of counseling as a related service, including psychological counseling, and transition services.

Through interviews and record reviews, there was evidence that the communication needs of students who are not eligible for the speech and language impaired programs are be addressed through classroom activities conducted by the ESE teachers, at times in consultation with the speech/language pathologist; staff reported that this may or may not be documented through goals and objectives on the IEP. Of the 19 records reviewed, there was evidence of a communication need for one student who was not identified as eligible for the programs for students who are speech impaired or language impaired; that student had communication goals and objectives on the IEP. Although several respondents (eight of 17) indicated that speech and/or language services would be documented on the IEP as related services for students who are not eligible for the SI or LI programs, there was no evidence of this on the IEPs reviewed.

Suwanee County School District contracts with the White Foundation for provision of counseling services to ESE students and also utilizes guidance counselors for some students. Staff indicated that there is open communication with the White Foundation for the student

receiving counseling services, and that the parents sign a release of information. The majority of staff interviewed (82%) indicated that the IEP team considers the counseling needs of students at the IEP meeting. Behavior patterns, parental and teacher input, classroom observations, and previous enrollment in alternative or adjudicated settings are areas reviewed when considering the student's need for educationally relevant counseling. It was reported that it may or may not be documented on the IEP. Two records reviewed on site for SED students did not include counseling as a related service on their IEP, although the students were receiving counseling as required. The district will be required to address this in its system improvement plan.

School and district staff reported that, based on identified needs of the student, outside agencies are sent a written invitation to transition IEP (TIEP) meetings. Approximately one week prior to the meeting a follow-up telephone call is made to the district to ensure agency participation. Eleven of the nineteen records reviewed were TIEPs. Four of those eleven had identified transition needs and three had agencies invited to the Transition IEP meeting. Two Transition IEP meetings had agency participation and the other two, who were unable to attend, provided information for the meeting. Staff reported that the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, Comprehensive Community Services (formerly Association for retarded Citizens), and the Suwannee County Vocational-Technical Center are the primary agency participants for transition services. There were no findings of noncompliance in this area.

In summary, school and district staff report that communication needs of students not eligible as SI or LI generally are addressed through goals and objectives, and may be documented as a related service on the IEP. There was evidence of counseling as a related service, including psychological counseling, being available to any student with a disability who needs it to receive FAPE. However, this is not routinely documented on the IEP. Transition service agencies are invited to Transition IEP meetings in the district. Staff report that they have good cooperation from specific agencies. If an agency cannot participate in the meeting, information is provided to the student and parents.

Services to Gifted Students

This section provides information related to the district's gifted program across all grade levels. In accordance with section 1003.57, F.S., districts are required to "...provide for an appropriate program of special instruction, facilities, and services to exceptional students..." and this includes students who are gifted (section 1003.01(3)(a), F.S.).

Suwannee County currently has one teacher of the gifted. Gifted services are provided for primary, elementary, and middle schools on alternate days at the Douglas Center. In addition, services are provided in Branford one day a week, and consultative services are provided to high school student who also participate in Pre-Advanced Placement (AP) and AP courses.

Referrals are generated by parents, teachers, guidance counselors, and administrators. The teacher of the gifted reported that all services available to students with disabilities are available to gifted students. Students and parents are involved in the development of educational plans (EPs), as well as a general education teacher of the student. The parent survey confirmed

parental involvement with 100% of the parents who responded reporting having participated in one or more meetings during the school year.

The district employs data elements from the management information system (MIS) to help locate under-represented populations for screening and evaluation for gifted programs, and the district utilizes a Plan B option for determining eligibility. Presently there are no African-American students and one Hispanic student in the gifted program. The district has targeted increasing overall participation in the gifted program through its continuous improvement plan.

District staff reported incorporating gifted services into the general education classroom to the extent possible. Some gifted projects in the elementary school are done through the inclusion classes containing general education students, gifted students and students with disabilities. The district utilizes a webpage for every gifted student and a quarterly webpage update for services and information for parents.

In summary, Gifted services are available across the district, but service delivery varies across grade. Services are provided through both pull-out and inclusion models for primary and elementary students, a pull-out model for middle school students, and through consultation for high school students. The district has targeted increasing overall participation in the gifted program through its continuous improvement plan. Parents are active participants in the gifted education process.

Student Record Reviews

This section provides information related to the compliance of IEPs with state and federal requirements. Records of 29 students randomly selected from the population of exceptional students in Suwannee County were reviewed for compliance prior to the monitoring visit. The review included 19 IEPs for students with disabilities and ten EPs for students identified as gifted. The sample group included records of elementary, middle, and high school students. Of the 19 IEP records reviewed, 11 were transition IEPs. In addition, five matrix of services documents for students with disabilities reported through the Florida Educational Finance Program (FEFP) at the 254 or 255 levels were reviewed on-site, and an additional 38 records were reviewed for communication, counseling, and transition services.

Systemic findings are those that occur with such a frequency that the monitoring team could reasonably infer that a system-wide problem exists. To be determined systemic, an item must be found to be noncompliant in at least 25% of the records reviewed. In Suwannee County, at least five (5) IEPs must have been noncompliant on an item to be considered a systemic finding. During the review of IEPs, the following area of noncompliance was determined to be systemic in nature:

- reports of progress lacked sufficient information to determine progress toward the annual goal (10)
- lack measurable annual goals (8)
- description of frequency of special designed instruction and/or related services not sufficient (8)

- consideration of results of student performance on state- or district-wide assessments not documented (7)

In addition, of the 19 IEPs reviewed, there were individual or non-systemic findings of noncompliance in the following areas:

- lack of documentation that the parent was provided a copy of the IEP (3)
- related services specific to transition not identified and/or addressed (3)
- transition not identified as purpose of the meeting on notice for TIEP (3)
- lack of a statement or an inappropriate statement for no need in one or more transition areas (3)
- interpreter of instructional implications at the meeting not identified (3)
- lack of documentation progress was provided as often as nondisabled (3)
- LEA representative at meeting not identified (2)
- present level of educational performance statements do not support services (2)
- lack of statement or insufficient statement of disability to indicate affect on participation in general education (2)
- lack of correspondence between annual goals and short-term objectives or benchmarks and needs identified on the present levels of educational performance statements (2)
- location of special education services not sufficient (2)
- frequency of accommodations not indicated (2)
- lack of an explanation of the extent to which the student will not participate with non-disabled peers in the general education setting (2)
- lack of evidence concerns of the parent were considered (2)
- lack of informed prior written notice to the parents for a change in FAPE (2)
- lack of documentation of the student preferences and interests taken into account during transition planning (2)
- lack of agency participation in transition planning when noted need elsewhere on IEP (2)
- lack of documentation of parental input in reevaluation process (2)
- present level of performance and annual goals and short-term objectives or benchmarks do not support the services on the IEP (1)
- lack of at least one written attempt to invite parent (1)
- special education teacher at meeting not identified (1)
- general education teacher at the meeting not identified (1)
- lack of related service being provided on IEP (1)
- lack of instructional accommodations as indicated (1)
- lack of statement of accommodations or modification in the administration of state or district assessments (1)
- lack of assistive technology for student as identified in assistive technology report (1)
- lack of specially designed physical education as a service (1)
- lack of a course of study statement beginning at age 14 (1)
- lack of statement the student was informed of transfer of rights one year before 18th birthday (1)
- lack of separate notice of transfer of rights closer to 18th birthday (1)

For three of the 19 students a majority of the goals were not measurable, and the IEP teams were required to reconvene to address this finding. The district was notified of the specific students

requiring reconvened IEPs in a letter dated on December 15, 2004, and the revised IEPs were submitted to the Bureau within the stated timeline. There were no findings of noncompliance that required an adjustment of federal funds.

During the site visit, four matrix of services documents for students at Suwannee High School were found to have been inadvertently reported to the DOE at a higher level than their matrix documents indicated was appropriate. The district was required to provide an amendment to the data provided to the DOE through the Automated Student Information System database for surveys 4 and 5 for the 2003-04 school year and surveys 1 and 2 for the 2004-05 school year for those student records. Documentation of the correction was submitted to the Bureau within the required timeline. An additional five matrix of services documents for students at the other schools visited were reviewed for compliance. Of those reviews, all five were found to be inaccurately reported. Any services claimed on the matrix must be documented on the IEP. The services identified on the matrices for these students were not in evidence on the IEPs. The district must develop and implement a plan to ensure that IEPs and matrices of services developed are developed in accordance with all state and federal requirements.

Ten EPs for a gifted student were reviewed. A finding must be evident in at least three EPs in order to be considered systemic. There were two systemic findings related to lack of written notice of the meeting (10) and lack of or inadequate statements of the students' present levels of performance or strengths and needs beyond the general curriculum (10).

In summary, systemic findings were noted in four areas on IEPs and in two areas on EPs. Individual or non-systemic findings were noted in 30 additional areas. Systemic findings related to matrix of services documents will result in the district submitting corrections to its data submitted to the DOE. The district will be required to address these issues in its SIP through staff development and periodic self-assessment.

District Forms Review

This section provides information related to the compliance of district forms related to students with disabilities, in accordance with state and federal requirements. Forms representing the areas identified below were submitted to Bureau staff for a review to determine compliance with federal and state laws. Nine forms needed revisions to include all required elements and a recommendation was noted for one form. The district was notified of the specific findings via a separate letter dated June 14, 2004. A detailed explanation of the specific findings is included as appendix D.

- *Parent Notification of Individual Education Plan (IEP) Meeting +*
- *Individual Educational Plan forms**
- *Educational Plan forms*
- *Notice and Consent for Initial Placement*
- *Informed Notice and Consent for Evaluation*
- *Informed Notice and Consent for Reevaluation**
- *Notification of Change of Placement**
- *Notification of Change of FAPE (Free Appropriate Public Education)**
- *Informed Notice of Refusal**

- *Documentation of Staffing/Eligibility Determination**
- *Informed Notice of Dismissal**
- *Notice: Not Eligible for Exceptional Student Placement**
- *Summary of Procedural Safeguards*
- *Annual Notice of Confidentiality**

* indicates required revisions to a form

+ indicates recommended revisions to a form

In summary, nine forms require additional information be added in order to meet state and federal compliance regulations. Four forms meet all compliance regulations and required no changes. One recommendation was made. The district will be required to make the necessary changes to the required forms to meet compliance regulations.

System Improvement Plan

In response to these findings, the district is required to develop a system improvement plan for submission to the Bureau. This plan must include activities and strategies intended to address specific findings, as well as measurable evidence of change. In developing the system improvement plan, every effort should be made to link the system improvement activities resulting from this focused monitoring report to the district's continuous improvement plan. Following is the format for the system improvement plan, including a listing of the critical issues identified by the Bureau as most significantly in need of improvement.

During the course of conducting the focused monitoring activities, including daily debriefings with the monitoring team and district staff, it is often the case that suggestions and/or recommendations related to interventions or strategies are proposed. Listings of these recommendations as well as specific discretionary projects and DOE contacts available to provide technical assistance to the district in the development and implementation of the plan are included following the plan format.

Suwannee County School District Focused Monitoring System Improvement Strategies

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

Category	Findings	ESE	All	System Improvement Strategy	Evidence of Change (Including target date)
Access to General Curriculum	There are no findings of noncompliance in this area.				
Accommodations/ Modifications/ Support	There are no findings of noncompliance in this area.				
Decision-Making	There are no findings of noncompliance in this area. Recommendations in this area are included in the <i>Recommendations and Technical Assistance</i> section of this report.			The district is encouraged to review the recommendations related to this area for inclusion in its system improvement plan.	
Staff Development	There are no findings of noncompliance in this area. Recommendations in this area are included in the			The district is encouraged to review the recommendations related to this area for inclusion in its system improvement plan.	

Category	Findings	ESE	All	System Improvement Strategy	Evidence of Change (Including target date)
Staff Development (continued)	<i>Recommendations and Technical Assistance</i> section of this report.				
Additional Compliance	Communication Communication needs of the student are not routinely documented on the IEP.	X		The district will target this element in its training on IEP development and conduct a self-evaluation using protocols developed by the Bureau to ensure compliance.	District report of self-assessment reveals compliance in targeted area for 100% of IEPs reviewed. December 2005 May 2006
	Counseling Counseling services provided to students with disabilities as a related service are not routinely documented on the IEP.	X		District staff will review the IEPs of students with disabilities who are being provided counseling to determine if it is included as a related service. If not, staff will determine if the student was referred based on educationally relevant concerns or for other reasons, and IEP teams will reconvene to address educationally relevant counseling as a related services when this need is indicated.	District report of self-assessment reveals compliance in targeted area for 100% of IEPs reviewed. December 2005 May 2006
	Transition No findings of noncompliance in this area.				
Gifted Services	There are no findings of noncompliance in this area.				
Record Reviews	Three IEPs were required to be reconvened due to a lack of a	X		The IEP teams for the identified students were	Documentation of the reconvened IEPs was

Category	Findings	ESE	All	System Improvement Strategy	Evidence of Change (Including target date)
Record Reviews (continued)	<p>majority of measurable annual goals.</p> <p>Systemic findings of noncompliance were noted in the following areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • lack measurable annual goals • lack of sufficient description of frequency of special designed instruction and/or related services • lack of results of student performance on state- or district-wide assessments • reports of progress lacked sufficient descriptions to determine progress toward the annual goal <p>Individual or non-systemic findings were noted in 30 additional areas on IEPs</p> <p>Systemic findings of noncompliance were noted in the following areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • lack of written notice of the meeting • lack of or inadequate statements of the students' 	X		<p>reconvened to develop measurable annuals goals.</p> <p>The identified noncompliant elements will be targeted in the district's IEP training.</p> <p>Pre-and post- training surveys will be conducted to determine perceived effectiveness of the training.</p> <p>Using protocols developed by the Bureau, school and/or district staff will conduct compliance reviews of a random sample of 25 IEPs developed by staff who participated in the training session.</p>	<p>submitted to the Bureau prior to the dissemination of this report.</p> <p>District report of self-assessment reveals compliance with all targeted elements for 100% of IEPs reviewed.</p> <p>December 2005 May 2006</p>

Category	Findings	ESE	All	System Improvement Strategy	Evidence of Change (Including target date)
Record Reviews (continued)	present levels of performance or strengths and needs beyond the general curriculum				
	<p>Four matrix of services documents required corrections.</p> <p>There were systemic findings related to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • reporting most current matrix level to DOE • ensuring the IEP supports the matrix of services document 	X		<p>Corrections on the identified records were submitted to the Bureau within the required timelines.</p> <p>Using protocols developed by the Bureau, district staff will conduct reviews of two IEPs per school for students reported through the FEFP at the 254 or 255 level of funding (first and last record from alphabetical list of 254/255 records). For students whose IEPs do not support the services on the matrix or for whom the services are not in evidence, the district will submit an amendment to the Automated Student Information System database for the open window of correction.</p>	<p>Results of the matrix self-assessment must be submitted by the district with its report of progress.</p> <p>December 2005</p>
Forms Review	<p>Specific forms required revision to include all required components:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Individual Educational</i> 	X			Revised forms must be submitted to the Bureau within 60 days of receipt of this report.

Category	Findings	ESE	All	System Improvement Strategy	Evidence of Change (Including target date)
Forms Review (continued)	<p><i>Plan forms*</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Informed Notice and Consent for Evaluation</i> • <i>Informed Notice and Consent for Reevaluation*</i> • <i>Notification of Change of Placement*</i> • <i>Notification of Change of FAPE (Free Appropriate Public Education)*</i> • <i>Informed Notice of Refusal*</i> • <i>Documentation of Staffing/Eligibility Determination*</i> • <i>Informed Notice of Dismissal*</i> • <i>Notice: Not Eligible for Exceptional Student Placement*</i> • <i>Annual Notice of Confidentiality*</i> 				

Recommendations and Technical Assistance

As a result of the focused monitoring activities conducted in Suwannee County, the Bureau has identified specific findings related to the number of ESE students graduating with a standard diploma. The following are recommendations for the district to consider when developing the system improvement plan and determining strategies that are most likely to effect change. The list is not all-inclusive, and is intended only as a starting point for discussion among the parties responsible for the development of the plan. A partial listing of technical assistance resources is also provided. These resources may be of assistance in the development and/or implementation of the system improvement plan.

Recommendations

- Continue efforts to provide staff training on inclusive practices, both initial and follow-up sessions; ensure that all affected staff participate in the training.
- Develop parent and teacher training modules to address options and decision-making for diploma selection. Include strategies for increasing district, school, and parent expectations for academic achievement for students with disabilities.
- Provide updated and on-going training to the appropriate staff involved in matrix completion; develop a system for district review of student records reported at the 254 or 255 level.
- Incorporate training on appropriate documentation of needs (e.g., communication; counseling, including psychological counseling) and services on the IEP.

Technical Assistance

Florida Inclusion Network

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

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

Project CENTRAL

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

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

Career Development and Transition/Project Connect

Drew Andrews/Joyce Lubbers

(352) 392-0701 ext. 267/285

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

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

**The Able Trust
High School/High Tech**

Donna Mundy
(321) 631-5047

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

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

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

Bureau of Exceptional Education and Student Services

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

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

Eileen Amy, Administrator
Eileen.Amy@fldoe.org

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

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

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

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

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

Karen Denbroeder, Administrator
Karen.Denbroeder@fldoe.org

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

Arlene Duncan, Administrator
Arlene.Duncan@fldoe.org

ESE Program Development and Services
(850) 245-0478

Evy Friend, Administrator
Evy.Friend@fldoe.org

Speech/Language Impaired

Lezlie Cline, Program Director

Lezlie.Cline@fldoe.org

**Mentally Handicapped/Autism/
Disproportionate Representation**

Sheryl Sandvoss, Program Specialist

Sheryl.Sandvoss@fldoe.org

Elise Lynch, Program Specialist

Elise.Lynch@fldoe.org

Specific Learning Disabled/ IEPs

Heather Diamond, Program Specialist

Heather.Diamond@fldoe.org

Parent Services

Kathy Burton, Program Specialist

Kathy.Burton@fldoe.org

**Behavior/Discipline
EH/SED**

Lee Clark, Program Specialist

Lee.Clark@fldoe.org

Assistive Technology

Karen Morris, Program Specialist

Karen.Morris@fldoe.org

Transition Services

Janet Adams, Program Specialist

Janet.Adams@fldoe.org

APPENDIX A—DISTRICT DATA



FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
BUREAU OF EXCEPTIONAL EDUCATION AND STUDENT SERVICES

2005 LEA PROFILE

JOHN WINN, COMMISSIONER

DISTRICT:	SUWANNEE	PK-12 POPULATION:	5,776
ENROLLMENT GROUP:	LESS THAN 7,000	PERCENT DISABLED:	13%
		PERCENT GIFTED:	<1%

INTRODUCTION

The LEA profile is intended to provide districts with a tool for use in planning for systemic improvement. The profile contains a series of data indicators that describe measures of educational benefit, educational environment, and prevalence for exceptional students. The data are presented for the district, their enrollment group (districts of comparable size), and the state. Where appropriate and available, comparative data for general education students are included.

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

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

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

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

- Regular class, resource room, and separate class placement, ages 6-21
- Early childhood setting or home, part-time early childhood/part-time early childhood special education setting and early childhood special education setting, ages 3-5
- Discipline rates

Data presented as indicators of prevalence (*Section Three*)

- Student membership by race/ethnicity
- Gifted membership by free/reduced lunch and limited English proficiency (LEP) status
- Student membership in selected disabilities by race/ethnicity
- Selected disabilities as a percentage of all disabilities and as a percentage of total PK-12 population

LEA PROFILE 2005

Three of the indicators included in the profile, graduation rate, dropout rate, and regular class placement, are also used in the selection of districts for focused monitoring. Indicators describing the prevalence and separate class placement of students identified as educable mentally handicapped (EMH) are included to correspond with provisions of the Bureau's partnership agreement with the Office for Civil Rights.

DATA SOURCES

The data contained in this profile were obtained from data submitted electronically by districts through the Department of Education Information Database in surveys 2, 9, 3, and 5 and through the Florida Education and Training Placement Information Program (FETPIP).

DISTRICTS IN SUWANNEE'S ENROLLMENT GROUP:

BAKER, BRADFORD, CALHOUN, DESOTO, DIXIE, FRANKLIN, GADSDEN, GILCHRIST, GLADES, GULF, HAMILTON, HARDEE, HOLMES, JEFFERSON, LAFAYETTE, LEVY, LIBERTY, MADISON, SUWANNEE, TAYLOR, UNION, WAKULLA, WALTON, WASHINGTON



SECTION ONE: EDUCATIONAL BENEFIT

Educational benefit refers to the extent to which children benefit from their educational experience. Progression through and completion of school are dimensions of educational benefits as are post-school outcomes and indicators of consumer satisfaction. This section of the profile provides data on indicators of student progression, school completion, and post-school outcomes.

STANDARD DIPLOMA STUDENTS MEETING ALL GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS:

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

	2001-02	2002-03	2003-04
Suwannee	34%	28%	33%
Enrollment Group	41%	44%	36%
State	48%	45%	42%

STANDARD DIPLOMA THROUGH GED EXIT OPTION:

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

	2001-02	2002-03	2003-04
Suwannee	0%	3%	0%
Enrollment Group	2%	2%	2%
State	1%	1%	1%

STANDARD DIPLOMA THROUGH FCAT WAIVER:

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

	2002-03	2003-04
Suwannee	3%	4%
Enrollment Group	8%	15%
State	9%	14%

DROPOUT RATE:

The number of students grades 9-12 for whom a dropout withdrawal reason (DNE, W05, W11, W13-W23) was reported, divided by the total enrollment of grade 9-12 students and students who did not enter school as expected (DNEs) as reported in end of year (survey 5). The resulting percentages are reported for students with disabilities, gifted students, all PK-12 students, students identified as EH/SED, and students identified as SLD for the years **2001-02** through **2003-04**.

	Students with Disabilities			Gifted Students			All Students		
	2001-02	2002-03	2003-04	2001-02	2002-03	2003-04	2001-02	2002-03	2003-04
Suwannee	7%	6%	8%	0%	0%	0%	3%	4%	9%
Enrollment Group	5%	5%	5%	<1%	0%	<1%	3%	3%	4%
State	5%	4%	5%	<1%	<1%	<1%	3%	3%	3%

	EH/SED			SLD		
	2001-02	2002-03	2003-04	2001-02	2002-03	2003-04
Suwannee	15%	9%	16%	7%	9%	6%
Enrollment Group	5%	5%	6%	5%	5%	6%
State	7%	7%	7%	5%	4%	5%

POSTSCHOOL OUTCOME DATA:

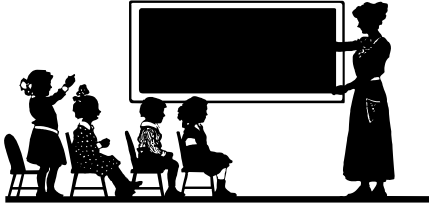
The Florida Education and Training Placement Information Program (FETPIP) is an interagency data collection system that obtains follow-up data on former students. The most recent FETPIP data available reports on students who exited Florida public schools during the **2002-03** school year. The table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

	Students with Disabilities		Gifted Students	
	Employed	Cont. Ed.	Employed	Cont. Ed.
Suwannee	29%	0%	0%	0%
Enrollment Group	38%	15%	42%	84%
State	44%	20%	37%	72%

THIRD GRADE PROMOTION AND RETENTION RATE:

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

	2003-04					
	Students with Disabilities			All Students		
	Promoted	Promoted with Cause	Retained	Promoted	Promoted with Cause	Retained
Suwannee	80%	45%	20%	87%	10%	13%
Enrollment Group	81%	36%	19%	88%	12%	12%
State	82%	30%	18%	89%	11%	11%



SECTION TWO: EDUCATIONAL ENVIRONMENT

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

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

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

	Regular Class			Resource Room			Separate Class		
	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05
Suwannee	43%	51%	70%	30%	27%	9%	27%	23%	20%
Enrollment Group	49%	52%	56%	27%	25%	21%	18%	16%	15%
State	48%	50%	55%	26%	24%	21%	22%	22%	20%

EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION SETTINGS, AGES 3-5:

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

	Early Childhood Setting or Home			Part-Time Early Childhood/ Part-Time Early Childhood Special Education Setting			Early Childhood Special Education Setting		
	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05
Suwannee	2%	7%	10%	63%	80%	69%	34%	13%	21%
Enrollment Group	10%	16%	16%	68%	62%	64%	19%	21%	17%
State	7%	7%	7%	57%	57%	56%	31%	31%	33%

SEPARATE CLASS PLACEMENT OF EMH STUDENTS, AGES 6-21:

The number of students ages 6-21 identified as educable mentally handicapped who spend less than 40 percent of their day with nondisabled peers divided by the total number of EMH students reported in December (survey 9). The resulting percentages are reported for three years from **2002-03** through **2004-05**.

	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05
Suwannee	65%	53%	56%
Enrollment Group	49%	47%	46%
State	61%	62%	57%

DISCIPLINE RATES:

The number of students who served in-school or out-of-school suspensions, were expelled, or moved to alternative placement at any time during the school year divided by the total year enrollment as reported in end of year (survey 5). The resulting percentages are reported for students with disabilities and nondisabled students for **2003-04**.

		2003-04							
		In-School Suspensions		Out-of-School Suspensions		Expulsions		Alternative Placement*	
		Students with Disabilities	Nondisabled Students	Students with Disabilities	Nondisabled Students	Students with Disabilities	Nondisabled Students	Students with Disabilities	Nondisabled Students
Suwannee		23%	17%	17%	10%	0%	<1%	0%	0%
Enrollment Group		15%	11%	14%	8%	<1%	<1%	<1%	<1%
State		14%	9%	15%	7%	<1%	<1%	<1%	<1%

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



SECTION THREE: PREVALENCE

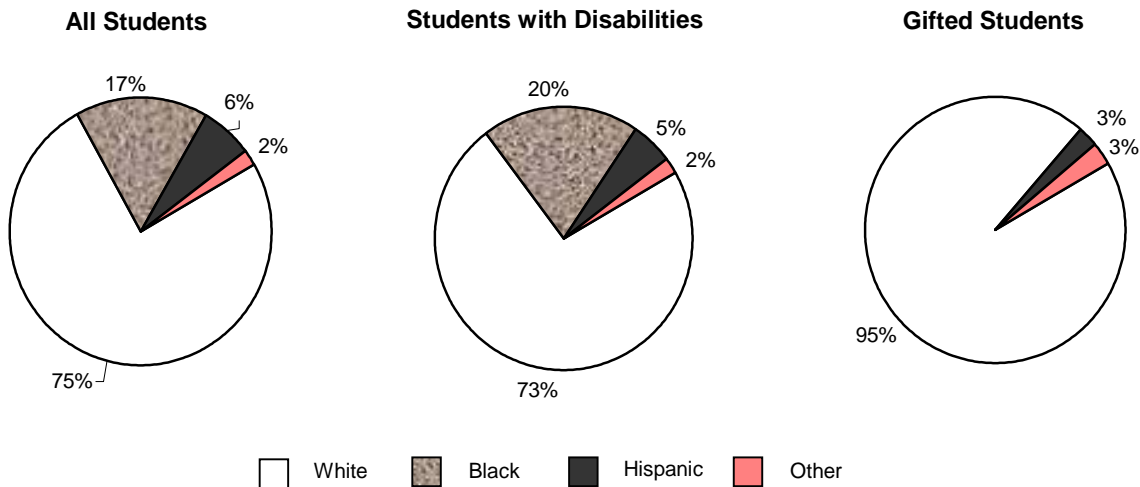
Prevalence refers to the proportion of the PK-12 population identified as exceptional at any given point in time. This section of the profile provides prevalence data by demographic characteristics.

STUDENT MEMBERSHIP BY RACIAL/ETHNIC CATEGORY:

The three columns on the left show the statewide racial/ethnic distribution for all PK-12 students, all students with disabilities, and all gifted students as reported in **October 2004** (survey 2). Statewide, there is a larger percentage of black students in the disabled population than in the total PK-12 population (28 percent vs. 24 percent) and a smaller percentage of black students in the gifted population (10 percent vs. 24 percent). Similar data for the district are reported in the three right-hand columns and displayed in the graphs.

	State			District		
	All Students	Students with Disabilities	Gifted Students	All Students	Students with Disabilities	Gifted Students
White	49%	50%	63%	75%	73%	95%
Black	24%	28%	10%	17%	20%	0%
Hispanic	23%	19%	20%	6%	5%	3%
Asian/Pacific Islander	2%	<1%	4%	<1%	<1%	0%
Am Ind/Alaskan Native	<1%	<1%	<1%	<1%	<1%	3%
Multiracial	3%	2%	3%	1%	1%	0%

District Membership by Race/Ethnicity



FREE/REDUCED LUNCH AND LEP:

The percent of all students and all gifted students in the district and the state on free/reduced lunch. The percent of all students and all gifted students in the district and in the state who are identified as limited English proficient (LEP). These percentages are based on data reported in **October 2004** (survey 2).

	State		District	
	All Students	Gifted Students	All Students	Gifted Students
Free/Reduced Lunch	46%	22%	51%	14%
LEP	11%	3%	3%	0%

SELECTED DISABILITIES BY RACIAL/ETHNIC CATEGORY:

Racial/ethnic data for all students as well as students with a primary disability of specific learning disabled (SLD), emotionally handicapped or severely emotionally disturbed (EH/SED), and educable mentally handicapped (EMH) are presented below. The data are presented for the state and the district as reported in **October 2004** (survey 2).

	All Students		SLD		EH/SED		EMH	
	State	District	State	District	State	District	State	District
White	49%	75%	51%	83%	47%	79%	32%	49%
Black	24%	17%	24%	11%	39%	21%	51%	42%
Hispanic	23%	6%	22%	5%	12%	0%	14%	4%
Asian/Pacific Islander	2%	<1%	<1%	0%	<1%	0%	<1%	<1%
Am Ind/Alaskan Native	<1%	<1%	<1%	<1%	<1%	0%	<1%	1%
Multiracial	3%	1%	2%	0%	2%	0%	1%	3%

SELECTED DISABILITIES AS PERCENT OF DISABLED AND PK-12 POPULATIONS:

The percentage of the total disabled population and the total population identified as SLD, EH/SED, EMH, and speech impaired (SI) for the district and the state. Statewide, seven percent of the total population is identified as SLD and 46 percent of all students with disabilities are SLD. The data are presented for the district and state as reported in **October 2004** (survey 2).

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



John Winn, Commissioner

**Florida Department of Education
Bureau of Exceptional Education and Student Services
2004 Focused Monitoring**

	Standard Diploma			
District	# Completers	# St. Dip.	%	Rank
Glades	3	0	0%	1
Charlotte	11	1	9%	2
Liberty	22	7	32%	3
Hendry	47	15	32%	4
Polk	507	165	33%	5
Suwannee	39	13	33%	6
Jefferson	14	5	36%	7
Jackson	70	26	37%	8
Marion	312	122	39%	9
Putnam	101	41	41%	10
Escambia	292	122	42%	11
Duval	607	258	43%	12
Osceola	269	121	45%	13
Hamilton	13	6	46%	15
Baker	28	13	46%	16
Holmes	28	13	46%	17
Orange	1,022	479	47%	18
Hernando	134	65	49%	19
Gadsden	45	22	49%	20
Broward	769	377	49%	21
Sumter	57	28	49%	22
DeSoto	34	17	50%	23
Washington	18	9	50%	24
Hardee	31	16	52%	25
Madison	31	16	52%	26
Citrus	165	86	52%	27
Columbia	15	8	53%	28
Collier	242	130	54%	29
Lee	355	191	54%	30
Pasco	556	300	54%	31
Highlands	137	74	54%	32
Lake	211	115	55%	33
Palm Beach	919	510	55%	34

	Standard Diploma			
District	# Completers	# St. Dip.	%	Rank
Martin	114	64	56%	35
Wakulla	28	16	57%	36
Leon	185	107	58%	37
Dixie	24	14	58%	38
Bradford	71	42	59%	39
Lafayette	5	3	60%	40
St. Lucie	160	97	61%	41
Miami Dade	1,382	844	61%	42
St. Johns	137	85	62%	43
Bay	173	108	62%	44
Hillsborough	941	595	63%	45
Pinellas	690	438	63%	46
Levy	63	40	63%	47
Alachua	163	104	64%	48
Volusia	452	289	64%	49
Nassau	14	9	64%	50
Gilchrist	29	19	66%	51
Monroe	58	38	66%	52
Indian River	98	65	66%	53
Okaloosa	272	182	67%	54
Sarasota	304	205	67%	55
Brevard	427	288	67%	56
Flagler	68	46	68%	57
Taylor	32	22	69%	58
Clay	252	174	69%	59
Santa Rosa	123	85	69%	60
Okeechobee	53	37	70%	61
Franklin	10	7	70%	62
Seminole	318	230	72%	63
Calhoun	14	11	79%	64
Union	14	11	79%	65
Walton	43	35	81%	66
Gulf	12	11	92%	67
District Total	4,749	2,691	57%	

Note: All data is from surveys conducted during the 2002-03 school year

APPENDIX B—ESE MONITORING TEAM MEMBERS

**Suwannee County
Focused Monitoring
December 1 - 3, 2004**

ESE Monitoring Team Members

Department of Education Staff

Bambi Lockman, Chief, Bureau of Exceptional Education and Student Services
Eileen Amy, Administrator, ESE Program Administration and Quality Assurance
Kim Komisar, Program Director, ESE Program Administration and Quality Assurance
April Katine, Program Specialist
Barbara McAnelly, Program Specialist
Anitra Moreland, Program Specialist
Angela Nathaniel, Program Specialist

Peer Reviewers

Jan Bennett, Alachua County District Schools
Rose Mary Ragle, Okaloosa County School District

APPENDIX C – SURVEY RESULTS

**Suwannee County School District
2004 Parent Survey Report
Students with Disabilities**

The Parent Survey was sent to parents of the 796 students with disabilities for whom complete addresses were provided by the district. A total of 93 parents (PK, n = 12; K-5, n = 39; 6-8, n = 23; 9 - 12, n = 19) representing 12% of the sample, returned the survey. 24 surveys were returned as undeliverable, representing 3% of the sample. Parents represented the following students with disabilities: 25 educable mentally handicapped, 6 trainable mentally handicapped, 12 speech impaired, 8 language impaired, 7 emotionally handicapped, 24 specific learning disabled, 2 autistic, 7 developmentally delayed and 2 other health impaired.

**% Always/Almost Always
and Frequently combined**

Overall, I am satisfied with:

- the level of knowledge and experience of school personnel. 68
- the way I am treated by school personnel. 63
- how quickly services are implemented following an IEP (Individualized Educational Plan) decision. 60
- the amount of time my child spends with regular education students. 60
- the way special education teachers and regular education teachers work together. 59
- the exceptional education services my child receives. 58
- the effect of exceptional student education on my child's self-esteem. 57
- my child's academic progress. 52

My child:

- has friends at school. 67
- is learning skills that will be useful later on in life. 60
- is happy at school. 59
- spends most of the school day involved in productive activities. 59
- receives all the special education and related services on his/her IEP. 58

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

- all of my child's needs. 72
- ways that my child could spend time with students in regular classes. 55
- whether my child needed speech/language services. 52
- whether my child should get accommodations (special testing conditions), for example, extra time. 51
- whether my child would take the FCAT (Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test). 51
- whether my child needed physical and/or occupational therapy. 41
- * which diploma my child may receive. 39
- whether my child needed services beyond the regular school year. 36
- * the requirements for different diplomas. 34

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

**% Always/Almost Always
and Frequently combined**

- whether my child needed psychological counseling services. 33
- whether my child needed transportation. 21

My child’s teachers:

- expect my child to succeed. 71
- are available to speak with me. 67
- set appropriate goals for my child. 65
- call me or send me notes about my child. 58
- give students with disabilities extra time or different assignments, if needed. 55
- give homework that meets my child’s needs. 51

My child’s school:

- sends me information written in a way I understand. 67
- encourages me to participate in my child’s education. 67
- makes sure I understand my child’s IEP. 67
- addresses my child’s individual needs. 61
- offers students with disabilities the classes they need to graduate with a standard diploma. 56
- explains what I can do if I want to make changes to my child’s IEP. 55
- encourages acceptance of students with disabilities. 55
- does all it can to keep students from dropping out of school. 50
- * offers a variety of vocational courses, such as computers and business technology. 49
- wants to hear my ideas. 49
- involves students with disabilities in clubs, sports, or other activities. 49
- informs me about all of the services available to my child. 47
- 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. 47
- * provides information to students about education and jobs after high school. 40
- sends me information about activities and workshops for parents. 40
- provides students with disabilities updated books and materials. 38

Parent Participation

- I have attended my child’s IEP meetings.
- I am comfortable talking about my child with school staff. 86
- I meet with my child’s teachers to discuss my child’s needs and progress. 83
- I participate in school activities with my child. 51
- I have heard about the Florida Diagnostic and Learning Resources System (“FDLRS”) and the services they provide to families of children with disabilities. 42

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

**% Always/Almost Always
and Frequently combined**

- I attend School Advisory Committee meetings concerning school improvement. 18
- I attend meetings of organizations for parents of students with disabilities. 17
- I have used parent support services in my area. 15
- I attend meetings of the PTA/PTO. 11

**Suwannee County School District
2004 Parent Survey Report
Students Identified as Gifted**

The Parent Survey was sent to parents of the 25 students identified as gifted for whom complete addresses were provided by the district. A total of 9 parents (KG-5, n = 4; 6-8, n = 4; 9 - 12, n = 1) representing 36% of the sample, returned the survey. 0 surveys were returned as undeliverable.

% Yes

Overall, I am satisfied with:

- how quickly services were implemented following an initial request for evaluation. 100
- my child's academic progress. 89
- the effect of gifted services on my child's self-esteem. 89
- gifted teachers' subject area knowledge. 89
- regular teachers' subject area knowledge. 78
- gifted teachers' expertise in teaching students identified as gifted. 78
- the gifted services my child receives. 75
- regular teachers' expertise in teaching students identified as gifted. 67

In regular classes, my child:

- has friends at school. 100
- is learning skills that will be useful later on in life. 89
- is usually happy at school. 67
- has his/her social and emotional needs met at school. 67
- is academically challenged at school. 56
- has creative outlets at school. 56

In gifted classes, my child:

- is usually happy at school. 100
- has his/her social and emotional needs met at school. 100
- has friends at school. 100
- has creative outlets at school. 89
- is learning skills that will be useful later on in life. 78
- is academically challenged at school. 56

My child's regular teachers:

- expect appropriate behavior. 100
- are available to speak with me. 100
- provide coursework that includes representation of diverse ethnic, racial, and other groups. 89
- set appropriate goals for my child. 67
- call me or send me notes about my child. 67

	% Yes
• have access to the latest information and technology.	67
• relate coursework to students' future educational and professional pursuits.	67
• give homework that meets my child's needs.	63
 My child's gifted teachers:	
• are available to speak with me.	100
• expect appropriate behavior.	89
• call me or send me notes about my child.	89
• have access to the latest information and technology.	89
• provide coursework that includes representation of diverse ethnic, racial, and	78
• relate coursework to students' future educational and professional pursuits.	67
• set appropriate goals for my child.	63
• give homework that meets my child's needs.	50
 My child's home school:	
• treats me with respect.	89
• sends me information written in a way I understand.	89
• encourages me to participate in my child's education.	78
• sends me information about activities and workshops for parents.	78
• provides students identified as gifted with appropriate books and materials.	67
• informs me about all of the services available to my child.	67
• wants to hear my ideas.	56
• implements my ideas.	56
• addresses my child's individual needs.	56
• involves me in developing my child's Educational Plan (EP or IEP).	56
• makes sure I understand my child's EP or IEP.	56
• explains what I can do if I want to make changes to my child's EP or IEP.	56
 My child's 2nd school:	
• wants to hear my ideas.	100
• implements my ideas.	100
• treats me with respect.	100
• encourages me to participate in my child's education.	100
• addresses my child's individual needs.	100
• sends me information about activities and workshops for parents.	100
• provides students identified as gifted with appropriate books and materials.	75
• informs me about all of the services available to my child.	75
• sends me information written in a way I understand.	75
• involves me in developing my child's Educational Plan (EP or IEP).	75
• makes sure I understand my child's EP or IEP.	50
• explains what I can do if I want to make changes to my child's EP or IEP.	50

**The following questions relate primarily to high school students.
Students identified as gifted:**

	% Yes
• are provided with information about options for education after high school.	100
• are provided with career counseling.	100
• are provided with the opportunity to participate in externships or mentorships.	100
• have the option of taking a variety of vocational courses.	0

Parent Participation

• I have attended one or more meetings about my child during this school year.	100
• I participate in school activities with my child.	100
• I attend School Advisory Committee meetings concerning school improvement.	67
• I have used parent support services in my area.	44
• I am a member of the PTA/PTO.	33
• I belong to an organization for parents of students identified as gifted.	33

**Suwannee County School District
2004 Teacher Survey Report
Students with Disabilities**

We received 235 teacher surveys representing approximately 56% of ESE and GE teachers in the district. Data are from 8 (89%) of the district's 9 schools.

**% Always, Almost Always
Frequently combined**

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

- ensures that students with disabilities feel comfortable when taking classes with general education students. 77
- addresses each student's individual needs. 73
- modifies and adapts curriculum for students as needed. 73
- places students with disabilities into general education classes whenever possible. 73
- ensures that the general education curriculum is taught in ESE classes to the maximum extent possible. 69
- encourages collaboration among ESE teachers, GE teachers and service providers. 61
- provides adequate support to GE teachers who teach students with disabilities. 54
- offers teachers professional development opportunities regarding curriculum and support for students with disabilities. 52

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

- provides students with appropriate testing accommodations. 87
- provides teachers with FCAT test preparation materials. 79
- gives students in ESE classes updated textbooks. 73
- aligns curriculum for students with the standards that are tested on the FCAT. 67

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

- develops IEPs according to student needs. 87
- conducts ongoing assessments of individual students' performance. 82
- makes an effort to involve parents in their child's education. 82
- provides positive behavioral supports. 77
- ensures that classroom material is grade- and age-appropriate. 74
- allows students to make up credits lost due to disability-related absences. 74
- ensures that classroom material is culturally appropriate. 73
- encourages participation of students with disabilities in extracurricular activities. 72
- provides social skills training to students as needed. 70
- ensures that students are taught strategies to manage their behavior as needed. 69
- implements dropout prevention activities. 54

**The items below relate primarily to middle and high school students.
If any items did not apply, respondents marked N/A.**

My school:

**% Always, Almost Always
Frequently combined**

- | | |
|---|----|
| • implements an IEP transition plan for each student. | 90 |
| • provides extra help to students who need to retake the FCAT. | 85 |
| • informs students through the IEP process of the different diploma options and their requirements. | 83 |
| • encourages students to aim for a standard diploma when appropriate. | 78 |
| • provides students with information about options after graduation. | 75 |
| • teaches transition skills for future employment and independent living. | 71 |
| • provides students with job training. | 47 |
| • coordinates on-the-job training with outside agencies. | 44 |

**Suwannee County School District
2004 Student Survey Report
Students with Disabilities**

We received 111 surveys representing approximately 46% of students with disabilities in grades 9-12 in the district. Data are from 3 (60%) of the district's 5 schools with students in grades 9-12.

I am taking the following ESE classes:	% Yes
• English	74
• Math	68
• Science	43
• Electives (physical education, art, music)	39
• Social Studies	38
• Vocational (woodshop, computers)	16

At my school:

• ESE teachers believe that ESE students can learn.	94
• ESE teachers teach students in ways that help them learn.	92
• ESE teachers teach students things that will be useful later on in life.	91
• ESE teachers give students extra help, if needed.	91
• ESE teachers understand ESE students' needs.	88
• ESE teachers give students extra time or different assignments, if needed.	81
• ESE teachers provide ESE students with updated books and materials.	77

I am taking the following regular/mainstream classes:

• Electives (physical education, art, music)	74
• Science	47
• Social Studies	41
• Vocational (woodshop, computers)	39
• Math	28
• English	28

At my school:

• regular education teachers believe that ESE students can learn.	90
• regular education teachers teach ESE students in ways that help them learn.	81
• regular education teachers teach ESE students things that will be useful later on in life.	79
• regular education teachers give ESE students extra help if needed.	77
• regular education teachers understand ESE students' needs.	75
• regular education teachers provide students with updated books and materials.	72
• regular education teachers give ESE students extra time or different assignments if needed.	61

At my school, ESE students:

- are encouraged to stay in school. 92
- get the help they need to well in school. 89
- can take vocational classes such as computers and business technology. 88
- participate in clubs, sports, and other activities. 86
- spend enough time with regular education students. 85
- fit in at school. 85
- get work experience (on-the-job training) if they are interested. 80
- are treated fairly by teachers and staff. 77
- get information about education after high school. 74

Diploma Option

- I know the difference between a regular and a special diploma. 86
- I agree with the type of diploma I am going to receive. 86
- I know what courses I have to take to get my diploma. 84
- I had a say in the decision about which diploma I would get. 71
- I will probably graduate with a regular diploma. 55

IEP

- I was invited to attend my IEP meeting this year. 75
- I attended my IEP meeting this year. 70
- I had a say in the decision about which classes I would take. 61
- I had a say in the decision about special testing conditions I might get for the FCAT or other tests. 42
- I had a say in the decision about whether I need to take the FCAT or a different test. 35

FCAT

- I took the FCAT this year. 79
- Teachers help ESE students prepare for the FCAT. 72
- In my English/reading classes, we work on the kinds of skills that are tested on the reading part of the FCAT. 72
- In my math classes, we work on the kinds of problems that are tested on the math part of the FCAT. 62
- I received accommodations (special testing conditions) for the FCAT. 53

APPENDIX D—FORMS REVIEW

**Suwannee County School District
Focused Monitoring Report
Forms Review**

This forms review was completed as a component of the focused monitoring visit that will be conducted the week of September 20, 2004. The following district forms were compared to the requirements of applicable State Board of Education rules, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), and applicable sections of Part 300, Code of Federal Regulations. The review includes required revisions and recommended revisions based on programmatic or procedural issues and concerns. The results of the review are detailed below and list the applicable sources used for the review

Parent Notification of Individual Educational Plan (IEP) Meeting

Form *Notice of Conference Form 5200-022*

Title 34 of the Code of Federal Regulation Section 300.345

This form contains the components for compliance.

The following comment is made regarding this form: It is recommended that a notation be added as to who is serving as the LEA designee if the ESE administrator is not in attendance.

Individual Educational Plan (IEP) Meeting

Form *Individual Education Plan/Transition*

Title 34 of the Code of Federal Regulation Section 300.347

The following must be addressed:

- Related Services specific to transition must be added.

Informed Notice and Consent for Evaluation

Form *Informed Notice And Consent For Evaluation Form 5200-023*

Title 34 of the Code of Federal Regulation Sections 300.503 and 300.505

This form contains the components for compliance.

Informed Notice and Consent for Reevaluation

Form *Informed Notice And Consent For Re-evaluation Form 5200-066*

Title 34 of the Code of Federal Regulation Sections 300.503 and 300.505

The following must be addressed:

- Federal and state laws require that the parental notice form include sources for a parent to contact to obtain assistance in understanding the provisions of the IDEA. This form must be revised to include more than one source.

Notice and Consent for Initial Placement

Form *Informed Notice of Eligibility And Consent For Educational Placement Form 5200-023*

Title 34 of the Code of Federal Regulation Sections 300.503 and 300.505

This form contains the components for compliance.

Notice of Change in Placement Form

Form *Informed Prior Notice Of Change Of Placement Form 5200-026*

Title 34 of the Code of Federal Regulation Sections 300.503 and 300.505

The following must be addressed:

- Federal and state laws require that the parental notice form include sources for a parent to contact to obtain assistance in understanding the provisions of the IDEA. This form must be revised to include more than one source.

Notice of Change in FAPE

Form *Informed Prior Notice Of Change Of FAPE Form 5200-026*

Title 34 of the Code of Federal Regulation Sections 300.503 and 300.505

The following must be addressed:

- Federal and state laws require that the parental notice form include sources for a parent to contact to obtain assistance in understanding the provisions of the IDEA. This form must be revised to include more than one source.

Informed Notice of Refusal

Form *Informed Notice of Refusal To Take A Specific Action Form 5200-030*

Title 34 of the Code of Federal Regulation Section 300.503

The following must be addressed:

- Federal and state laws require that the parental notice form include sources for a parent to contact to obtain assistance in understanding the provisions of the IDEA. This form must be revised to include more than one source.
- A description of any options the district considered and the reasons those options were rejected must be added.

Notice of Dismissal

Form *Informed Notice of Dismissal Form 5200-029*

Title 34 of the Code of Federal Regulation Sections 300.503 and 300.505

The following must be addressed:

- Federal and state laws require that the parental notice form include sources for a parent to contact to obtain assistance in understanding the provisions of the IDEA. This form must be revised to include more than one source.
- A description of any options the district considered and the reasons those options were rejected must be added.

Notice of Ineligibility

Form *Informed Notice of Ineligibility Form 5200-028*

Title 34 of the Code of Federal Regulation Sections 300.503 and 300.505

The following must be addressed:

- The words “and approved” must be removed from the statement “The ESE Administrator reviewed and approved this recommendation.

Documentation of Staffing Form

Form ESE Staffing Committee Process Documentation Form 5200-021

Title 34 of the Code of Federal Regulation Sections 300.534, 300.503

The following must be addressed:

- The statement indicating that the ESE administrator “approved” or “disapproved” the staffing committee decision must be revised to indicate that the ESE administrator “reviewed” the recommendation of the staffing committee.

Confidentiality of Information

Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act, Part 99 Title 34 of the Code of Federal Regulation Title 34 of the Code of Federal Regulation Section 300.503

The following must be addressed:

- The right to seek amendment of the student’s educational records the parent or eligible student believes to be inaccurate, misleading, or otherwise in violation of the student’s privacy rights, including the procedures to request an amendment, must be included.
- The information that the parent or guardian has the right to file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Education concerning alleged failures by the district to comply with the requirements of FERPA must be included.

Educational Plan

Form Gifted Program Educational Plan (EP) Form

This form contains the basic components for compliance.

It was noted that the district utilizes the procedural safeguards wording provided by the Bureau of Instructional Support and Community Services.

APPENDIX E—GLOSSARY OF ACRONYMS

Glossary of Acronyms

Bureau	Bureau of Exceptional Education and Student Services
CARE	Classrooms Accelerating Reading Excellence
CFR	Code of Federal Regulations
CIP	Continuous Improvement Plan
DJJ	Department of Juvenile Justice
DOE	Department of Education
EH	Emotionally Handicapped
EMH	Educable Mentally Handicapped
EP	Educational Plan for gifted students
ESE	Exceptional Student Education
FAC	Florida Administrative Code
FAPE	Free Appropriate Public Education
FCAT	Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test
FDLRS	Florida Diagnostic and Learning Resources System
FIN	Florida Inclusion Network
F.S.	Florida Statute
IDEA	Individuals with Disabilities Education Act
IEP	Individual Educational Plan
LEA	Local education agency
LEP	Limited English proficient
LI	Language Impaired
OCR	Office for Civil Rights
OLSAT	Otis-Lennon School Ability Test
OSEP	Office of Special Education Programs
Pre-K (PK)	Pre-kindergarten
SED	Severely Emotionally Disturbed
SEDNET	Multiagency Network for Students with Severe Emotional Disturbance
SI	Speech Impaired
SLD	Specific Learning Disabled