

FINAL REPORT: FOCUSED MONITORING  
EXCEPTIONAL STUDENT EDUCATION PROGRAMS

# **VOLUSIA COUNTY**

MAY 9 - 12, 2005



FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION  
BUREAU OF EXCEPTIONAL EDUCATION AND STUDENT SERVICES

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December 9, 2005

Dr. Margaret Smith, Superintendent  
Volusia County School District  
P.O. Box 2118  
Deland, Florida 32721-2118

Dear Superintendent Smith:

We are pleased to provide you with the Final Report of Focused Monitoring of Exceptional Student Education Programs in Volusia 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 May 9-12, 2005. The report includes a system improvement plan outlining the findings of the monitoring team. The final report will be placed on the Bureau of Exceptional Education and Student Services' website and may be viewed at [www.firn.edu/doe/commhome/mon-home.htm](http://www.firn.edu/doe/commhome/mon-home.htm).

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

Semi-annual updates of outcomes achieved and/or a summary of related activities, as identified in your district's plan, must be submitted for the next two years, unless otherwise noted on the plan. The first scheduled update will be due on May 30, 2006. A verification monitoring visit to your district may take place two years after your original monitoring visit.

**BAMBI J. LOCKMAN**  
*Chief*

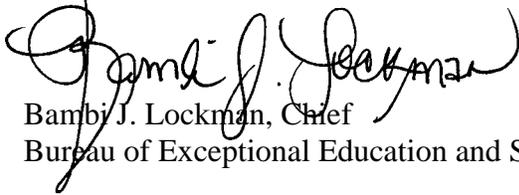
*Bureau of Exceptional Education and Student Services*

Superintendent Smith  
December 9, 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](mailto:Eileen.Amy@fldoe.org).

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

Sincerely,



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

Enclosure

- cc: Candace Lankford, School Board Chair  
Members of the School Board  
Richard Kizma, School Board Attorney  
School Principals  
William Fink, ESE Director  
Eileen Amy  
Evy Friend  
Kim Komisar

**Volusia County Final Monitoring Report**  
**Focused Monitoring**  
**May 9 - 12, 2005**

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**Volusia County Final Monitoring Report**  
**Focused Monitoring**  
**May 9 - 12, 2005**

**Executive Summary**

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

During the week of May 9, 2005, 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 Volusia County Public Schools. Barbara Bush, Exceptional Student Education Assistant Director, served as the coordinator and point of contact for the district during the monitoring visit. In its continuing effort to focus the monitoring process on student educational outcomes, the Bureau identified four key data indicators: percentage of students with disabilities participating in regular classes (i.e., spending at least 80% of the school day with their nondisabled peers); dropout rate for students with disabilities; percentage of students with disabilities exiting with a standard diploma; and percentage of students with disabilities participating in statewide assessments. Volusia County was selected for monitoring on the basis of the percent of students with disabilities in general education classes ((i.e., spending at least 80% of the school day with their nondisabled peers). The results of the monitoring process are reported under categories or related areas that are considered to impact or contribute to the key data indicator. In addition, information related to the following are addressed: services provided to ESE students in Department of Juvenile Justice(DJJ) facilities and charter schools; counseling as a related service, including psychological counseling; speech and language services as related services; transition services; services for gifted students; review of student records, and, review of district forms.

## **Summary of Findings**

### **General Information**

Student placement data is reported in December through survey 9, and is based on placement levels established by the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs. During the three school years from 2002-03 through 2004-05 instruction in the three most commonly reported levels of service remained essentially unchanged, although a slight trend toward placement in a more restrictive environment was evident.

### **Service Delivery Models/Continuum of Placements**

There were no findings of noncompliance in this area. The district is encouraged to continue its efforts to expand inclusive programs by reviewing the service delivery models available by school, and developing and implementing a coordinated plan to ensure that sufficient supports are available for students with disabilities to participate in the general education classroom to the extent appropriate. Promising practices regarding the implementation of inclusive programs were reported by district and school staff.

### **Access to the General Curriculum**

Placement options at Riverview Alternative School are limited to all general education classes with consultation or a self-contained ESE classroom; requiring placement in all ESE courses for students who may be successful in some general education courses with support results in students being served in a more restrictive environment than is justified by their individual needs. Concerns also were noted related to the use of the parallel curriculum course model at some schools, prerequisites to enrollment in the Advanced Technology Center that may exclude some students with disabilities who might be successful in the program with additional supports, and limitations to the way in which students are provided access to the general curriculum at the Three Springs Juvenile Justice facility. The district is required to address the need for additional flexibility in placement options at the Riverview Alternative School and is encouraged to review current staff allocations for "ESE resource teachers" and the students with disabilities being served by those teachers to review options for participation in the general education curriculum in the least restrictive environment. The district is encouraged to continue and expand the Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) task force. Positive practices related to the implementation of co-teaching were reported by staff across the district.

### **Discipline and Classroom Management**

There were no findings of noncompliance in this area. A concern was noted regarding the lack of school-wide positive behavioral support systems, which may contribute to some students with disabilities being removed from the general education setting when IEP team members are not confident of behavioral support being available in general education classrooms. The district is encouraged to consider providing staff development and training in positive behavior support systems in schools with high ESE populations. Promising practices regarding effective classroom management were evident at several sites.

### **Decision-making Process**

Master schedules and availability of ESE assignments to those slots are reported to influence the decision-making process for placement in general education classes. Decisions regarding

placement in a general education class is reported to be based on the students' ability to perform at or near grade level rather than on a consideration of the supports needed for the students to achieve their annual goals in that setting. This results in students with disabilities being held to a higher standard than their nondisabled peers. A concern was noted regarding staff reports that placement decisions at some schools are strongly influenced by parent requests that their children be placed in ESE classes rather than in the more rigorous general education classes. The district is required to review placement procedures in a sampling of elementary, middle and high schools across the district. Based on the results, the district must develop and implement a plan to ensure that placement decisions are based on a consideration of the supports required for the students to achieve their goals without removal from the general education setting. Promising practices were reported regarding staff acceptance of more inclusive programs.

### **Staff Development**

There were no findings of noncompliance in this area. Staff members at the middle and high schools visited requesting additional training on effective instruction and classroom management. The district is encouraged to conduct a survey of general education staff members at schools with high ESE populations to determine specific training or technical assistance needs for the individual schools. Promising practices were reported by school staff regarding team-based co-teaching training.

### **Parental Involvement**

There were no findings of noncompliance in this area. A concern was noted that placement in ESE classes often are based on parents' wishes for courses they believe will be less rigorous for their children. The district is encouraged to provide training to staff and parents at targeted schools regarding the decision-making process at IEP team meetings, including the use of data to inform decisions and the requirement to consider all reasonable supports in the general education setting prior to removal of a student. Promising practices regarding ways to foster parent involvement were reported at several sites.

### **Stakeholder Opinions Related to the Key Data Indicator**

When asked what factors they feel might contribute to the districts relative low regular class placement rate for students with disabilities, respondents cited: the amount of time devoted to instruction in reading; scheduling difficulties and lack of available space in general education classes; parental request; behavioral concerns; lack of co-teaching and inclusion models at all school levels; teacher concerns about accountability and ensuring ESE students are prepared prior to entering the general education classroom; and, relatively high class-sizes in general education and low class-sizes in ESE classes impacting IEP team decisions.

### **Services to ESE Students in Department of Juvenile Justice Facilities**

Findings of noncompliance were related to the lack of counseling as a related service on the IEPs of four SED students. The IEP teams for the SED students must reconvene to address the need for counseling. A concern was noted that students who require more intensive ESE services for English, language arts, or social studies may not have access to it. The district is encouraged to review service delivery options for Juvenile Justice facilities to ensure that placement decisions are based on student needs. The Positive Peer Culture Program utilizing peer pressure and counseling to modify behavior was reported by staff to be effective.

### **Services to ESE Students in Charter Schools**

Transition services agencies are not invited to transition IEP meetings at Chiles Academy. The district is required to provide training and/or technical assistance to Chiles Academy that addresses the requirement to solicit agency participation in transition IEP team meetings as appropriate. Staff at the charter school reported a positive and supportive working relationship with the district.

### **Counseling as a Related Service**

Counseling as a related service was not included on the IEPs of 31 SED students (including DJJ). A concern was noted that school and district staff reported a strong focus on behavioral interventions and support as a replacement for counseling services. The IEP teams for the identified students are required to reconvene to address the need for counseling as a related service, and the district is required to conduct a review of services provided to all SED students to ensure that counseling as a related service is included on their IEPs. The district is encouraged to provide training and guidance on decision-making regarding the need for counseling as a related service (e.g., to determine when counseling may result in a student's placement in a less restrictive environment and/or in an increase in academic engaged time). Promising practice(s) included the availability of school-based staff to provide counseling and the extensive evidence of behavior intervention plans developed and implemented for students with challenging behaviors.

### **Speech and Language Services as Related Services**

The communication needs of students with disabilities who are not eligible as speech or language impaired are not addressed by IEP teams at Holly Hill Middle School. A concern was noted that, although addressed by the ESE or general education teachers through classroom instruction, the communication needs of students not eligible as speech or language impaired often are not incorporated into the students' IEPs. The district is required to address the requirement of IEP teams to address the communication needs of students (both intervention and documentation on the IEP) in its district-wide staff development activities, with targeted attention to Holly Hill Middle School. Promising practices were noted in the way in which some ESE classrooms incorporate communication skills into the daily curriculum for students with disabilities.

### **Transition Services**

Transition not indicated as a purpose of the IEP meeting on meeting notice. Concerns were noted for the lack of evidence that parents and students are provided with agency information when agencies are not present at transition meetings and not all students in the focus groups reported participating in transition discussions. The district is required to target notice requirements for training on IEP development and transition planning. The district is encouraged to develop a method by which students and parents receiving information regarding transition services available through agencies have the receipt of the information documented. Promising practices were in that Daytona Beach Community College counselors participate at the transition IEP meetings of students with disabilities at the Advanced Technology Center.

### **Services to Gifted Students**

General education teachers did not provide input or attend the EP meeting. A concern was noted that the range of service delivery options may not address needs beyond the general curriculum for all gifted students. The district will be required to provide training or other technical assistance to school staff regarding the required members of an EP team, and report the results of periodic self-assessments to the Bureau. The district is encouraged to conduct a review of the service delivery models available by school, and to develop and implement a coordinated plan to ensure that sufficient supports and services are available for gifted students at all levels. A promising practice was noted across the district, in that gifted services are available in multiple content areas.

### **Review of Student Records**

Systemic findings of noncompliance for IEPs were identified in 13 areas. Individual or non-systemic findings of noncompliance were noted in 57 additional individual elements of the IEP. Systemic findings of noncompliance for EPs were identified in two areas. Individual or non-systemic findings of noncompliance were noted in six additional individual elements of the EP. One IEP was not current on the day of the review. For 19 IEPs the majority of annual goals were not measurable. There were four matrix of service documents for which the services identified on the matrix were not in evidence on the IEPs; however, provision of the services reported on the matrix document was confirmed through classroom visits. The district is required to target the elements noted in the report in its existing IEP training procedures, and to develop and implement a system of self-assessment to ensure compliance with required elements. Funding adjustments and data corrections are required to be made.

### **Review of District Forms**

Forms representing the thirteen areas identified below were submitted to Bureau staff for a review to determine compliance with federal and state laws. Forms representing 13 actions required changes to meet compliance standards, and recommendations were noted for eight. The district was notified of the specific findings via a separate letter dated June 17, 2005.

### **System Improvement Plan**

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



## Volusia 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 Strategies   | Evidence of Change and Reporting Date   |
|---|--|-----|-----|---|---|
| Service Delivery Models/<br>Continuum of Placements | No findings of noncompliance in this area.<br><br>Recommendations are included in the body of the report and in the <i>Recommendations and Technical Assistance</i> section.   |     |     |   |   |
| Access to the General Curriculum                    | Placement options at Riverview Alternative School are limited to all general education classes with consultation or a self-contained ESE classroom; requiring placement in all ESE courses for students who may be successful in some general education courses with support | X   |     | The district will review the criteria for placement in ESE classes at Riverview Alternative School. Based on that review, a plan will be developed and implemented to ensure that students are not removed from all access to the general education | District report of self-assessment indicates that students are receiving services in the least restrictive environment according to their need(s) (for 100% of records reviewed). |

| Category                                     | Findings   | ESE | All | System Improvement Strategies   | Evidence of Change and Reporting Date  |
|--|--|-----|-----|---|--|
| Access to the General Curriculum (continued) | results in students being served in a more restrictive environment than is justified by their individual needs.  |     |     | environment due to the need for ESE services in one or more courses.  | May 2006<br>November 2006  |
| Discipline and Classroom Management          | <p>No findings of noncompliance in this area.</p> <p>Recommendations are included in the body of the report and in the <i>Recommendations and Technical Assistance</i> section.</p>  |     |     |   |  |
| Decision-making Process                      | <p>Master schedules and availability of ESE assignments to those slots are reported to influence the decision-making process for placement in general education classes.</p> <p>Decisions regarding placement in a general education class is reported to be based on the students' ability to perform at or near grade level rather than on a consideration of the supports needed for the students to achieve their annual goals in that setting. This results in students with disabilities being held to a higher standard than their nondisabled peers.</p> | X   |     | School and district staff will review the placement decisions of a random selection of students. Based on the results of the review, a plan will be developed and implemented to ensure that the decision to remove a student from the general education setting is based on consideration of services and supports that are required for the student to achieve specific goals and that can not be provided in the general education setting, and that placement is not based on administrative convenience. | <p>District report of self-assessment indicates that, for 100% of student records reviewed, the decision to remove a student from the general education setting for any given class or subject complies with all least restrictive environment requirements.</p> <p>May 2006<br/>November 2006</p> |

| Category                            | Findings  | ESE | All | System Improvement Strategies   | Evidence of Change and Reporting Date |
|-------------------------------------|---|-----|-----|---|---------------------------------------|
| Decision-making Process (continued) |   |     |     | The self-assessment procedure will include periodic sampling of the records of students at resource and separate class levels in all school levels (elementary, middle, and high schools), and interviews with IEP team members to determine factors that were considered when deciding whether removal from the general education setting is required. |                                       |
| Staff Development                   | <p>No findings of noncompliance in this area.</p> <p>Recommendations are included in the body of the report and in the <i>Recommendations and Technical Assistance</i> section.</p> |     |     |   |                                       |
| Parental Involvement                | <p>No findings of noncompliance in this area.</p> <p>Recommendations are included in the body of the report and in the <i>Recommendations and Technical Assistance</i> section.</p> |     |     |   |                                       |

| Category                        | Findings  | ESE | All | System Improvement Strategies  | Evidence of Change and Reporting Date   |
|---------------------------------|---|-----|-----|--|---|
| DJJ Facilities                  | <p>Lack of counseling services identified on the IEPs of four SED students.</p> <p>Recommendations are included in the body of the report and in the <i>Recommendations and Technical Assistance</i> section.</p> | X   |     | See Counseling section below.  |   |
| Charter Schools                 | Transition services agencies are not invited to transition IEP meetings at Chiles Academy.  | X   |     | <p>Technical assistance addressing the requirement to solicit agency participation in transition IEP team meetings as appropriate will be provided to Chiles Academy.</p> <p>District staff will conduct a periodic review of records from that school to ensure compliance.</p> | <p>District report of self-assessment indicates that transition service agencies are invited to participate, as appropriate, in transition IEP meetings (for 100% of records reviewed).</p> <p>May 2006<br/>November 2006</p> |
| Counseling as a Related Service | Counseling as a related service not included on the IEPs of 31 SED students.  | X   |     | <p>The IEP teams for the identified SED students will reconvene to address the need for counseling as a related service; documentation will be submitted to the Bureau no later than.</p> <p>District and/or school staff will review services provided to all</p>               | The district has provided documentation of completion of the reconvene requirement effective October 12, 2005.  |

| Category                                    | Findings  | ESE      | All | System Improvement Strategies   | Evidence of Change and Reporting Date   |
|---|---|----------|-----|---|---|
| Counseling as a Related Service (continued) |   |          |     | students in the district with a primary exceptionality code of Q (SED) to ensure that counseling as a related service is included on their IEPs or that a reevaluation is conducted to determine whether the students' eligibility for a different program.   | District report of self-assessment reveals compliance with the targeted elements for 100% of services to SED students.<br><br>May 2006<br>November 2006 |
| Speech and Language                         | The communication needs of students with disabilities who are not eligible as speech or language impaired are not addressed by IEP teams at Holly Hill Middle School.     | <b>X</b> |     | The requirement that IEP teams address the communication needs of students (both intervention and documentation on the IEP) will be targeted in the general staff development activities for ESE teachers at Holly Hill Middle School.<br><br>District and/or school staff will conduct periodic reviews (15 records) of records from that school to ensure compliance. | District report of self-assessment reveals compliance with the targeted communication needs for 100% of IEPs reviewed.<br><br>May 2006<br>November 2006 |
| Transition Services                         | Transition is not consistently indicated as a purpose on the transition IEP team meeting notice.<br><br>Recommendations are included in the body of the report and in the | <b>X</b> |     | Training and/or technical assistance regarding notice requirements will be incorporated into the general staff development activities for ESE staff.  | The district will document staff development activities for transition.   |

| Category                           | Findings  | ESE      | All | System Improvement Strategies  | Evidence of Change and Reporting Date  |
|------------------------------------|---|----------|-----|--|--|
| Transition Services<br>(continued) | <i>Recommendations and Technical Assistance</i> section.  |          |     | The self-assessment procedure must include periodic sampling of the records of students age 14 and older.  | District report of self-assessment reveals compliance with all targeted transition element for 100% of IEPs reviewed.<br><br>May 2006<br>November 2006 |
| Gifted Services                    | General education teachers did not provide input or attend the EP meeting for 5 of 10 records reviewed. | <b>X</b> |     | <p>Training and/or other technical assistance regarding the role of the general education teacher in EP development will be provided at all schools.</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 10 EPs developed by staff who participated in the training session.</p> | District report of self-assessment reveals compliance with the targeted element for 100% of EPs reviewed.<br><br>May 2006<br>November 2006             |

| Category                  | Findings   | ESE | All | System Improvement Strategies  | Evidence of Change and Reporting Date   |
|---------------------------|--|-----|-----|--|---|
| Review of Student Records | <p>Systemic findings of noncompliance (evident in 25% or more records) were noted in 13 IEP components; individual or non-systemic findings of noncompliance were noted in 57 additional elements.</p> <p>Systemic findings of noncompliance were noted in two EP elements; individual or non-systemic findings were noted in six additional elements.</p> <p>One IEP was not current on the day of the review.</p> <p>More than 50% of the goals were not measurable for 19 IEPs.</p> <p>Four of 11 IEPs for students reported at the 254 or 255 levels (36%) did not support the matrix of service documents; however, provision of the services reported on the matrix document was confirmed through classroom visits.</p> | X   |     | <p>The identified elements will be targeted through the district's existing IEP training and technical assistance procedures. Using protocols provided by the Bureau district and/or school staff will conduct periodic self-assessments of a random sampling of records (i.e., at least 30 IEPs and 10 EPs).</p> <p>The IEP teams for the 19 identified students will reconvene to address measurable annual goals.</p> <p>An amendment will be provided to the data provided to the DOE through the Automated Student Information System database for surveys 2, 3, and 4 for the 2004-05 school year for the four identified matrix of services documents. 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).</p> | <p>Documentation of the reconvened IEPs was submitted to the Bureau and identified as complete effective October 12, 2005.</p> <p>Documentation of corrections to the matrix of services documents was submitted to the Bureau and identified as complete effective July 29, 2005.</p> <p>District report of self-assessment reveals compliance with all targeted elements for 100% of IEPs and EPs reviewed.</p> <p>Results of the matrix review will be reported annually.</p> <p>May 2006<br/>May 2007</p> |

| Category                 | Findings  | ESE      | All | System Improvement Strategies  | Evidence of Change and Reporting Date   |
|--------------------------|---|----------|-----|--|---|
| Review of District Forms | <p>The following district forms require changes to meet compliance standards:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>IEP forms</i></li> <li>• <i>EP forms</i></li> <li>• <i>Notice and Consent for Initial Placement</i></li> <li>• <i>Informed Notice and Consent for Evaluation</i></li> <li>• <i>Informed Notice and Consent for Reevaluation</i></li> <li>• <i>Notification of Change of Placement</i></li> <li>• <i>Notification of Change of FAPE (Free Appropriate Public Education)</i></li> <li>• <i>Informed Notice of Refusal</i></li> <li>• <i>Documentation of Staffing/Eligibility Determination</i></li> <li>• <i>Informed Notice of Dismissal</i></li> <li>• <i>Notice: Not Eligible for Exceptional Student Placement</i></li> <li>• <i>Annual Notice of Confidentiality</i></li> <li>• <i>Services Plan</i></li> </ul> | <b>X</b> |     | The district is required to correct the forms to meet compliance standards. Revised forms are required to be submitted to the Bureau by February 2006. | The district and the Bureau continue to work collaboratively to ensure compliance of necessary forms. |

# Monitoring Process

## Authority

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

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

## Focused Monitoring

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

## **Key Data Indicators**

The four key data indicators utilized during 2005 and their sources of data are as follows:

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

## **District Selection**

In making the decision to include Volusia County in this year's focused monitoring visits, the data reviewed was related to the placement data from Survey 9 reported to OSEP through the December 1 count for the 2003-04 school year. Regular class placement rate was used for district selection. The district's current 2005 LEA profile and the listing of districts rank ordered on data related to the key data indicator, which was used for district selection, are included as appendix A. The most current LEA profiles for all Florida school districts are available on the web at <http://www.firn.edu/doe/commhome/datapage.htm>.

## **Sources of Information**

### **On-Site Monitoring Activities**

The Bureau conducted the on-site focused monitoring visit from May 9-12, 2005. Four Bureau staff members, seven peer monitors, and one contracted staff conducted site-visits to the following 11 schools and one Department of Juvenile Justice (DJJ) facility:

- Chiles Academy Charter School
- Deland High School
- Deland Middle School
- Friendship Elementary School
- Holly Hill Middle School
- Palm Terrace Elementary School
- Pine Ridge High School
- Riverview Alternative School
- Three Springs DJJ
- Woodward Avenue Elementary School
- Advanced Technology Center (interviews with staff only; no site-visit)

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 Bureau staff, peer monitors, and contracted staff who conducted the monitoring activities for this visit is included as appendix B.

### **Interviews**

A total of 92 interviews, including nine district-level staff, 27 school-level administrators or other student support staff (e.g., guidance counselors), 35 ESE teachers or other service providers, and 21 general education teachers were conducted.

### ***Focus Group Interviews***

In conjunction with the 2005 Volusia County focused monitoring visit, two focus groups for students with disabilities were conducted. Sixteen students participated in the focus group for students pursuing a standard diploma and 16 students participated in the focus group for students pursuing a special diploma.

### ***Student Case Studies***

Students may be randomly selected for case studies or the monitoring team may select students who, on the face of it, appear able to participate in the general educational environment to a greater extent than a preliminary record review indicates that they are. As part of this process, the student's records are reviewed, teachers are interviewed regarding the development and implementation of the student's IEP, and the student's classroom may be observed. Forty-three in-depth case studies were conducted in Volusia County.

### ***Classroom Visits***

Classroom visits are conducted in conjunction with individual student case studies as well as during general observations of classrooms that include exceptional students. In addition to implementation of a student's IEP, curriculum and instruction, classroom management and discipline, and classroom design and resources are observed during general classroom visits. Teachers of the classes visited are interviewed regarding practices related to students with disabilities. A total of 40 classrooms (27 ESE and 13 general education) were visited during the focused monitoring visit to Volusia County.

### ***Off-Site Monitoring Activities***

Surveys are designed by the University of Miami research staff in order to provide maximum opportunity for input about the district's ESE services from parents of students with disabilities and students identified as gifted, ESE and general education teachers, and students with disabilities in grades 9-12. The survey that is sent to parents is printed in English, Spanish, and Haitian Creole, where applicable. It includes a cover letter and a postage paid reply envelope. Data from the surveys are incorporated into the body of this report. The results of the surveys are included as appendix C.

### ***Parent Surveys***

The parent survey was sent to parents of the 11,930 students with disabilities for whom complete addresses were provided by the district. A total of 1,408 parents (PK, n = 77; K-5, n = 640; 6-8, n = 370; 9 – 12, n = 321), representing 12% of the sample, returned the survey. Surveys were returned as undeliverable from 448 families, representing 4% of the sample. Parents represented the following students with disabilities: autistic, deaf or hard of hearing, developmentally delayed, educable mentally handicapped, emotionally handicapped, hospital/homebound, language impaired, orthopedically impaired, other health impaired, profoundly mentally handicapped, specific learning disabled, severely emotionally disturbed, speech impaired, trainable mentally handicapped, traumatic brain injured, and visually impaired.

Surveys were sent to parents of the 2,312 students identified as gifted for whom complete addresses were provided by the district. A total of 791 parents (KG-5, n = 382; 6-8, n = 283; 9 -

12, n = 126), representing 34% of the sample, returned the survey. Surveys were returned as undeliverable from 27 families, representing 1% of the sample.

### ***Teacher Surveys***

Surveys developed for teachers and other service providers were mailed to each school, with a memorandum explaining the key data indicator and the monitoring process. All teachers and other service providers, both general education and ESE, were provided an opportunity to respond. A total of 2,216 teachers, representing approximately 54% of ESE and general education teachers in the district, returned the survey. Data are from 72 (87%) of the district's 83 schools.

### ***Student Surveys***

A sufficient number of surveys were provided to allow all students with disabilities, grades 9-12, to respond. Instructions for administration of the survey by classroom teachers, including a written script, were provided for each class or group of students. Since participation in this survey is not appropriate for some students whose disabilities might impair their understanding of the survey, professional judgment is used to determine appropriate participants. Surveys from 1,371 students, representing approximately 34% of students with disabilities in grades 9-12 in the district, were returned. Data are from 14 (47%) of the district's 30 schools with students in grades 9-12.

### ***Reviews of Student Records and District Forms***

Prior to the on-site monitoring visit, Bureau staff conducts a compliance review of student records that are randomly selected from the population of exceptional students. In Volusia County, 30 IEPs for students with disabilities and ten educational plans (EPs) for gifted students were reviewed for compliance. Fifteen of the IEPs represented transition IEPs. In addition, 11 matrix of services documents were reviewed during the on-site visit. An additional 391 records were reviewed on-site in conjunction with student case studies and to collect information related to additional compliance areas designated by the Bureau.

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

## **Reporting Process**

### ***Interim Reports***

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

### ***Preliminary Report***

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

### ***Final Report***

Upon final review and revision by Bureau staff, the final report is issued. The report is sent to the district, and is posted to the Bureau's website at [www.firn.edu/dae/commhome/mon-home.htm](http://www.firn.edu/dae/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 correlate activities in order to utilize resources, staff, and time in an efficient manner in order to improve outcomes for students with disabilities. Upon approval of the system improvement plan, it is forwarded to the district and the plan is posted on the website noted above. Corrective Action(s) are monitored through the submission of semiannual status reports of progress to be submitted to the Bureau on May 30<sup>th</sup> and November 30<sup>th</sup> of each year for the duration of the system improvement plan.



## **Reporting of Information**

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

- service delivery models/continuum of services
- decision-making process
- access to the general curriculum
- discipline and classroom management
- staff development
- parental involvement
- stakeholder opinion related to the key data indicator

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

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

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

To the extent possible, this report focuses on systemic issues rather than on isolated instances of noncompliance or need for improvement. In accordance with established Bureau monitoring procedures, a finding of a systemic violation will be made if evidence of such a violation is found in 25% or more of the pertinent data sources. 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 category provides demographic and background information specific to the district as well as information regarding the educational placement of students with disabilities.

Based on the 2005 LEA profile, Volusia County School District has a total school population (PK-12) of 65,011 with 18% of students being identified as students with disabilities (including 2% identified as eligible for the program for speech impaired only), and 4% identified as gifted. Volusia County is considered a medium district and is one of 11 districts in this enrollment group. Volusia County School District is comprised of 46 elementary schools, 12 middle schools, nine high schools, one middle-high school, five alternative education schools, one ESE center school, two charter schools, and eight DJJ facilities/programs.

Student placement data is reported in December through survey 9, and is based on placement levels established by the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs. Regular class placement is defined as 80 percent or more of the school week spent with nondisabled peers. Resource placement is defined as between 40 and 80 percent of the school week spent with nondisabled peers. Separate class placement is defined as less than 40 percent of the school week spent with nondisabled peers. Placement rates for students with disabilities in Volusia County for the three school years from 2002-03 through 2004-05 are provided in the table below.

|         | Regular* | Resource* | Separate* | Separate: EMH ** |
|---------|----------|-----------|-----------|------------------|
| 2002-03 | 43%      | 26%       | 29%       | 67%              |
| 2003-04 | 43%      | 26%       | 30%       | 68%              |
| 2004-05 | 42%      | 25%       | 31%       | 68%              |

\* % of total population of students with disabilities

\*\* % of EMH population in separate class placement

### **Service Delivery Models/Continuum of Placements**

This category refers to the availability of a continuum of services across the school district that is sufficient to provide placement in the least restrictive environment appropriate for students with disabilities served by the district.

#### ***Requirements***

Section 300.551(a) of Title 34, Code of Federal Regulations requires that a continuum of alternative placements be available to meet the needs of children with disabilities for special education and related services (34 CFR 300.551(a).

Rule 6A-6.0311(1)(a)-(h), Florida Administrative Code (FAC), *Eligible Special Programs for Exceptional Students*, describes the continuum of placements as follows: "...Special programs shall be organized so that an exceptional student shall receive instruction in one or more of the following ways: (a) Supplementary consultation or related services; (b) Resource room; (c) Special class; (d) Special Day School; (e) Residential school; (f) Special class in a hospital or facility operated by a noneducational agency; (g) Individual instruction in a hospital or home; (h) supplementary instructional personnel to public or nonpublic preschool or day care programs for the instruction of pre-kindergarten exceptional students." Rule 6A-6.03411(3)(a)3, FAC, *Policies and Procedures for the Provision of Specially Designed Instruction and Related Services for Exceptional Students*, clarifies that regular class placement is included in the continuum of placements.

### ***Data***

Volusia County provides an array of service delivery options for students with disabilities throughout the district. Cluster sites of classrooms referred to as “multi-VE” are utilized for students eligible for low-incidence disabilities and specialized populations (e.g., SED). Students with high incidence disabilities or who have less extensive needs (e.g., SLD; LI) are educated in their home zoned schools. The district currently includes one separate day school for students with disabilities; staff reported that this school is scheduled to close following the 2006-07 school year.

All service delivery options are not available at all schools, but many schools provide consultation, support facilitation, pull-out resource, and separate class placement. Some schools, primarily elementary, utilize a model staff referred to as “push-in inclusion,” which was described as ESE teachers working with ESE and at-risk students within the general education setting. Staff reported that use of this model facilitates providing early intervening services for at-risk students. Support facilitation is being piloted in some high schools and co-teaching is being piloted in some elementary schools. Of the teachers who responded to the survey, 91% indicated schools place students with disabilities into general education classes whenever possible. Additionally, 75% indicated co-teaching is being implemented for some or all classes and 87% indicated that support facilitation and/or consultation by ESE teachers are implemented for students with disabilities in general education classes.

### ***Findings***

- Finding(s) of Noncompliance
  - None noted.
- Area(s) of Concern
  - None noted.
- Corrective Action(s)
  - None required.
- Recommendation(s)
  - The district is encouraged to continue its efforts to expand inclusive programs by reviewing the service delivery models available by school, and developing and implementing a coordinated plan to ensure that sufficient supports are available for students with disabilities to participate in the general education classroom to the extent appropriate.
- Promising Practice(s)
  - Staff at Deland Middle School, Holly Hill Middle School, and Pine Ridge High School report co-teaching in core subject areas has been very effective in supporting students with disabilities in general education classrooms.

- District and school staff report commitment to ensuring sufficient ESE teaching staff and paraprofessionals through an expansion of inclusive service delivery models across grade levels.

## **Access to the General Curriculum**

This category refers to the manner in which students with disabilities are provided access to the general curriculum as well as the accommodations, supplementary aids and services, and supports for school personnel that are provided to promote this access.

### ***Requirements***

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

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

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

Regarding instructional and testing accommodations, 34 CFR 300.347 (a) requires that the IEP include "(3)...a statement of the special education and related services and supplementary aids and services to be provided to the child, or on behalf of the child, and a statement of the program modifications or supports for school personnel that will be provided for the child— (i) to advance appropriately toward attaining the annual goals; (ii) to be involved and progress in the general curriculum in accordance with paragraph (a)(1) of this section and to participate in extracurricular and other nonacademic activities ..."

Related services are "... transportation and such developmental, corrective, and other supportive services as are required to assist a child with a disability to benefit from special education" (34 CFR 300.24). Supplementary aids and services are "...aids, services, and other supports that are provided in regular education classes or other education-related settings to enable children with disabilities to be educated with nondisabled children to the maximum extent appropriate" (34 CFR §300.28).

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

When determining the most appropriate setting or placement for a student to be provided access to the general curriculum, 34 CFR §300.550 requires that “Each public agency shall ensure (1) that to the maximum extent appropriate, children with disabilities, including children in public or private institutions or other care facilities, are educated with children who are nondisabled; and (2) That special classes, separate schooling or other removal of children with disabilities from the regular educational environment occurs only if the nature or severity of the disability is such that education in regular classes with the use of supplementary aids and services cannot be achieved satisfactorily.”

### ***Data***

District staff reported that, in an effort to increase the numbers of students with disabilities participating in the general curriculum, an LRE task force has been formed. The task force has established goals and objectives and timelines for implementation, and has designated the specific staff responsible. Data reported by the task force indicate gains in student achievement over a two year period for exceptional students participating in co-taught classes. Tasks include establishing clear data-driven criteria for the movement of students on the placement continuum; increasing use of the district’s “push-in inclusion” model (similar to support facilitation); establishing a new staffing formula for increased supports/services for student with disabilities in the general education classroom; expanding use of the district’s Collaborative Model (Response to Intervention); and increasing co-teaching opportunities in elementary schools. While many tasks begin with piloting the actions, and others have implementation dates in late 2006, the district indicates that it is proactively seeking to make a positive difference in the placement of students with disabilities in the least restrictive environment.

At the middle schools visited ESE teachers are assigned to full-time self-contained classes, to “resource” classes, or to consultative and/or support facilitation roles. Staff referred to students enrolled in the resource classes as resource level students, although many of these students are enrolled in ESE resource classes for the majority of the school day; as a result, they are served at the separate class level. Staff at Deland and Pine Ridge high schools as well as Deland and Holly Hills middle schools reported providing students with disabilities access to the general curriculum through parallel curriculum courses (ESE sections of courses that follow the general curriculum and Sunshine State Standards). Standard diploma focus group students supported this information by reporting participating in general curriculum courses taught by ESE teachers. The manner and extent to which these classes differed from sections taught by general education teachers was unclear. Eighty-eight percent of the teachers responding to the survey indicated the general education curriculum is taught in ESE classes to the maximum extent possible.

The Volusia Adaptive Assistive Technology Team (VAATT) is reported by district staff to be a significant resource for teachers to utilize to ensure students can function in the general education environment, although school-level staff did not mention the VAATT with the same frequency. When asked what resources are available to support students with disabilities in general education classrooms the most frequent response was the availability of additional classroom personnel (i.e., behavior specialists; nurses; consultative teachers; support facilitators; co-teachers; paraprofessionals; guidance counselors; ESE administrators). Additional accommodations and supplementary aids and services cited as being most effective included use

of: copies of overheads/notes; point systems for behavior; peer helpers; re-phrasing directions; manipulatives/concrete visual aids; graphing calculators; frequency modulation (FM) systems; computer labs; and, audio books.

Students in both focus groups reported receiving needed accommodations in general education classrooms, including extra time on tests, taking tests in an alternate locations, and receiving individual assistance when requested. This was supported by the case studies, with no findings of noncompliance regarding the implementation of IEPs. Of the students responding to the survey, 67% indicated general education teachers give students extra time or different assignments, if needed.

In addition to traditional school campuses, three specialized programs were visited. At Riverview Alternative School ESE students with disabilities are served in a self-contained ESE class or in general education classes with consultation. At the Three Springs DJJ facility all students with disabilities are enrolled in general education courses, with support. The facility's ESE teacher also teaches the general education math and science classes. The Advanced Technology Center charter school provides consultative services. A prerequisite for enrollment at the school is that the students be performing on grade level and have a 2.0 grade point average.

### ***Findings***

- Finding(s) of Noncompliance
  - Placement options at Riverview Alternative School are limited to all general education classes with consultation or a self-contained ESE classroom; requiring placement in all ESE courses for students who may be successful in some general education courses with support results in students being served in a more restrictive environment than is justified by their individual needs.
- Area(s) of Concern
  - Use of the parallel curriculum course model, while designed to provide access to the general curriculum, may result in unnecessary removal of students with disabilities from the general education environment.
  - Prerequisites to enrollment in the Advanced Technology Center exclude some students with disabilities who might be successful in the program with additional supports.
  - While there were no findings of noncompliance regarding the students with disabilities currently enrolled at the Three Springs DJJ facility, a concern was noted that students who require more intensive ESE services for English, language arts, or social studies would not have access to it.
- Corrective Action(s)
  - The district is required to address the need for additional flexibility in placement options at the Riverview Alternative School to ensure that students are not removed from all access to the general education environment due to the need for ESE services in one or more courses.

- Recommendation(s)
  - Review current staff allocations for “ESE resource teachers” and the students with disabilities being served in by those teachers to review options for participation in the general education curriculum in the least restrictive environment.
- Promising Practice(s)
  - The use of the co-teaching model at Pine Ridge High School and Deland and Holly Hill middle schools was reported by staff at the schools to be very effective in providing access to the general curriculum in the least restrictive environment.

## **Discipline and Classroom Management**

This section provides information related to classroom and behavior management in general as well as disciplinary procedures used with students with disabilities. Behavioral factors often are cited as affecting the IEP team’s determination of the least restrictive environment appropriate for a given student.

### ***Requirements***

In accordance with 34 FR 300.346(a)(2)(i), the IEP team must “...In the case of a child with a disability whose behavior impedes his or her learning or that of others, consider, if appropriate, strategies, including positive behavioral interventions, strategies, and supports to address that behavior.” In addition, regulatory requirements related to discipline are found at 34 CFR 300.519 through 300.529.

### ***Data***

District and school staff did not report the use of a consistent behavior modification system throughout schools or throughout the district. When asked whether disciplinary issues and behavior management are perceived as areas of concern, 51% of administrators and teachers interviewed reported that students with disabilities do not exhibit behavior problems to a greater degree than any other students, although 16% of teachers reported that students with disabilities are responsible for more class disruptions than their nondisabled peers and 11% reported talking in class and attendance problems occurring more frequently with these students. Twenty-two percent of teachers reported using behavior management plans and/or systems to promote and/or control classroom behavior. Four of the 19 teachers (21%) who stated that more students with disabilities could be enrolled in general education classes with adequate support indicated that disruptive behavior is the determining factor hindering their placement. Behavioral observations were noted in 24 of the classrooms visited; in 23 of the 24 classrooms (96%) the teachers were observed to consistently or generally implement effective behavior management strategies.

### ***Findings***

- Finding(s) of Noncompliance
  - None noted.

- Area(s) of Concern
  - Lack of school-wide positive behavioral support systems may contribute to some students with disabilities being removed from the general education setting; some IEP team members may not feel confident of behavioral support being available in general education classrooms.
- Corrective Action(s)
  - None required.
- Recommendation(s)
  - Consider providing staff development and training in positive behavior support systems in schools with high ESE populations.
- Promising Practice(s)
  - Effective behavior management was observed in the majority of classrooms visited, with notable positive support systems observed in SED classrooms and selected other classrooms.
  - Staff at Riverview Alternative School report that an effective behavior plan incorporating positive reinforcement is implemented throughout the school.

### **Decision-making Process**

This category refers to the process by which placement decisions are made, including the factors that are considered prior to removing a student with a disability from the general education environment.

#### ***Requirements***

Section 300.550(b)(1)(2) of Title 34, Code of Federal Regulations, requires each public agency to ensure “...(1) that to the maximum extent appropriate, children with disabilities, including children in public or private institutions or other care facilities, are educated with children who are nondisabled; and (2) That special classes, separate schooling or other removal of children with disabilities from the regular educational environment occurs only if the nature or severity of the disability is such that education in regular classes with the use of supplementary aids and services cannot be achieved satisfactorily.”

Regarding nonacademic settings or activities, 34 CFR 300.306 and 300.553 require the district to ensure that children with disabilities participate with nondisabled children to the extent appropriate to the needs of the child. Specific settings or activities include, but are not limited to, meals, recess, athletics, recreational activities, and special interest groups or clubs sponsored by the district.

When determining the educational placement of a student with a disability, including preschool children, districts must ensure that the placement is determined at least annually, is based on the student’s IEP, and is as close as possible to the student’s home. Unless the IEP requires some other arrangement, the placement must be at the school the student would attend if nondisabled. Consideration must be given to any potentially harmful effects of a given placement on the

student or on the quality of services he or she needs. Lastly, the student may not be removed from an age-appropriate general education classroom solely because of needed modifications in the general curriculum (34 CFR 300.552).

### ***Data***

All staff reported placement decisions are an IEP team decision based on current data and previous history available. Staff at Deland High School, Pine Ridge High School, Woodward Avenue Elementary School, and Friendship Elementary School indicated that parental request for general education or ESE class placement greatly impacts the IEP team decision, with parental requests for placement in the less rigorous ESE courses most commonly cited.

At all schools visited one or more staff members reported that the master schedule and the designated slots available for ESE students impacted the decision-making process. Administrators at the middle and high schools visited reported that the restrictions of the master schedule often cause challenges in student placement. When asked for the specific factors that influenced placement decisions for case study students, staff cited the students' ability to demonstrate grade level skills or maintain an "A" average in ESE classes, and the need for ESE students to exhibit few or no challenging behaviors in order to be enrolled in general education classes. General education teachers at all school visited reported that more ESE students could participate in general education classes if there were more co-teaching assignments available and/or if class size was reduced.

At the schools that utilize parallel curriculum courses for ESE students there was evidence from interviews and records that placement in ESE classes is likely to be based on the student's status as an ESE student rather than on particular areas of need that cannot be addressed in the general education classroom with supports. Staff reported opting to place a student in a more restrictive exceptional education setting before looking at less restrictive settings with accommodations or supplementary aids and services to ensure student success.

Although none of the students in either the standard or special diploma focus groups reported participating in placement discussions at IEP meetings they had attended, 72% of students who responded to the survey reported that they had a say in the decision about which classes to take. Participants in both focus groups reported not knowing about the Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test (FCAT) waiver option for standard diploma graduation, and many were unclear about the differences between standard and special diplomas. Of the students who responded to the survey, 28% indicated they had a say in the decision to take FCAT or a different test.

### ***Findings***

- Finding(s) of Noncompliance
  - Master schedules and availability of ESE assignments to those slots are reported to influence the decision-making process for placement in general education classes.
  - Decisions regarding placement in a general education class is reported to be based on the students' ability to perform at or near grade level rather than on a consideration of the supports needed for the students to achieve their annual goals in that setting. This results in students with disabilities being held to a higher standard than their nondisabled peers.

- Area(s) of Concern
  - Placement decisions at four schools visited (DHS, PRHS, FES, and WAES) are reported to be strongly influenced by parent requests that their children be placed in ESE classes rather than in the more rigorous general education classes, even when staff indicate this is not the most appropriate placement.
  - Students reported not knowing about the FCAT waiver or various diploma options.
- Corrective Action(s)
  - The district must review the placement decisions of a random selection of students served at the resource or separate class levels, at elementary, middle and high schools. Based on the results of the review, the district must develop and implement a plan to ensure that placement decisions are based on consideration of the supports needed for the students to achieve their goals without removal from the general education setting and are not based on administrative convenience.
- Promising Practice(s)
  - District and school staff report an emphasis on reviewing and revising the existing placement options to encourage inclusion of students with disabilities in general education classrooms.
  - Staff report willingness of the part of general education teachers to support students with disabilities in their classrooms.

## **Staff Development**

This category refers to in-service training or other staff development activities designed to: foster more inclusive environments; ensure that students with disabilities are provided instruction in the least restrictive environment; prepare general education teachers to address the learning and behavioral needs of students with disabilities in their classrooms; and, prepare ESE teachers to act as effective consultants for their general education colleagues and support facilitators for students with disabilities enrolled in general education classes. Actual or perceived levels of staff knowledge and training are factors that may influence IEP teams' placement decisions.

### ***Requirements***

In accordance with 34 CFR 300.347(a)(3), an IEP must include "...a statement of the program modifications or supports for school personnel that will be provided for the child." "Supports for school personnel" is described in the portion of *Attachment I—Analysis of Comments and Changes* that applies to this section as including staff training for a child's teacher.

Section 1003.02, F.S., delineates the responsibilities of district school boards, which include "...staff development, public K-12 school student education including education for exceptional students and students in juvenile justice facilities, special programs, adult education programs, and career and technical education programs."

### ***Data***

District staff reported all training activities are listed on the district website and include but are not limited to the following:

- Strategies, Tips and Resources for Teacher Success (STARTS) for new ESE teachers
- co-teacher training
- CHAMPS training
- behavior management training

Additionally, the district funds a half-time position through the Florida Inclusion Network (FIN) to promote co-teaching and provide continued support and training to district staff. District staff reported teachers are surveyed annually to determine areas of needed staff development or technical assistance. A 24-hour hotline for teachers to obtain assistance with the web-based IEP program has been established. Additionally, the district requires that teachers participate in area meetings at least four times per year and program/placement specialists routinely hold meetings involving issues relevant to exceptional student education programming and decision-making. Of the teachers who responded to the survey, 78% reported adequate support by the district and 82% reported the district encourages collaboration among ESE teachers, general education teachers, and other service providers.

Forty-eight percent of ESE and general education teachers interviewed reported that training is available through the district; however, they noted that there is no requirement to attend. Of teachers responding to the survey, 84% indicated the district offers teachers professional development opportunities regarding curriculum and support for student with disabilities. General education teachers at Deland Middle School and Deland High School requested additional training on effective instruction and classroom management with ESE students. Teachers and administrators at Three Springs DJJ and Chiles Academy Charter School reported all of the district staff development is available for them; however, it often is not applicable to their environments.

### ***Findings***

- Finding(s) of Noncompliance
  - None noted.
- Area(s) of Concern
  - Staff members at the middle and high schools visited requesting additional training on effective instruction and classroom management.
- Corrective Action(s)
  - None required.
- Recommendation(s)
  - Survey general education staff members at schools with high ESE populations for specific training needs related to the individual schools.

- Promising Practice(s)
  - Staff reported that volunteers were recruited for co-teaching at Holly Hills Middle School and they participated in co-teaching training as a team prior to implementation.
  - Pine Ridge High School has ESE Updates as part of every faculty meeting.

### **Parental Involvement**

This category refers to parental involvement in the decision-making process regarding placement of students with disabilities in the least restrictive environment.

#### ***Requirements***

In accordance with 34 CFR 300.501(c)(1),(3),(5), “...(1) Each public agency shall ensure that the parents of each child with a disability are members of any group that makes decisions on the educational placement of their child. (3) If neither parent can participate in a meeting in which a decision is to be made relating to the educational placement of their child, the public agency shall use other methods to ensure their participation, including individual or conference telephone calls or video conferencing. (5) The public agency shall make reasonable efforts to ensure that the parents understand, and are able to participate in, any group discussions relating to the educational placement of their child, including arranging for an interpreter for parents with deafness, or whose native language is other than English.”

#### ***Data***

There was documentation of parent attendance at 24 of the 30 IEPs reviewed prior to the on-site visits (80%); one parent who did not attend gave permission for the meeting to proceed. District and school staff all reported that parents are encouraged to be active participants in the IEP team process. All school staff indicated that parents are invited to all meetings regarding their child; however, teachers at Chiles Academy Charter School, the Advanced Technology Center, Holly Hill Middle School, and Riverview Alternative School reported struggling to promote parental participation and attendance. Of the school administrators interviewed, nine percent reported rescheduling meetings so that parents could be present regardless of permission to proceed without them.

School administrators and/or guidance counselors at Deland High, Pine Ridge High, Friendship Elementary, Palm Terrace Elementary, and Woodward Avenue Elementary schools reported parents have the ultimate authority when making placement decisions. Of the 20 teachers who responded specifically to the manner in which parents participate in the decision-making process related to placement, three ESE teachers (15%) reported that parents attend and generally “get what they want.” Comments regarding parents’ roles in the decision-making process included:

- “...parents call the shots for ESE services...”
- “...parent ultimately makes decision...”
- “...if parent insists we try the student in the requested placement...”
- “...if the parent says no, the child is not placed...”

#### ***Findings***

- Finding(s) of Noncompliance
  - No findings of noncompliance.

- Area(s) of Concern
  - Through the interviews with staff, it is evident that the concerns of the parents are considered in deciding placement; however, there is evidence that parental requests are implemented over and above team decisions; at times this leads to students being placed in more restrictive settings than the school staff feel is appropriate.
- Corrective Action(s)
  - None required.
- Recommendation(s)
  - Provide training to parents of ESE students targeted schools regarding the decision-making process at IEP team meetings, including the use of data to inform decisions and the requirement to consider all reasonable supports in the general education setting prior to removal of a student.
- Promising Practice(s)
  - Friendship Elementary uses parent survey data to assist in implementing change.
  - District has a parent educator who is available to work individually with parents or provide group training on ESE issues and concerns.

### **Stakeholder Opinions Related to the Key Data Indicator**

This section provides information related to the opinions of district staff as to why they believe the number of ESE students participating in the LRE is low. When asked their opinion on the likely contributors to the relatively low participation rate for students with disabilities in general education settings in Volusia County, the following factors were cited:

- additional time devoted to instruction in reading has decreased time with nondisabled peers for some students;
- scheduling difficulty and lack of available space in general education classes;
- parental request;
- behavior of ESE students disrupting general education classes;
- lack of co-teaching and inclusion models at all levels;
- teacher concerns about accountability and ensuring ESE students are prepared prior to entering the general education classroom; and,
- relatively high class-sizes in general education and low class-sizes in ESE classes; some IEP teams base placement decisions on this in an effort to ensure more individualized instruction and support for the student.

### **Services to ESE Students in DJJ Facilities**

This section provides information related to the services provided to ESE students placed in DJJ facilities. As public school students within the district, students with disabilities and gifted students must be provided a free appropriate public education.

### ***Requirements***

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

### ***Data***

Three Springs is a level 10 facility for sexual offenders. The length of stay is between 18 and 24 months with most students averaging 14 months. Students may pursue a standard diploma, special diploma or General Education Development (GED) exit option for high school completion. The educational program consists of three teachers and one paraprofessional. All courses are general education courses. One teacher (who holds ESE certification) teaches science and math and the other teaches English and social studies. A reading specialist concentrates on reading and daily living skills development, and the ESE paraprofessional assists all teachers based on the needs of the students in the class. Students with disabilities participate with general education students in all classes. The facility attempts to implement the current IEP when the student enters the facility; however, new IEPs are routinely developed on day 21 based on the skill level of the student and the course of treatment identified by the DJJ counselors. A guidance counselor is on staff and provides counseling services on a consistent basis to many students; however, that service is not documented on the IEP. Four SED students did not have counseling identified on their IEPs. The district provides a speech/language therapist to assist with any speech/language needs.

The district provides all current textbooks and standard computer programs to the facility and additional materials are added based on the GED and student needs. The facility has no hands-on vocational courses; however, teachers use guest speakers to provide exposure to various career opportunities. Presently all students with disabilities at the facility are participating in the FCAT. The ESE teacher reported parents are always invited to the IEP meetings; however, very seldom do they participate in person. All staff members reported transition services are incorporated into every aspect of education beginning with reception at the institution. Teachers work with Juvenile Probation Officers (JPO) to ensure smooth transition back into their home community and school environments. Due to the unique nature of this facility, staff reported it is a uniform and coordinated effort to ensure all needs, educational and treatment are addressed while at the facility and transitioning back into the community.

### ***Findings***

- Finding(s) of Noncompliance
  - Counseling as a related service was not included on the IEPs of four SED students.
- Area(s) of Concern
  - As noted in the *Access to the General Curriculum* section of the report, there is a concern that students who require more intensive ESE services for English, language arts, or social studies may not have access to it.
- Corrective Action(s)
  - Addressed in Student Records section below.

- Recommendation(s)
  - The district is encouraged to review service delivery options for Juvenile Justice facilities to ensure that placement decisions are based on student needs.
- Promising Practice(s)
  - The Positive Peer Culture Program utilizing peer pressure and counseling to modify behavior is reported by staff to be effective.
  - Teachers are working toward multiple certifications to meet highly qualified teacher standards.

### **Services to ESE Students in Charter Schools**

This section provides information related to the services provided to ESE students in charter schools. Students with disabilities and gifted students who are enrolled in the district must be provided a free appropriate public education, including special education and related services.

#### ***Requirements***

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

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

#### ***Data***

The Chiles Academy charter school was visited. The school was previously an alternative school and converted to a charter school, presently serving nine ESE students. The primary focus is for pregnant students and teen parents in grades 6–12. Of the students enrolled at the school at the time of the visit, 97% were eligible for free and/or reduced lunch, 22% were homeless, and 20% were involved with the juvenile justice system.

The school uses a computer-based instruction through the Compass Lab. There are three general education teachers and one ESE teacher, although the Compass Lab teacher also is a certified ESE teacher and provides additional support. Students with disabilities can be served through consultation, resource pull-out, or full-time ESE services. Academic skill level on the Academy of Reading computer program, FCAT scores, and other achievement scores are considered when determining placement. Presently there are no gifted students enrolled in the school.

On-site staff include two mental health workers, one guidance counselor and a full-time nurse, in addition to the administrative staff and day care staff for the students’ children (ages 3 weeks to 3 years old). Speech/language services are contracted through Easter Seals and the district provides a job coach to assist with guidance, support and supervision of students on special diploma option 2. The guidance counselor provides the majority of counseling services which are documented on the IEP, and additional local agencies assist with other specific counseling needs. Transition agencies are not invited to IEP meetings, although the students are actively involved with social service agencies and many have case workers.

## ***Findings***

- Finding(s) of Noncompliance
  - Transition services agencies are not invited to transition IEP meetings at Chiles Academy.
- Area(s) of Concern
  - None noted.
- Corrective Action(s)
  - The district is required to provide training and/or technical assistance to Chiles Academy that addresses the requirement to solicit agency participation in transition IEP team meetings as appropriate; a self-assessment component to determine effectiveness of the assistance must be incorporated.
- Recommendation(s)
  - None noted.
- Promising Practice(s)
  - School staff reported a positive and supportive working relationship with the district.
  - The dedication of the staff and their concern for and interest in their students was evident.

## **Counseling as a Related Service**

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

### ***Requirements***

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

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

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

Rule 6A-6.03016, Special Programs for Students Who Are Emotionally Handicapped, FAC, requires that students may be eligible as severely emotionally disturbed if they meet the requirements as emotionally handicapped and, in addition, "...require a program which... (d) provides extensive support services specifically designed for severely emotionally disturbed students. These services include but are not limited to: 1. individual or group counseling, 2. parent counseling or education, and 3. consultation from mental health, medical, or other professionals..."

### ***Data***

District staff reported that counseling is available for students who need it, although the district's primary focus is on behavioral interventions and supports. District and school staff reported that counseling needs are considered and addressed as a related service on the IEP, and that if counseling was needed it would be provided by the guidance counselors, school social workers, and school psychologists for all exceptionalities except SED, who would receive services from a mental health counselor. In addition to the four students referenced above in the section regarding DJJ facilities, the records of 27 SED students were reviewed; 24 of the 27 (89%) did not have counseling as a related service documented on the IEP; and questioned about this, several staff members reported that the functional behavior assessments and behavior intervention plans for those students addressed their needs in the social/emotional domain. A total of 63 additional records were reviewed (on-site or prior to the visit). Twenty-six of the 63 records (41%) included evidence of a need for educationally relevant counseling to be considered by the IEP team, and eight of those students (31%) had counseling as a related service on their IEPs.

District and school staff indicated that students also may be referred to outside agencies for counseling services; however these services would not be written on the IEP as they are not funded through the district. School staff indicated the parents would be responsible for payment, mostly likely through insurance.

### ***Findings***

- Finding(s) of Noncompliance
  - Counseling as a related service not included on the IEPs of 31 SED students.
- Area(s) of Concern
  - None noted.
- Corrective Action(s)
  - The IEP teams for 31 SED students (including DJJ) are required to reconvene to address the need for counseling as a related service.
  - The district is required to conduct a review of services provided to all SED students to ensure that counseling as a related service is included on their IEPs.
- Recommendation(s)
  - The district is encouraged to provide training and guidance on decision-making regarding the need for counseling as a related service (e.g., to determine when counseling may

result in a student's placement in a less restrictive environment and/or in an increase in academic engaged time).

- Promising Practice(s)
  - Guidance counselors and ESE guidance counselors are available on site for counseling services.
  - Extensive evidence of behavior intervention plans developed and implemented in ESE classes for students with challenging behaviors.

### **Speech and Language Services as Related Services**

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

#### ***Requirements***

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

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

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

#### ***Data***

Teachers and administrative staff reported that communication needs of all students are considered by the IEP teams, regardless of whether the students are eligible for programs for speech or language impaired, with the exception of staff at Holly Hill Middle School. Five of the six respondents at Holly Hill reported that communication needs are only considered for students who are speech or language impaired. District-level staff indicated the need would be addressed through a related service on the IEP, while most school-level staff indicated needs likely would be addressed through classroom instruction (e.g., language arts) and incorporated into curriculum or communication goals on the IEP. Of the 30 records reviewed by the Bureau prior to the on-site visit, one had identified communication needs that were not addressed through any service or goals and objectives or benchmarks. Of the 32 records reviewed on-site, 16 had identified communication needs and eight (50%) had those needs specifically addressed through goals and objectives.

## ***Findings***

- Finding(s) of Noncompliance
  - The communication needs of students with disabilities who are not eligible as speech or language impaired are not addressed by IEP teams at Holly Hill Middle School.
  
- Area(s) of Concern
  - Although addressed by the ESE or general education teachers through classroom instruction, the communication needs of students of students not eligible as speech or language impaired often are not incorporated into the students' IEPs.
  
- Corrective Action(s)
  - The district is required to address the requirement of IEP teams to address the communication needs of students (both intervention and documentation on the IEP) in its district-wide staff development activities, with targeted attention to Holly Hill Middle School.
  
- Recommendation(s)
  - None noted.
  
- Promising Practice(s)
  - Multi-VE classrooms incorporate communication skills into the daily curriculum for students with disabilities in a variety of ways.

## **Transition Services**

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

## ***Requirements***

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

## ***Data***

Fifteen of the IEPs selected at random for Bureau review prior to the on-site visit were for students ages 14 or older. The parent notices for three of the 15 transition IEPs did not include transition as a purpose of the meeting (20%). Six of 16 standard diploma focus group participants and 12 of 16 special diploma focus group participants reported discussing transition needs at IEP meetings.

With the exception of the Chiles Academy charter school (noted above), most district- and school-level staff and teachers reported that agencies are routinely invited to transition IEP team meetings when determined appropriate by the IEP teams. At Chiles Academy agency representatives present information to all students during specific classes. An additional 43 transition IEPs (total of 58) were reviewed on-site to verify agency participation. Agency representatives were invited to 28 of the 58 transition IEP meetings (48%), and attended five of the meetings (9%). There was evidence that the families were provided information regarding agency resources for three of the remaining 23 meetings. At Riverview Alternative School agency representatives were not invited to any of the transition IEP meetings.

### ***Findings***

- Finding(s) of Noncompliance
  - Transition not indicated as a purpose of the IEP meeting on meeting notice.
  
- Area(s) of Concern
  - Lack of evidence that parents and students are provided with agency information when agencies are not present at transition meetings.
  - Although transition was addressed on all IEPs for students ages 14 and older, not all students in the focus groups reported participating in such discussions.
  
- Corrective Action(s)
  - The district is required to target notice requirements in its training on IEP development and transition planning.
  
- Recommendation(s)
  - The district is encouraged to develop a method by which students and parents receiving information regarding transition services available through agencies have the receipt of the information documented.
  
- Promising Practice(s)
  - Participation of Daytona Beach Community College counselors at the transition IEP meetings of students with disabilities at the Advanced Technology Center.

### **Services to Gifted Students**

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

### ***Requirements***

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

### ***Data***

Gifted services are provided at 33 schools; the manner in which services are provided varies. For the 2004-05 school year 3% of the student population was identified as gifted. Elementary schools offer some full-time classes. Service delivery models at the middle schools vary according to the number of students and their needs. Some middle schools have specific gifted courses or provide full-time classes for gifted students. High schools provide consultative services, with many gifted students enrolled in advanced placement, dual enrollment, International Baccalaureate, diploma of distinction, and honors courses. Gifted students at alternative schools receive consultation and increased or modified assignments or projects.

In an effort to identify students who may be eligible for gifted services, the district screens all second grade students with the Otis-Lennon Student Abilities Test. Students may be referred for evaluation by parents and school staff, and the district utilizes a plan B to identify under-represented populations. Following completion of a gifted characteristics checklist, the student success team determines if referral for evaluation is warranted. All staff reported that dismissal from the gifted program is based on parental request.

Required participants for the EP team varied among schools with the student, parent, and gifted teacher being the consistent members at all locations, and staffing specialists, general education teachers, guidance counselors, and administrators also cited as participants. The general education teacher did not attend or otherwise provide input on five of the ten EPs reviewed prior to the on-site visit (50%). Of the parents responding to the survey, 91% reported attending one or more meetings about their child during this school year.

### ***Findings***

- Finding(s) of Noncompliance
  - General education teachers did not provide input or attend the EP meeting.
- Area(s) of Concern
  - There is a concern that the range of service delivery options may not address needs beyond the general curriculum for all gifted students.
- Corrective Action(s)
  - The district will be required to provide training or other technical assistance to school staff regarding the required members of an EP team, and report the results of periodic self-assessments to the Bureau.
- Recommendation(s)
  - The district is encouraged to conduct a review the service delivery models available by school, and to develop and implement a coordinated plan to ensure that sufficient supports and services are available for gifted students at all levels.
- Promising Practice(s)
  - Across the district, gifted services are available in multiple content areas.

## **Review of Student Records**

This section provides information related to the IEP reviews conducted during the monitoring visit to Volusia County.

### ***Data***

Prior to the on-site visit a total of 30 student records of students with disabilities and 10 records of students identified as gifted, randomly selected from the population of ESE students, were reviewed from 27 schools in Volusia County. Fifteen of the records represented transition IEPs. 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 in nature, an item must be found noncompliant in at least 25% of the records reviewed. In Volusia County, at least eight of the IEPs and three of the EPs must have been noncompliant on a given item to be considered a systemic finding. Student- and item-specific feedback on the record reviews was provided to Volusia County staff to assist in the provision of targeted technical assistance on IEP development.

In addition to the records noted above, partial reviews of targeted elements for an additional 391 records and 11 matrix of services documents for students reported at the 254 or 255 funding level through the Florida Education Finance Program (FEFP) were conducted on-site. Any services claimed on the matrix must be documented on the IEP and must be in evidence in the classroom.

### ***Findings***

- Finding(s) of Noncompliance
  - Systemic findings of noncompliance for IEPs were in the areas of:
    - lack of a statement if how the student's progress toward annual goals will be measured (forms issue) (30)
    - report of progress lack a description of progress toward annual goals (forms issue) (29)
    - lack of an explanation of the extent, if any, to which the student will not participate with nondisabled peers in the general education classroom (26)
    - lack of documentation of accessibility of the IEP to teachers and service providers (forms issue) (25)
    - annual goal(s) not measurable (23)
    - need for assistive technology noted without evidence of provision (forms issue) (23)
    - need for extended school year (ESY) services noted without evidence provision (22)
    - lack of special education services/specially designed instruction (15)
    - lack of evidence of consideration of the need for instruction in self-determination (forms issue) (15)
    - lack of appropriate team members present at the IEP meeting – general education teacher (12)
    - lack of documentation of the teachers/service providers being informed of specific responsibilities for IEP implementation of specific accommodations (10)
    - location of special education services/specially designed instruction not identified (9)
    - report of progress lacks a description of the extent to which progress is sufficient to enable the student to achieve the goal by the end of the year(9)

- Individual or non-systemic findings of noncompliance were noted in 57 additional individual elements of the IEP (provided to the district through the Individual IEP Record Review Report).
  - Systemic findings of noncompliance for EPs were in the areas of:
    - general education teacher did not provide input or attend the EP meeting (5)
    - lack of consideration of performance on state or district assessments in the development of the EP (5)
  - Individual or non-systemic findings of noncompliance were noted in six additional individual elements of the EP (provided to the district through the Individual EP Record Review Report).
  - One IEP was not current on the day of the review.
  - For 19 IEPs the majority of annual goals were not measurable.
  - There were four matrix of service documents for which the services identified on the matrix were not in evidence on the IEPs; however, provision of the services reported on the matrix document was confirmed through classroom visits.
- Corrective Action(s)
    - The district is required to target the elements noted above in its existing IEP training procedures, and to develop and implement a system of self-assessment to ensure compliance with required elements. This system must include periodic self-assessment by school and/or district staff of a sampling of records (i.e., at least 30 IEPs and 10 EPs); the results must be reported to the Bureau.
    - The district will have funding adjusted for the IEP not current on the date of review.
    - 19 IEP teams must be reconvened to address the majority of annual goals not being measurable.
    - The district will be required to provide an amendment to the data provided to the DOE through the Automated Student Information System database for surveys 2, 3, and 4 for the 2004-05 school year for the four matrix of services records found to be in error.
  - Recommended Action(s)
    - The district is encouraged to utilize the student- and item-specific feedback provided for the record reviews to assist in the provision of targeted technical assistance on IEP and EP development.

### **Review of District Forms**

This section provides information related to district forms used to document specific procedures regarding the provision of specially designed instruction and related services to students with disabilities. Forms representing the thirteen areas identified below were submitted to Bureau staff for a review to determine compliance with federal and state laws. Forms representing 13 actions required changes to meet compliance standards, and recommendations were noted for eight. The district was notified of the specific findings via a separate letter dated June 17, 2005. A detailed explanation of the specific findings is included as appendix D.

- *Parent Notification of Individual Education Plan (IEP) Meeting*
- *IEP forms*\*+
- *EP 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\**
- *Services Plan\**

\*indicates findings that require immediate attention

+ indicates recommended changes

## **System Improvement Plan**

In response to these findings, the district is required to develop a system improvement plan for submission to the Bureau. This plan must include activities and strategies intended to address specific findings, as well as measurable evidence of change. In developing the system improvement plan, every effort should be made to link the system improvement activities resulting from this focused monitoring report to the district's continuous improvement 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 presented in this report following the summary of findings.

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.

## **Recommendations and Technical Assistance**

As a result of the focused monitoring activities conducted in Volusia County, the Bureau has identified specific findings related to the percentage of students with disabilities participating in the least restrictive environment. 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**

- \* It is recommended that the district continue with the current LRE Committee addressing student placement and ensure elementary, middle, high and charter schools are represented.

### **Technical Assistance**

#### **Florida Inclusion Network**

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

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

#### **Student Support Services Project**

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

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

#### **Florida's Positive Behavioral Supports Project**

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

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

#### **Bureau of Exceptional Education and Student Services**

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

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

Eileen Amy, Administrator  
[Eileen.Amy@fldoe.org](mailto:Eileen.Amy@fldoe.org)

Kim Komisar, Program Director  
[Kim.Komisar@fldoe.org](mailto:Kim.Komisar@fldoe.org)

April Katine, Program Specialist  
[April.Katine@fldoe.org](mailto:April.Katine@fldoe.org)

Barbara McAnelly, Program Specialist  
[Barbara.Mcanelly@fldoe.org](mailto:Barbara.Mcanelly@fldoe.org)

Angela Nathaniel, Program Specialist  
[Angela.Nathaniel@fldoe.org](mailto:Angela.Nathaniel@fldoe.org)

Denise Taylor, Program Specialist  
[Denise.Taylor@fldoe.org](mailto:Denise.Taylor@fldoe.org)

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

Karen Denbroeder, Administrator  
[Karen.Denbroeder@fldoe.org](mailto:Karen.Denbroeder@fldoe.org)

Marie LaCap, Program Specialist  
[Marie.Lacap@fldoe.org](mailto:Marie.Lacap@fldoe.org)

Virginia Sasser, Program Specialist  
[Virginia.Sasser@fldoe.org](mailto:Virginia.Sasser@fldoe.org)

**Clearinghouse Information Center**  
[cicbiscs@FLDOE.org](mailto:cicbiscs@FLDOE.org)  
(850) 245-0477

Arlene Duncan, Program Director  
[Arlene.Duncan@fldoe.org](mailto:Arlene.Duncan@fldoe.org)

**ESE Program Development and Services**  
(850) 245-0478  
Evy Friend, Administrator  
[Evy.Friend@fldoe.org](mailto:Evy.Friend@fldoe.org)

**Behavior/Discipline  
EH/SED**

Lee Clark, Program Specialist  
[Lee.Clark@fldoe.org](mailto:Lee.Clark@fldoe.org)

**Gifted**

Donnajo Smith, Program Specialist  
[Donnajo.Smith@fldoe.org](mailto:Donnajo.Smith@fldoe.org)

**Speech/Language**

Lezlie Cline, Program Director  
[Lezlie.Cline@fldoe.org](mailto:Lezlie.Cline@fldoe.org)

**Appendix A:**  
**District Data**



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

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|                   |                          |                   |               |
|-------------------|--------------------------|-------------------|---------------|
| DISTRICT:         | <b>VOLUSIA</b>           | PK-12 POPULATION: | <b>65,011</b> |
| ENROLLMENT GROUP: | <b>40,000 TO 100,000</b> | PERCENT DISABLED: | <b>18%</b>    |
|                   |                          | PERCENT GIFTED:   | <b>4%</b>     |

**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

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**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 VOLUSIA'S ENROLLMENT GROUP:**

BREVARD, COLLIER, ESCAMBIA, LEE, MANATEE, MARION, OSCEOLA, PASCO, POLK, SARASOTA, SEMINOLE, VOLUSIA



## 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 |
|------------------|---------|---------|---------|
| Volusia          | 45%     | 48%     | 37%     |
| Enrollment Group | 45%     | 42%     | 38%     |
| 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 |
|------------------|---------|---------|---------|
| Volusia          | 0%      | 0%      | 0%      |
| Enrollment Group | 1%      | 1%      | <1%     |
| State            | 1%      | 1%      | 1%      |

### STANDARD DIPLOMA THROUGH FCAT WAIVER:

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

|                  | 2002-03 | 2003-04 |
|------------------|---------|---------|
| Volusia          | 16%     | 21%     |
| Enrollment Group | 8%      | 13%     |
| 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 |
| Volusia          | 3%                         | 3%      | 3%      | 0%              | <1%     | <1%     | 2%           | 1%      | 1%      |
| Enrollment Group | 4%                         | 5%      | 5%      | <1%             | <1%     | <1%     | 3%           | 3%      | 3%      |
| State            | 5%                         | 4%      | 5%      | <1%             | <1%     | <1%     | 3%           | 3%      | 3%      |

|                  | EH/SED  |         |         | SLD     |         |         |
|------------------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
|                  | 2001-02 | 2002-03 | 2003-04 | 2001-02 | 2002-03 | 2003-04 |
| Volusia          | 4%      | 4%      | 3%      | 3%      | 3%      | 2%      |
| Enrollment Group | 6%      | 7%      | 6%      | 4%      | 5%      | 5%      |
| State            | 7%      | 7%      | 7%      | 5%      | 4%      | 5%      |

**POSTSCHOOL OUTCOME DATA:**

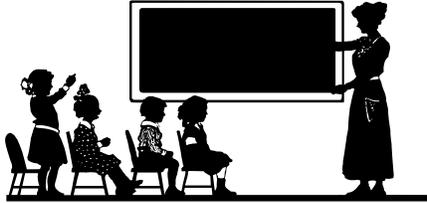
The Florida Education and Training Placement Information Program (FETPIP) is an interagency data collection system that obtains follow-up data on former students. The most recent FETPIP data available reports on students who exited Florida public schools during the **2002-03** school year. The table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

|                  | Students with Disabilities |           | Gifted Students |           |
|------------------|----------------------------|-----------|-----------------|-----------|
|                  | Employed                   | Cont. Ed. | Employed        | Cont. Ed. |
| Volusia          | 50%                        | 25%       | 47%             | 79%       |
| Enrollment Group | 48%                        | 18%       | 40%             | 74%       |
| 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 |
| Volusia          | 86%                        | 35%                 | 14%      | 92%          | 11%                 | 8%       |
| Enrollment Group | 83%                        | 32%                 | 17%      | 90%          | 11%                 | 10%      |
| 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 |
| Volusia          | 43%           | 42%     | 42%     | 26%           | 26%     | 25%     | 29%            | 30%     | 31%     |
| Enrollment Group | 48%           | 51%     | 59%     | 23%           | 22%     | 17%     | 24%            | 24%     | 21%     |
| 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/<br>Part-Time Early Childhood<br>Special Education Setting |         |         | Early Childhood Special<br>Education Setting |         |         |
|------------------|---------------------------------|---------|---------|--|---------|---------|--|---------|---------|
|                  | 2002-03                         | 2003-04 | 2004-05 | 2002-03  | 2003-04 | 2004-05 | 2002-03                                      | 2003-04 | 2004-05 |
| Volusia          | 3%                              | 3%      | 4%      | 67%  | 63%     | 60%     | 21%  | 26%     | 29%     |
| Enrollment Group | 7%                              | 9%      | 6%      | 61%  | 63%     | 61%     | 24%  | 22%     | 29%     |
| 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 |
|------------------|---------|---------|---------|
| Volusia          | 67%     | 68%     | 68%     |
| Enrollment Group | 62%     | 61%     | 49%     |
| 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 |
| Volusia          |  | 20%                        | 13%                  | 17%                        | 7%                   | 0%                         | <1%                  | 0%                         | 0%                   |
| Enrollment Group |  | 13%                        | 8%                   | 15%                        | 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

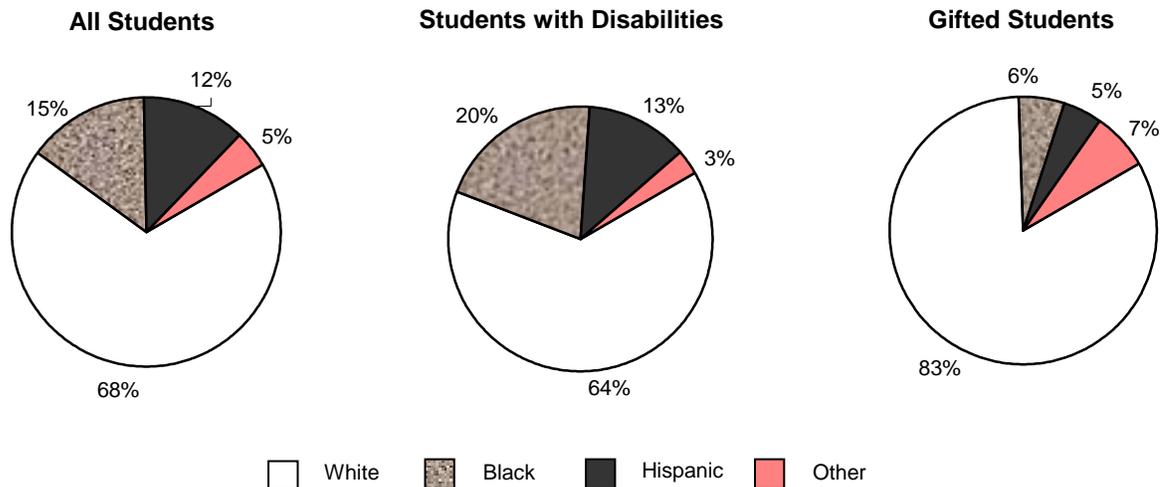
Prevalence refers to the proportion of the PK-12 population identified as exceptional at any given point in time. This section of the profile provides prevalence data by demographic characteristics.

#### 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%             | 68%          | 64%                        | 83%             |
| Black                  | 24%          | 28%                        | 10%             | 15%          | 20%                        | 6%              |
| Hispanic               | 23%          | 19%                        | 20%             | 12%          | 13%                        | 5%              |
| Asian/Pacific Islander | 2%           | <1%                        | 4%              | 1%           | <1%                        | 3%              |
| Am Ind/Alaskan Native  | <1%          | <1%                        | <1%             | <1%          | <1%                        | <1%             |
| Multiracial            | 3%           | 2%                         | 3%              | 3%           | 2%                         | 3%              |

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%             | 38%          | 17%             |
| LEP                | 11%          | 3%              | 5%           | <1%             |

**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%          | 68%      | 51%   | 64%      | 47%    | 55%      | 32%   | 46%      |
| Black                  | 24%          | 15%      | 24%   | 18%      | 39%    | 37%      | 51%   | 41%      |
| Hispanic               | 23%          | 12%      | 22%   | 15%      | 12%    | 6%       | 14%   | 11%      |
| Asian/Pacific Islander | 2%           | 1%       | <1%   | <1%      | <1%    | 0%       | <1%   | <1%      |
| Am Ind/Alaskan Native  | <1%          | <1%      | <1%   | <1%      | <1%    | <1%      | <1%   | <1%      |
| Multiracial            | 3%           | 3%       | 2%    | 2%       | 2%     | 2%       | 1%    | 1%       |

**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%           | 9%       | 46%          | 55%      |
| EH/SED | 1%           | 2%       | 9%           | 10%      |
| EMH    | 1%           | <1%      | 7%           | 4%       |
| SI     | 2%           | 2%       | 14%          | 10%      |



John Winn, Commissioner

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

**Districts Rank-Ordered on Regular Class Placement for Students with Disabilities**

Based on data reported to the FDOE for Survey 9 (2003-04), regular class placement rates were used to rank-order the districts.

| District     | 6-21 ESE Population | # served at regular level | %   | Rank |
|--------------|---------------------|---------------------------|-----|------|
| Miami Dade   | 40,091              | 10,381                    | 26% | 1    |
| Lafayette    | 127                 | 37                        | 29% | 2    |
| Charlotte    | 3,225               | 1,108                     | 34% | 3    |
| Madison      | 699                 | 273                       | 39% | 4    |
| Nassau       | 1,467               | 586                       | 40% | 5    |
| Escambia     | 6,934               | 2,829                     | 41% | 6    |
| Citrus       | 2,598               | 1,070                     | 41% | 7    |
| Hendry       | 1,278               | 532                       | 42% | 8    |
| Volusia      | 10,977              | 4,642                     | 42% | 9    |
| Polk         | 12,319              | 5,384                     | 44% | 10   |
| Jackson      | 1,309               | 576                       | 44% | 11   |
| Gadsden      | 1,052               | 467                       | 44% | 12   |
| Martin       | 2,780               | 1,235                     | 44% | 13   |
| Hillsborough | 26,120              | 11,673                    | 45% | 14   |
| St. Lucie    | 4,225               | 1,923                     | 46% | 15   |
| Marion       | 6,341               | 2,898                     | 46% | 16   |
| Osceola      | 5,993               | 2,789                     | 47% | 17   |
| Holmes       | 467                 | 218                       | 47% | 18   |
| Highlands    | 1,903               | 889                       | 47% | 19   |
| Union        | 319                 | 150                       | 47% | 20   |
| Bay          | 4,605               | 2,188                     | 48% | 21   |
| Washington   | 469                 | 224                       | 48% | 22   |
| Dixie        | 407                 | 195                       | 48% | 23   |
| Palm Beach   | 22,454              | 10,759                    | 48% | 24   |
| Wakulla      | 738                 | 355                       | 48% | 25   |
| Taylor       | 596                 | 293                       | 49% | 26   |
| Seminole     | 7,855               | 3,885                     | 49% | 27   |
| Calhoun      | 420                 | 210                       | 50% | 28   |
| Lee          | 9,102               | 4,587                     | 50% | 29   |
| Suwannee     | 692                 | 350                       | 51% | 30   |
| Columbia     | 1,558               | 789                       | 51% | 31   |
| Orange       | 24,118              | 12,217                    | 51% | 32   |
| Jefferson    | 326                 | 166                       | 51% | 33   |
| Indian River | 2,215               | 1,136                     | 51% | 34   |

| District              | 6-21 ESE Population | # served at regular level | %          | Rank |
|-----------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|------------|------|
| Lake                  | 5,025               | 2,582                     | 51%        | 35   |
| Baker                 | 467                 | 246                       | 53%        | 36   |
| Gulf                  | 370                 | 201                       | 54%        | 37   |
| Alachua               | 5,261               | 2,883                     | 55%        | 38   |
| Clay                  | 5,520               | 3,028                     | 55%        | 39   |
| Hardee                | 996                 | 552                       | 55%        | 40   |
| Walton                | 908                 | 511                       | 56%        | 41   |
| Bradford              | 862                 | 486                       | 56%        | 42   |
| Pasco                 | 10,154              | 5,780                     | 57%        | 43   |
| Levy                  | 1,043               | 594                       | 57%        | 44   |
| Brevard               | 11,100              | 6,390                     | 58%        | 45   |
| Leon                  | 5,350               | 3,080                     | 58%        | 46   |
| Pinellas              | 18,397              | 10,660                    | 58%        | 47   |
| Gilchrist             | 616                 | 357                       | 58%        | 48   |
| Putnam                | 2,072               | 1,210                     | 58%        | 49   |
| St. Johns             | 3,161               | 1,851                     | 59%        | 50   |
| Santa Rosa            | 3,501               | 2,056                     | 59%        | 51   |
| Sarasota              | 6,361               | 3,790                     | 60%        | 52   |
| Franklin              | 199                 | 121                       | 61%        | 53   |
| Glades                | 174                 | 106                       | 61%        | 54   |
| Hamilton              | 289                 | 178                       | 62%        | 55   |
| Collier               | 5,576               | 3,479                     | 62%        | 56   |
| Sumter                | 1,045               | 656                       | 63%        | 57   |
| Duval                 | 18,554              | 11,654                    | 63%        | 58   |
| Okeechobee            | 1,389               | 891                       | 64%        | 59   |
| Monroe                | 1,484               | 957                       | 64%        | 60   |
| Flagler               | 1,247               | 807                       | 65%        | 61   |
| Broward               | 27,089              | 17,581                    | 65%        | 62   |
| Manatee               | 7,110               | 4,648                     | 65%        | 63   |
| Hernando              | 3,194               | 2,165                     | 68%        | 64   |
| Okaloosa              | 4,697               | 3,286                     | 70%        | 65   |
| Liberty               | 315                 | 222                       | 70%        | 66   |
| DeSoto                | 933                 | 802                       | 86%        | 67   |
| <b>District Total</b> | <b>360,238</b>      | <b>180,824</b>            | <b>50%</b> |      |

Note: Shaded districts have been monitored during the past four years or are currently being monitored.



**Appendix B:**  
**ESE Monitoring Team Members**



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

**ESE Monitoring Team Members**

**Department of Education Staff**

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

Barbara McAnelly, Program Specialist, Team Leader  
April Katine, Program Specialist  
Angela Nathaniel, Program Specialist  
Allison Cruz-Mitchell, Program Specialist

**Peer Reviewers**

Mardi Scott, Gadsden County School District  
Rosemary Ragle, Okaloosa County School District  
Angelyn Vaughan, Okaloosa County School District  
Patty Burrows, Pinellas County School District  
Theresa Hanley, Pinellas County School District  
Ginny Chance, Santa Rosa County School District



**Appendix C:**  
**Survey Results**



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

**Parent Survey Report: Students with Disabilities**

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

The parent survey was sent to parents of the 11,930 students with disabilities for whom complete addresses were provided by the district. A total of 1,408 parents (PK, n = 77; K-5, n = 640; 6-8, n = 370; 9 – 12, n = 321) representing 12% of the sample, returned the survey. Surveys were returned as undeliverable from 448 families, representing 4% of the sample. Parents represented the following students with disabilities: autistic, deaf or hard of hearing, developmentally delayed, educable mentally handicapped, emotionally handicapped, hospital/homebound, language impaired, orthopedically impaired, other health impaired, profoundly mentally handicapped, specific learning disabled, severely emotionally disturbed, speech impaired, trainable mentally handicapped, traumatic brain injured, and visually impaired.

**% Very Strongly Agree,  
Strongly Agree,  
Agree combined**

**Overall, I am satisfied with:**

- |   |    |
|---|----|
| • the way I am treated by school personnel.   | 85 |
| • the amount of time my child spends with general education students.                           | 82 |
| • the exceptional education services my child receives.   | 80 |
| • the level of knowledge and experience of school personnel.                                    | 80 |
| • how quickly services are implemented following an IEP (Individual Educational Plan) decision. | 79 |
| • the way special education teachers and general education teachers work together.              | 77 |
| • my child's academic progress.   | 75 |
| • the effect of exceptional student education on my child's self-esteem.                        | 74 |

**My child:**

- |   |    |
|---|----|
| • has friends at school.  | 88 |
| • is learning skills that will be useful later in life.                   | 82 |
| • receives all the special education and related services on his/her IEP. | 80 |
| • spends most of the school day involved in productive activities.        | 79 |
| • is happy at school.   | 79 |

\*These questions were answered by parents of students grades 8 and above.

**% Very Strongly Agree,  
Strongly Agree,  
Agree combined**

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

- all of my child's needs. 87
- whether my child should get accommodations (special testing conditions), for example, extra time. 82
- whether my child would take the FCAT (Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test). 78
- ways that my child could spend time with students in general education classes. 77
- whether my child needed speech/language services. 76
- whether my child needed transportation. 73
- whether my child needed services beyond the regular school year. 70
- the specific skills my child needs to work on in preparation for the FCAT. 68
- \* which diploma my child may receive. 66
- \* the transition services my child needs to achieve his/her goals. 65
- whether my child needed physical and/or occupational therapy. 64
- \* my child's goals after high school. 63
- whether my child needed psychological counseling services. 61
- \* the requirements for different diplomas. 61

**My child's special education teachers:**

- expect my child to succeed. 88
- are available to speak with me. 87
- encourage students to ask for help if they need it. 87
- give students with disabilities extra time or different assignments, if needed. 86
- set appropriate goals for my child. 85
- call me or send me notes about my child. 79
- individualized instruction for my child. 79
- give homework that meets my child's needs. 76

**My child's general education teachers:**

- expect my child to succeed. 82
- set appropriate goals for my child. 79
- are available to speak with me. 77
- encourage students to ask for help if they need it. 77
- give homework that meets my child's needs. 75
- give students with disabilities extra time or different assignments, if needed. 71
- call me or send me notes about my child. 68
- individualized instruction for my child. 62

\*These questions were answered by parents of students grades 8 and above.

**% Very Strongly Agree,  
Strongly Agree,  
Agree combined**

**My child's school:**

- makes sure I understand my child's IEP and the services my child will receive. 85
- encourages me to participate in my child's education. 83
- sends me information written in a way I understand. 83
- encourages acceptance of students with disabilities. 80
- offers students with disabilities the classes they need to graduate with a standard diploma. 78
- wants to hear my ideas. 77
- addresses my child's individual needs. 77
- does all it can to keep students from dropping out of school. 76
- handles discipline problems appropriately. 76
- explains what I can do if I want to make changes to my child's IEP. 75
- provides students with disabilities updated books and materials. 72
- \* offers a variety of vocational courses, such as computers and business technology. 72
- informs me about all of the services available to my child. 70
- involves students with disabilities in clubs, sports, or other activities. 68
- sends me information about activities and workshops for parents. 60
- \* provides information to students about education and jobs after high school. 58
- \* 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. 58

**Parent Participation**

- I have attended my child's IEP meetings. 95
- I meet with my child's teachers to discuss my child's needs and progress. 92
- I am comfortable talking about my child with school staff. 91
- My input is considered in the development of my child's IEP. 83
- I participate in school activities with my child. 78
- I attend meetings of the PTA/PTO. 34
- I attend meetings of organizations for parents of students with disabilities. 34
- I have used parent support services in my area. 33
- I have heard about the Florida Diagnostic and Learning Resources System ("FDLRS") and the services they provide to families of children with disabilities. 30
- I attend School Advisory Committee meetings concerning school improvement. 29

\*These questions were answered by parents of students grades 8 and above.

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

**Teacher Survey Report: Students with Disabilities**

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

A sufficient number of surveys were sent to each school in the district for all teachers and other service providers to participate. A total of 2,216 teachers, representing approximately 54% of ESE and general education teachers in the district returned the survey. Data are from 72 (87%) of the district's 83 schools.

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

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

- modifies and adapts curriculum for students as needed. 94
- ensures that students with disabilities feel comfortable when taking classes with general education students. 93
- places students with disabilities into general education classes whenever possible. 91
- addresses each students' individual needs. 91
- ensures that the general education curriculum is taught in ESE classes to the maximum extent possible. 88
- implements support facilitation and/or consultation by ESE teachers for students in general education classes. 87
- gives ESE teachers access to adequate instructional materials, including technology. 84
- offers teachers professional development opportunities regarding curriculum and support for students with disabilities. 84
- encourages collaboration among ESE teachers, GE teachers and service providers. 82
- provides adequate support for GE teachers who teach students with disabilities. 78
- implements co-teaching for some or all classes. 75

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

- provides students with appropriate testing accommodations. 95
- provides ESE teachers with FCAT test preparation materials. 94
- aligns curriculum for students with the standards that are tested on the FCAT. 93
- gives students in ESE classes updated textbooks. 88
- provides extra help or remediation before or after school. 85

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

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

- |  |     |
|--|-----|
| • conducts ongoing assessments of individual students' performance.                                      | n/a |
| • provides positive behavioral supports.   | n/a |
| • develops IEPs according to student needs.  | 95  |
| • makes an effort to involve parents in their child's education.   | 95  |
| • ensures that classroom material is culturally appropriate.   | 93  |
| • allows students to make up credits lost due to disability-related absences.                            | 93  |
| • ensures that classroom material is grade- and age- appropriate.  | 91  |
| • tracks student attendance to identify students with attendance problems.                               | 89  |
| • encourages participation of students with disabilities in extracurricular activities.                  | 87  |
| • ensures that students are taught strategies to manage their behavior as needed.                        | 84  |
| • uses a child study team to develop strategies for students identified as having an attendance problem. | 84  |
| • provides adequate counseling services for students who need it.  | 81  |
| • provides social skills training to students as needed.   | 80  |
| • implements dropout prevention activities.  | 72  |

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

**My school:**

- |   |    |
|---|----|
| • implements an IEP transition plan for each student.   | 95 |
| • encourages students to aim for a standard diploma when appropriate.                               | 93 |
| • provides extra help to students who need to retake the FCAT.                                      | 93 |
| • informs students through the IEP process of the different diploma options and their requirements. | 92 |
| • provides students with information about options after graduation.                                | 89 |
| • teaches transition skills for future employment and independent living.                           | 82 |
| • provides students with job training.  | 78 |
| • coordinates on-the-job training with outside agencies.  | 78 |

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

**Student Survey Report: Students with Disabilities**

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

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

Surveys from 1,371 students, representing approximately 34% of students with disabilities in grades 9-12 in the district, were returned. Data are from 14 (47%) of the district's 30 schools with students in grades 9-12.

|  | <b>% YES</b> |
|--|--------------|
| <b>I am taking the following ESE classes:</b>                                |              |
| • English  | 52           |
| • Math   | 46           |
| • Science  | 31           |
| • Social Studies   | 30           |
| • Learning Strategies or Unique Skills                                       | 21           |
| • Electives (physical education, art, music)                                 | 15           |
| • Vocational (woodshop, computers)   | 9            |
| <b>At my school:</b>   |              |
| • ESE teachers believe that ESE students can learn.                          | 86           |
| • ESE teachers encourage students to ask for help if they need it.           | 85           |
| • ESE teachers give students extra help, if needed.                          | 82           |
| • ESE teachers teach students in ways that help them learn.                  | 78           |
| • ESE teachers give students extra time or different assignments, if needed. | 77           |
| • ESE teachers understand ESE students' needs.                               | 75           |
| • ESE teachers teach students things that will be useful later on in life.   | 73           |
| • ESE teachers provide students with updated books and materials.            | 60           |

|   | <b>% YES</b> |
|---|--------------|
| <b>I am taking the following general education/mainstream classes:</b>                                  |              |
| • Electives (physical education, art, music)  | 69           |
| • Social Studies  | 56           |
| • Science   | 55           |
| • Math  | 54           |
| • English   | 50           |
| • Vocational (woodshop, computers)  | 45           |
| <b>At my school:</b>  |              |
| • general education teachers believe that ESE students can learn.                                       | 78           |
| • general education teachers encourage students to ask for help if they need it.                        | 76           |
| • general education teachers teach students things that will be useful later on in life.                | 73           |
| • general education teachers give students extra help, if needed.                                       | 70           |
| • general education teachers teach ESE students in ways that help them that help them learn.            | 68           |
| • general education teachers provide students with updated books and materials.                         | 64           |
| • general education teachers understand ESE students' needs.  | 63           |
| • general education teachers give students extra time or different assignments, if needed.              | 57           |
| <b>At my school, ESE students:</b>  |              |
| • get the help they need to do well in school.  | 82           |
| • can take vocational classes such as computers and business technology.                                | 82           |
| • are encouraged to stay in school.   | 80           |
| • fit in at school.   | 77           |
| • spend enough time with general education students.  | 76           |
| • participate in clubs, sports, and other activities.   | 75           |
| • get information about education after high school.  | 73           |
| • get work experience (on-the-job training) if they are interested.                                     | 73           |
| • are treated fairly by teachers and staff.   | 70           |
| <b>Diploma Option</b>   |              |
| • I know the difference between a standard and a special diploma.                                       | 84           |
| • I know what courses I have to take to get my diploma.   | 81           |
| • I agree with the type of diploma I am going to receive.   | 80           |
| • I will probably graduate with a standard diploma.   | 74           |
| • I had a say in the decision about which diploma I would get.  | 68           |
| <b>IEP</b>  |              |
| • I had a say in the decision about which classes I would take.   | 72           |
| • I was invited to attend my IEP meeting this year.   | 71           |
| • I attended my IEP meeting this year.  | 61           |
| • I had a say in the decision about special testing conditions I might get for the FCAT or other tests. | 41           |
| • I had a say in the decision about whether I need to take the FCAT or a different test.                | 28           |

|  | <b>% YES</b> |
|--|--------------|
| <b>FCAT</b>  |              |
| • I took the FCAT this year.   | 82           |
| • Teachers help ESE students prepare for the FCAT.   | 71           |
| • In my English/reading classes, we work on the kinds of skills that are tested on the reading part of the FCAT. | 71           |
| • In my math classes, we work on the kinds of problems that are tested on the math part of the FCAT.             | 65           |
| • I received accommodations (special testing conditions) for the FCAT.   | 53           |

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

**Parent Survey Report: Gifted Students**

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

The parent survey was sent to parents of the 2,312 students identified as gifted for whom complete addresses were provided by the district. A total of 791 parents (KG-5, n = 382; 6-8, n = 283; 9 - 12, n = 126), representing 34% of the sample, returned the survey. Surveys were returned as undeliverable from 27 families, representing 1% of the sample.

|  | <b>% YES</b> |
|--|--------------|
| <b>Overall, I am satisfied with:</b>   |              |
| • my child's academic progress.  | 91           |
| • gifted teachers' subject area knowledge.   | 91           |
| • the gifted services my child receives.   | 90           |
| • the effect of gifted services on my child's self-esteem.                           | 90           |
| • general education teachers' subject area knowledge.                                | 90           |
| • gifted teachers' expertise in teaching students identified as gifted.              | 89           |
| • how quickly services were implemented following an initial request for evaluation. | 87           |
| • general education teachers' expertise in teaching students identified as gifted.   | 77           |
| <b>In general education classes, my child:</b>                                       |              |
| • has friends at school.   | 94           |
| • is learning skills that will be useful later on in life.                           | 91           |
| • is usually happy at school.  | 86           |
| • has his/her social and emotional needs met at school.                              | 82           |
| • has creative outlets at school.  | 79           |
| • is academically challenged at school.  | 64           |
| <b>In gifted classes, my child:</b>  |              |
| • has friends at school  | 97           |
| • is learning skills that will be useful later on in life.                           | 94           |
| • is usually happy at school.  | 94           |
| • is academically challenged at school.  | 92           |
| • has his/her social and emotional needs met at school.                              | 89           |
| • has creative outlets at school.  | 89           |

|  | <b>% YES</b> |
|--|--------------|
| <b>My child's general education teachers:</b>  |              |
| • expect appropriate behavior.   | 96           |
| • are available to speak with me.  | 90           |
| • provide coursework that includes representation of diverse ethnic, racial, and other groups. | 88           |
| • set appropriate goals for my child.  | 80           |
| • have access to adequate instructional materials, including technology.                       | 80           |
| • give homework that meets my child's needs.   | 73           |
| • relate coursework to students' future educational and professional pursuits.                 | 72           |
| • call me or send me notes about my child.   | 49           |
| <b>My child's gifted teachers:</b>   |              |
| • expect appropriate behavior.   | 98           |
| • set appropriate goals for my child.  | 93           |
| • are available to speak with me.  | 93           |
| • provide coursework that includes representation of diverse ethnic, racial, and other groups. | 90           |
| • have access to adequate instructional materials, including technology.                       | 87           |
| • give homework that meets my child's needs.   | 84           |
| • relate coursework to students' future educational and professional pursuits.                 | 81           |
| • call me or send me notes about my child.   | 70           |
| <b>My child's home school:</b>   |              |
| • treats me with respect.  | 95           |
| • sends me information written in a way I understand.  | 91           |
| • encourages me to participate in my child's education.  | 87           |
| • makes sure I understand my child's EP or IEP.  | 87           |
| • handles discipline problems appropriately.   | 87           |
| • involves me in developing my child's Educational Plan (EP or IEP).                           | 86           |
| • provides students identified as gifted with appropriate books and materials.                 | 85           |
| • wants to hear my ideas.  | 80           |
| • addresses my child's individual needs.   | 79           |
| • explains what I can do if I want to make changes to my child's EP or IEP.                    | 77           |
| • informs me about all of the services available to my child.                                  | 71           |
| • implements my ideas.   | 67           |
| • sends me information about activities and workshops for parents.                             | 67           |
| <b>My child's 2nd school:</b>  |              |
| • treats me with respect.  | 95           |
| • sends me information written in a way I understand.  | 94           |
| • handles discipline problems appropriately.   | 93           |
| • provides students identified as gifted with appropriate books and materials.                 | 92           |
| • encourages me to participate in my child's education.  | 90           |
| • makes sure I understand my child's EP or IEP.  | 90           |

|   | <b>% YES</b> |
|---|--------------|
| <b>My child's 2nd school: (continued)</b>   |              |
| • involves me in developing my child's Educational Plan (EP or IEP).              | 89           |
| • addresses my child's individual needs.  | 84           |
| • wants to hear my ideas.   | 80           |
| • explains what I can do if I want to make changes to my child's EP or IEP.       | 80           |
| • informs me about all of the services available to my child.                     | 73           |
| • sends me information about activities and workshops for parents.                | 68           |
| • implements my ideas.  | 67           |
| <b>Students identified as gifted:</b>   |              |
| • are provided with information about options for education after high school.    | 85           |
| • have the option of taking a variety of vocational courses.                      | 78           |
| • are provided with career counseling.  | 74           |
| • are provided with the opportunity to participate in externships or mentorships. | 56           |
| <b>Parent Participation</b>   |              |
| • I have attended one or more meetings about my child during this school year.    | 91           |
| • I participate in school activities with my child.                               | 89           |
| • I am a member of the PTA/PTO.   | 61           |
| • I attend School Advisory Committee meetings concerning school improvement.      | 26           |
| • I have used parent support services in my area.                                 | 12           |
| • I belong to an organization for parents of students identified as gifted.       | 9            |



**Appendix D:**  
**Review of District Forms**



This forms review was completed as a component of the monitoring visit that was conducted the week of May 9, 2005. The following district forms were compared to the requirements of applicable State Board of Education rules, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), and applicable sections of Title 34, Section 300, Code of Federal Regulations. The review includes 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.

**Individual Educational Plan (IEP) Meeting**

**Form** *Volusia County Schools IEP Type:*

**34 CFR 300.347**

**The following must be addressed:**

- While not required to be part of the IEP, there should be documentation of a statement providing understanding and consent of the parent for the student receiving instructional accommodations not permitted on statewide assessments and the implications of such accommodations. (*Note:* this may be a separate form).
- Projected beginning dates, duration dates, frequency and location should be present for specially designed instruction/special education services, related services, accommodations and modifications.
- A statement of transition services needs should include more than student desires, it should also include needs.
- A statement of interagency responsibilities should be included with the statement of needed transition services.
- At least one year before the student reaches the age of majority, a statement that the student has been informed of his or her rights that will transfer should be included.
- While not required to be part of the IEP, there should be documentation of consideration of the results of state and district-wide assessments and the skills to be remediated to obtain a passing score.
- “Juvenile Justice Program” and “Not Applicable” need to be removed from the Placement Options section of the IEP, as the IEP team does not determine that a Juvenile Justice Program is the most appropriate placement and not making a placement decision is not an option. However, “Juvenile Justice Program” may be included as *additional* information.

**Recommendation:**

- It is recommended that the words “remediation of skills needed to pass FCAT” be added to the Present Level area to ensure it is addressed as part of the present level statement.

**Educational Plan (EP) Meeting**

**Form** *Educational Plan Meeting Cover Page*

**34 CFR 300.347**

**The following must be addressed:**

- A statement of specially designed instruction should be included on the EP.
- Beginning date, duration date, frequency, and duration should be included for the specially designed instruction on the EP.

- While not required to be a part of the EP, the following should have documentation of consideration:
  - needs resulting from giftedness, and
  - the language needs of the student with limited English proficiency.

**Recommendation:**

- It is recommended that the words “interests,” “needs beyond the general curriculum,” “performance on state and district assessments,” and “evaluation results” be added to the Present Level area to ensure they are addressed as part of the present level statement.

**Parent Notification of IEP or EP Meeting**  
**Form** *Meeting Notice/ Parent Response*  
**34 CFR 300.345**

This form contains the components for compliance.

**Notice and Consent for Initial Placement**  
**Form** *Eligibility/Ineligibility Staffing Form*  
**34 CFR 300.503 and 300.505**

**The following must be addressed:**

- A statement that the parents of a child with a disability have protections under the Procedural Safeguards of the Individuals With Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) should be included.
- A statement of where a copy of the procedural safeguards may be obtained should be included.
- At least two sources for parents to contact for assistance in understanding the provisions of IDEA, including telephone numbers, must be included.

**Informed Notice and Consent for Evaluation**  
**Form** *Consent for Formal Evaluation/Reevaluation Parent/Guardian Notice 2002-035 VCS*  
**34 CFR 300.503 and 300.505**

**The following must be addressed:**

- At least two sources for parents to contact for assistance in understanding the provisions of IDEA, including telephone numbers, must be included.

**Recommendation:**

- In the statement “As parents of...” it is recommended that you change the statement to read “As parent(s)/guardian(s) of a child with a disability you have protections under the procedural safeguards of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). A copy of the Summary of Procedural Safeguards has been attached for you.”

**Informed Notice and Consent for Reevaluation**  
**Form** *Consent for Formal Evaluation/Reevaluation Parent/Guardian Notice 2002-035 VCS*  
**34 CFR 300.503 and 300.505**

**The following must be addressed:**

- At least two sources for parents to contact for assistance in understanding the provisions of IDEA, including telephone numbers, must be included.

**Recommendation:**

- In the statement “As parents of...” it is recommended that you change the statement to read “As parent(s)/guardian(s) of a child with a disability you have protections under the procedural safeguards of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). A copy of the Summary of Procedural Safeguards has been attached for you.”

**Notice of Change in Placement Form and Change of FAPE**

**Form** *Informed Notice of Change of Placement and/or Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) 00004 VCS*

**34 CFR 300.503 and 300.505**

**The following must be addressed:**

- At least two sources for parents to contact for assistance in understanding the provisions of IDEA, including telephone numbers, must be included.
- A statement of where a copy of the procedural safeguards may be obtained should be included.

**Recommendation:**

- In the statement “As parents of...” it is recommended that you change the statement to read “As parent(s)/guardian(s) of a child with a disability you have protections under the procedural safeguards of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). A copy of the Summary of Procedural Safeguards has been attached for you.”

**Informed Notice of Refusal**

**Form** *Prior Written Notice Informed Notice of Proposal or Refusal to Take Action 2003-047 VCS*

**34 CFR 300.503**

**The following must be addressed:**

- At least two sources for parents to contact for assistance in understanding the provisions of IDEA, including telephone numbers, must be included.
- A statement of where a copy of the procedural safeguards may be obtained should be included.

**Recommendation:**

- In the statement “As parents of...” it is recommended that you change the statement to read “As parent(s)/guardian(s) of a child with a disability you have protections under the procedural safeguards of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). A copy of the Summary of Procedural Safeguards has been attached for you.”

**Documentation of Staffing Form**

**Form** *Intake Eligibility Form for FSDB Revised 9/03*

**34 of CFR 300.534, 300.503**

**The following must be addressed:**

- Documentation that parents received the determination of eligibility should be included on the Documentation of Staffing Form.

**Recommendation:**

- While not required to be part of the Documentation of Staffing Form, documentation that the principal was notified of the eligibility should be evident.

**Notice of Dismissal**

**Form** *Eligibility/Ineligibility Staffing Form*

**Form 34 CFR 300.503 and 300.505**

**The following must be addressed:**

- A statement that the parents of a child with a disability have protections under the Procedural Safeguards of the Individuals With Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) should be included.
- A statement of where a copy of the procedural safeguards may be obtained should be included.
- At least two sources for parents to contact for assistance in understanding the provisions of IDEA, including telephone numbers, must be included.
- Evidence of reevaluation prior to dismissal should be included.

**Notice of Ineligibility**

**Form** *Written Notice of Proposed/Refused Action Revised 10/03*

**34 CFR 300.503 and 300.505**

**The following must be addressed:**

- A statement that the parents of a child with a disability have protections under the Procedural Safeguards of the Individuals With Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) should be included.
- A statement of where a copy of the procedural safeguards may be obtained should be included.
- At least two sources for parents to contact for assistance in understanding the provisions of IDEA, including telephone numbers, must be included.

**Confidentiality of Information**

**Form** *Student Handbook – Information for parents, students and staff. Page 3*

**Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act, Part 99 34 CFR Title 34 CFR Section 300.503**

**The following must be addressed:**

- The statute cited is incorrect; the correct statute 1002.22(3), F.S. needs to be appropriately documented.
- The statement indicating the right to inspect and review the student's educational records should include the procedures to exercise this right should be included.
- A statement regarding the right to file a complaint with the US Department of Education concerning alleged failures by the agency to comply with the requirements of FERPA should be added.
- If the district has a policy of disclosing education records to school officials determined to have a legitimate educational interest, the specification for determining who constitutes a school official and what constitutes a legitimate educational interest should be specified.

**Service Plan for Privately Placed Students**

*Form IDEA Grant*

**20 U.S.C. Section 1414(d)**

No Service Plan was provided as part of the IDEA grant. A service plan including all of the following must be submitted:

- student's name
- date the service plan was developed
- a statement of present levels of educational performance, including how the student's disability affects the student's involvement in the general curriculum
- a statement of measurable annual goals, including benchmarks or short-term objectives
- a statement of specially designed instruction/special education and related services and supplementary aids and services to be provided, or on behalf of the student
- a statement of program modifications or supports for school personnel that will be provided for the student
- an explanation of the extent, if any, to which the student will not participate with nondisabled students in the general education class
- the projected beginning of specially designed instruction/special education services, related services, accommodations, and modifications and the anticipated frequency, location and duration date
- beginning at least one year before the student reaches the age of majority, a statement that the student has been informed of his or her rights that will transfer to the student on reaching the age of majority
- a statement of the student's progress toward annual goals will be measured and how the student's parents will be informed at least as often as the parents of nondisabled students
- the strengths of the child and concerns of the parents for enhancing the education of their child\*
- the results of initial or most recent evaluations\*
- in the case of a student whose behavior impedes his or her learning or the learning of others, consider strategies including positive behavioral interventions and supports\*
- in the case of the student with limited English proficiency, the language need of the student\*
- in the case of the student who is blind or visually impaired, provide of instruction in Braille and other use of Braille\*

- consider the communication needs of the child and in the case of a student who is deaf or hard-of-hearing, consider the language and communication needs\*
- whether the student requires assistive technology devices or services\*
- consider the results of state and district-wide assessments\*

\* while not required to be on the service plan, documentation must be evident that these areas were considered

It was noted that the district utilizes the procedural safeguards wording provided by the Bureau of Exceptional Education and Student Services. The district should ensure that when available the “new-updated” procedural safeguards are provided.

**Appendix E:**  
**Glossary of Acronyms**



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

**Glossary of Acronyms**

|        |  |
|--------|--|
| BIP    | Behavior Intervention Plan                                   |
| Bureau | Bureau of Exceptional Education and Student Services         |
| CFR    | Code of Federal Regulations                                  |
| 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                                |
| F.S.   | Florida Statutes   |
| FAC    | Florida Administrative Code                                  |
| FAPE   | Free Appropriate Public Education                            |
| FBA    | Functional Behavioral Assessment                             |
| FCAT   | Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test                        |
| FIN    | Florida Inclusion Network                                    |
| GED    | General Educational Development diploma                      |
| IDEA   | Individuals with Disabilities Education Act                  |
| IEP    | Individual Educational Plan (for students with disabilities) |
| LEA    | Local Educational Agency                                     |
| LI     | Language Impaired  |
| LRE    | Least Restrictive Environment                                |
| MIS    | Management Information System                                |
| OCR    | Office for Civil Rights                                      |
| OSEP   | Office of Special Education Programs (USDOE)                 |
| OSS    | Out-of-School Suspension                                     |
| PBS    | Florida's Positive Behavioral Support Project                |
| PMH    | Profoundly Mentally Handicapped                              |
| SED    | Severely Emotionally Disturbed                               |
| SI     | Speech Impaired  |
| SIP    | System Improvement Plan                                      |
| S/L    | Speech and Language  |
| SLD    | Specific Learning Disability                                 |
| TMH    | Trainable Mentally Handicapped                               |
| UM     | University of Miami  |
| USC    | United States Code   |
| VE     | Varying Exceptionalities                                     |