

FINAL REPORT:  
CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT/SELF ASSESSMENT PLAN  
VERIFICATION MONITORING  
EXCEPTIONAL STUDENT EDUCATION PROGRAMS

# WAKULLA COUNTY

NOVEMBER 2 - 4, 2005



FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION  
BUREAU OF EXCEPTIONAL EDUCATION AND STUDENT SERVICES

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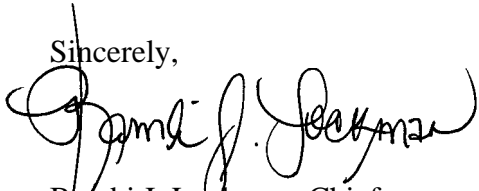


Superintendent Miller  
January 25, 2006  
Page 2

If my staff can be of any assistance as you develop and implement your new continuous improvement plans, 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 Wakulla County.

Sincerely,

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

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

Enclosure

cc: Ray Gray, School Board Chairman  
Members of the School Board  
Jeffry Wahlen, School Board Attorney  
School Principals  
Dr. Irene Savary, ESE Director  
Eileen Amy  
Evy Friend  
Kim Komisar

**Wakulla County Final Monitoring Report  
Continuous Improvement Monitoring  
November 2-4, 2005**

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**Wakulla County Final Monitoring Report  
Continuous Improvement Monitoring  
November 2 – 4, 2005**

**Monitoring Process**

**Authority**

The Florida Department of Education, Bureau of Exceptional Education and Student Services, in carrying out its roles of leadership, resources, 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 Improvement Act (IDEA 2004) 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 2004 the Department is responsible for ensuring that the requirements of the law are carried out and that each educational program for children with disabilities administered in the state meets the educational requirements of the state (34 CFR §300.600 (a)(1) and (2)).

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

**Continuous Improvement Monitoring**

In its continuing effort to focus the monitoring process on student educational outcomes, the Bureau has identified key data indicators for students with disabilities and students identified as gifted, and all districts in the state have developed continuous improvement plans (CIPs) to address self-selected indicators for these populations. The purpose of the continuous improvement monitoring visits conducted by the Bureau is two-fold. The primary purpose is to afford an opportunity for school districts to provide validation of

the activities they have undertaken through their continuous improvement plans for students with disabilities and students identified as gifted. In addition, these monitoring visits provide an opportunity for the Bureau to review districts' compliance with specific state and federal requirements. Compliance components of continuous improvement monitoring visits include reviews of: services provided to exceptional education students enrolled in charter schools; the implementation of specific programs and related services; and, records, forms, and special categories procedures. A detailed description of the Bureau's monitoring processes is provided in *Focused Monitoring, Continuous Improvement/Self Assessment Plan Verification, Focused Monitoring Verification: 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).

During November 2 - 4, 2005, the Bureau of Exceptional Education and Student Services conducted an on-site review of the exceptional student education (ESE) programs in Wakulla County Public Schools. Dr. Irene Savary, Exceptional Student Education Director, served as the coordinator and point of contact for the district during the monitoring visit.

## **Demographics**

This section provides information related to demographic and background information specific to the district. The Bureau compiles an annual profile of key data indicators for each district in the state (LEA profile). 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, districts of comparable size (enrollment group), and the state. The 2005 LEA profiles for all Florida school districts are available on the web at <http://www.firn.edu/doe/commhome/datapage.htm>. Specific key data indicators reported in the LEA profile are used in the continuous improvement monitoring process. Wakulla County School District's LEA profile is included in this report in appendix A.

Based on the 2005 LEA profile, Wakulla County School District has a total school population (PK – 12) of 4,848, with 19% of students being identified as students with disabilities, and 3% identified as gifted. Wakulla County is considered a "small size" district and is comprised of two pre-kindergarten facility, three elementary schools, two middle schools, one high school and one alternative school. The district also has one charter school.

Of the 31 students with disabilities who exited from the district during the 2004-05 school year, the district reported 19 students or 61.29% met all requirements for a standard diploma, four students or 13% met the requirements through a waiver of a passing score on the Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test (FCAT), and none

graduated through the GED exit option (i.e., under-credited students who have passed the FCAT and who pass the GED examination).

**District Selection**

In making the decision to include Wakulla County School District in this year’s continuous improvement monitoring visits, the district was one of four selected at random that had not participated in a monitoring visit by the Bureau for the current year or previous three years. Wakulla County School District’s self selected indicator for students with disabilities is to increase the percentage of students with disabilities graduating with a standard diploma. The district’s self-selected indicator for students identified as gifted is to increase FCAT performance.

**Monitoring Activities**

The Bureau conducted the on-site continuous improvement monitoring visit from November 2 – 4, 2005. Four bureau staff members, and five peer monitors conducted site-visits to the following five schools, including one charter school:

- Medart Elementary School
- Riversprings Middle School
- Wakulla Middle School
- Wakulla High School
- Wakulla Charter School of Arts, Science and Technology (COAST)

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

The monitoring process includes interviews with administrators, teachers, and other service delivery providers, focus group interviews with students, case studies, classroom observations, record reviews, and surveys of students, parents, and teachers. A summary of the monitoring activities conducted in Wakulla County is included in the table below.

<b>Activity</b>	<b>Source</b>	<b>Number</b>
Interviews	District Staff	3
	School Staff	
	• School Administrators/non-instructional support	11
	• ESE teachers – disabilities	12
	• ESE teachers – gifted	2
	• General education teachers	9
Focus Groups	Wakulla High School – grades 9-12	
	• Students pursuing special diploma	12
	• Students pursuing standard diploma	13
Case Studies	Individual student case studies	13



Classroom Visits	ESE and general education classroom	15
Record Reviews	IEPs	
	• Full desk-review	26
	• Targeted on-site review	66
	• Matrix of Services documents	6
	EPs	
	• Full desk-review	11
	• Targeted on-site review	12
	Special Categories	
	• Full desk-review	24
Surveys	Parents – students with disabilities	
	• Number sent	947
	• Number returned	99
	Parents – gifted	
	• Number sent	136
	• Number returned	34

The results of the surveys are included as appendix C.

## Reporting of Information

Findings based on data generated through record reviews; focus group interviews; individual interviews; case studies; classroom visits; parent surveys; and, the review of district forms are summarized in the reporting tables that follow. This report summarizes the information provided by the district regarding strategies implemented through the continuous improvement process, as well as findings of the monitoring team.

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 charter schools is 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. Based on the data gathered by the monitoring team, Wakulla County School District is not required to develop a system improvement plan. However, it is required to revise its continuous

improvement plan(s) to implement strategies to address the specific concerns and findings of noncompliance noted in reporting table 2: Compliance Review.

During the course of conducting the continuous improvement 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, and promising practices are noted. Listings of these recommendations and promising practices, as well as specific discretionary projects and DOE contacts available to provide technical assistance in the development of the revised continuous improvement plan, are included following the reporting tables.



**Wakulla County School District  
Continuous Improvement Monitoring**

**Reporting Table 1:  
Continuous Improvement Plans**

The table below includes information provided by the district on the activities conducted and outcomes achieved thus far through the continuous improvement process. In addition, information gleaned through the Bureau’s monitoring activities regarding the district’s implementation of these plans is provided.

Continuous Improvement Activities	Progress	Recommendations
<b>Students with Disabilities: Standard Diploma Rate</b>		
<p>In developing its CIP for students with disabilities the district involved a variety of stakeholders including the members from the ESE advisory committee. A survey was sent to parents and teachers, and workshops were held with school administrators. As a result, strategies implemented included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ESE teachers provided with FCAT practice materials</li> <li>• contract with Solutions Skills for FCAT Remediation implemented</li> <li>• graduation requirements/diploma option workshops for all middle school parents conducted</li> <li>• district parent liaison chairs Big Bend Transition Council meetings monthly</li> <li>• high school curriculum reviewed and evaluated</li> <li>• new scope and sequence for 9<sup>th</sup> grade developed.</li> </ul>	<p>2001-02 Baseline: 33%</p> <p>Goal for 2004-05: 56%</p> <p>Rate for 2004-05: 61.3%</p>	<p>The district is to be commended for surpassing its goal of 56%, and is encouraged to continue any strategies or interventions that have been found to be effective.</p> <p>Based on record reviews, interviews, and the case study process, it is recommended that the district consider discipline rate (i.e., in-school suspension (ISS)) for students with disabilities as the key data indicator to be targeted in its revised continuous improvement plan.</p>

Continuous Improvement Activities	Progress	Recommendations
<p>Verification of the implementation of the above activities was obtained through interviews, record reviews, observations, and the case study process.</p>		
<b>Gifted Students: Performance on FCAT Reading</b>		
<p>In developing its CIP for gifted students the district convened a task force that included teachers of the gifted and district staff. As a result, strategies implemented included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• FCAT profiles of gifted students reviewed and analyzed</li> <li>• individualized programs designed to strengthen targeted skill areas developed and implemented</li> <li>• reading remediation materials to target identified needs obtained.</li> </ul> <p>Targeted instructional support continues to be provided to gifted students to ensure that all students receive the needed remediation to score at levels 3 or above in reading on the FCAT.</p> <p>Verification of the implementation of the above activities was obtained through interviews, record reviews, observations, and the case study process.</p>	<p>FCAT Reading Level 1 or 2 2001-02 Baseline:</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">7<sup>th</sup> grade—6.6%</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">8<sup>th</sup> grade—8.3%</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">10<sup>th</sup> grade—5.9%</p> <p>Goal for 2004-05:</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">All grades—0%</p> <p>Rate for 2004-05:</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">All grades—.009%</p>	<p>With no gifted students scoring at level 1 on the FCAT reading and .009% scoring at level 2, the district has essentially met its goal, and is encouraged to continue any strategies or interventions that have been found to be effective.</p> <p>Based on record reviews, interviews, and the case study process, it is recommended that the district consider expansion of service delivery options for gifted students for the key data indicator to be targeted in its revised continuous improvement plan.</p>

**Wakulla County School District  
Continuous Improvement Monitoring**

**Reporting Table 2:  
Compliance Reviews**

The table below includes findings from the Bureau’s review of district procedures related to the provision of services to exceptional education students. The results are presented topically. Some topics represent factors believed to impact the key data indicators the district is addressing through its continuous improvement plans (i.e., standard diploma rate for students with disabilities; FCAT reading performance of gifted students), or selected processes and procedures targeted by the Bureau (e.g., transition from school to post school living; counseling as a related service).

Standard/Citation	Findings	Supporting Evidence	Concerns
<b>Access to General Curriculum</b>			
34 CFR 300.26(a)(3) Special education 34 CFR 300.347(a)(4) Content of IEP 34 CFR §300.550(b) General LRE requirements 34 CFR §300.552 Placements Rule 6A-0311(1), FAC, Eligible Special Programs for Exceptional Students	No findings of noncompliance.		IEPs selected at random for 6 of 8 students at Wakulla Middle School indicated that the students were moved to separate class placement from less restrictive placements upon transition from elementary to middle school

Standard/Citation	Findings	Supporting Evidence	Concerns												
<b>Accommodations, Modifications, Supplementary Aids and Services and Supports to School Personnel</b>															
34 CFR 300.347(a) Content of IEP  Rule 6A-6.03028(7), FAC, Development of Individual Educational Plans for Exceptional Students	No findings of noncompliance.														
<b>Discipline and Positive Behavior Supports</b>															
34 CFR §300.520 Authority of school personnel.  Rule 6A-6.03312(4), FAC, Discipline Procedures for Students with Disabilities	No findings of noncompliance.	<p><i>2005 LEA Profile (survey 5, 2003-04)</i> In school suspensions:</p> <table border="0" data-bbox="919 800 1518 987"> <thead> <tr> <th></th> <th colspan="2" style="text-align: center;"><u>Disabled/Nondisabled</u></th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Wakulla:</td> <td style="text-align: center;">18%</td> <td style="text-align: center;">18%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Enrollment Group:</td> <td style="text-align: center;">15%</td> <td style="text-align: center;">11%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>State:</td> <td style="text-align: center;">14%</td> <td style="text-align: center;">9%</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>		<u>Disabled/Nondisabled</u>		Wakulla:	18%	18%	Enrollment Group:	15%	11%	State:	14%	9%	In school suspension (ISS) rate for students with disabilities as well as nondisabled students is higher than the rates of both the enrollment group and the state (18%).
	<u>Disabled/Nondisabled</u>														
Wakulla:	18%	18%													
Enrollment Group:	15%	11%													
State:	14%	9%													
<b>FCAT Preparation</b>															
Rule 6A-6.03028(7)(a), FAC, Development of Individual Educational Plans for Exceptional Students  S. 1003.43(11)(b) General requirements for high school graduation.	No findings of noncompliance.														

Standard/Citation	Findings	Supporting Evidence	Concerns
<b>Student Course of Study and Diploma Option Decisions</b>			
34 CFR 300.347(b) Content of IEP.  Rule 6A-6.03028(7), FAC, Development of Individual Educational Plans for Exceptional Students  Rule 6-1.0996(13), FAC, Graduation Requirements for Certain Students with Disabilities.	No findings of noncompliance		Middle school teachers and some high school staff reported being unsure of all the FCAT waiver components and process.
<b>Staff Development</b>			
34 CFR 300.382 Improvement strategies.	No findings of noncompliance.		Administrative staff at the high school indicated training is needed in implementing effective supports to students prior to failing courses.
<b>Counseling Services</b>			
34 CFR §300.24 Related services.  Rule 6A-6.03016(4) (d), FAC, Special Programs for Students Who Are	For one student counseling as a related service was not provided despite evidence of need.	<i>Case Studies:</i> IEP/EPs of SLD/gifted student indicated the following placements between May 2003 and January 2005: • 5/22/03 – consultation for SLD; 5 hr/week	Although district staff described a variety of mechanisms through which students with disabilities may access counseling,



Standard/Citation	Findings	Supporting Evidence	Concerns
Emotionally Handicapped		<p>gifted class  "knowledgeable student who is succeeding in the regular classroom"</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 5/19/04 – consultation for SLD; “student is working on grade level”</li> <li>• 10/20/04 – Resource for reading, math, geography and language arts daily; 90 m/week gifted class  “...working on grade level”</li> <li>• 1/5/05 – All ESE classes; 90 m/week gifted class  "Student is working on grade level"</li> <li>• 5/13/05 – Separate; 90 m/week gifted class  "...works below grade level"; "...requires intellectual stimulation in areas beyond the regular curriculum and interaction with other gifted students"; “able to read at a 10.0 grade level and pass AR tests at that level.</li> </ul> <p><i>Interviews:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 4 out of 5 teachers of the student stated that student could benefit from counseling</li> <li>• 1 of 5 reported that counseling generally is provided only to students eligible as EH/SED</li> <li>• 1 of 5 reported that counseling would assist the student to be served in a less restrictive setting.</li> </ul>	<p>during interviews with school-level staff several respondents indicated that their understanding was that counseling was only available for students who are EH or SED. These staff members stated that there were students they felt would benefit from counseling, but that they had not referred the students for the service, as they were not in the EH or SED programs.</p>

Standard/Citation	Findings	Supporting Evidence	Concerns
<b>Communication Services</b>			
34 CFR §300.346(a) (2)(iv) Development, review, and revision of the IEP.  Rule 6A-6.03028(6), FAC, Development of Individual Educational Plans for Students with Disabilities	No findings of noncompliance.		
<b>School to Post-School Transition Services</b>			
34 CFR §300.344(b) IEP team.  Rule 6A-6.03028(3)-(4), FAC, Development of Individual Educational Plans for Exceptional Students	No findings of noncompliance.		
<b>Gifted Services</b>			
Section 1003.57, F.S. Exceptional Student Instruction  Section 1003.01(3)(a), F.S. Definitions.	No findings of noncompliance.		Consultation is the primary gifted service available to students at high school, offers other types of advanced curriculum or programs (e.g., AP Honors, IB program).

Standard/Citation	Findings	Supporting Evidence	Concerns
Rule 6A-6.030191(5)(a), FAC, Development of Educational Plans for Exceptional Students Who Are Gifted			
<b>Charter Schools</b>			
34 CFR §300.241(a) Treatment of charter schools and their students.  34 CFR §300.312(a) Children with disabilities in public charter schools.	No findings of noncompliance.		Goals on IEPs and EPs often not measurable and/or not individualized.
<b>Matrix of Services</b>			
S. 1011.62(1)(e), F.S. Funding model for exceptional student education programs.	One matrix of service document requires correction due to inaccurate reporting.	<i>Records:</i> 1 of 6 IEPs/matrix of services documents for students reported at the 254 or 255 level was not reported accurately.	
<b>Student Record Reviews – IEPs; EPs; Special Categories</b>			
34 CFR §300.340-300.350 Individualized Educational Programs  Rule 6A-6.03028, FAC, Development of Individual Educational Plans for Exceptional	11 IEP teams must reconvene to address identified findings.	113 IEPs were reviewed, in part or in whole 23 EPs were reviewed, in part or in whole 24 Special category records were reviewed  A detailed description of the record reviews was provided to the district in a letter dated December 8, 2005, and is included in this	Educational plans need to be individualized to meet the unique needs of students identified as gifted.

Standard/Citation	Findings	Supporting Evidence	Concerns
<p>Students.</p> <p>Rule 6A-6.030191, FAC, Development of Educational Plans for Exceptional Students who are Gifted.</p> <p>Rule 6A-6.0331, FAC, Identification and Determination of Eligibility of Exceptional Students for Specially Designed Instruction</p> <p>Rule 6A-6.0334, FAC, Temporary Assignment of Transferring Exceptional Students</p>		report as appendix E.	
<b>District Forms</b>			
<p>34 CFR §300.503 Prior written notice by the public agency; content of notice.</p> <p>34 CFR §300.347 Content of the IEP</p> <p>Rule 6A-6.03028, FAC, Development of Individual Educational Plans for Exceptional Students</p>	10 forms require revisions to meet compliance.	A detailed description of the forms review was provided to the district in a letter dated August 19, 2005.	













**Appendix A:**

**LEA Profile**





















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







**Appendix C:**

**Survey Results**

















**Appendix D:**  
**Regulatory Citations**



























**Appendix E:**  
**Review of Student Records**







**Appendix F:**  
**Glossary of Acronyms**





