

FINAL REPORT OF FINDINGS

DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS
OFFICE OF PROGRAM, TRANSITION, AND POST-RELEASE SERVICES

PROGRAMS FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES
MONITORING ACTIVITIES CONDUCTED IN 2001

**BROWARD CORRECTIONAL INSTITUTION
COLUMBIA CORRECTIONAL INSTITUTION
DESOTO CORRECTIONAL INSTITUTION
LAKE CORRECTIONAL INSTITUTION
LANCASTER CORRECTIONAL INSTITUTION
NEW RIVER CORRECTIONAL INSTITUTION**



FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
BUREAU OF INSTRUCTIONAL SUPPORT AND COMMUNITY SERVICES

FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION



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May 30, 2003

Ms. Barbara McAnelly, Assistant Chief of Programs
Department of Corrections
2601 Blair Stone Road
Tallahassee, Florida 32399-2500

Dear Ms. McAnelly:

We are pleased to provide you with the Final Report of Findings of Exceptional Student Education Programs at selected correctional facilities. The report from our visits during November and December of 2001, includes the system improvement plan proposed by your staff.

An update of outcomes achieved and/or a summary of related activities, as identified in your district's system improvement plan, must be submitted by June 30 and December 30 of each school year for the next two years, unless otherwise noted on the improvement plan.

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

Thank you for your continuing commitment to improve services for exceptional education students in the Department of Corrections.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Shan Goff".

Shan Goff, Chief
Bureau of Instructional Support and Community Services

Enclosure

cc: Sheryl Brainard, Consult Manager
Jim Warford, Chancellor

SHAN GOFF
Chief
Bureau of Instructional Support and Community Services

Department Of Corrections Final Monitoring Report
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**Department of Corrections
Monitoring Visit
November and December 2001**

Executive Summary

The Florida Department of Education, Bureau of Instructional Support and Community Services, in collaboration with the Department of Corrections, conducted an on-site review of the exceptional student education programs at selected correctional facilities during November and December of 2001. The purpose of these monitoring visits was to ensure compliance with federal and state laws, rules, and regulations regarding exceptional student education programs, as well as to assess the implementation of procedures related to the requirements. In addition, the monitoring process is intended to assist in the development of improvement plans related to compliance and implementation of exceptional student education programs designed to promote student educational outcomes.

Summaries of Findings

Curriculum

The teachers in the facilities were using curriculums that were specifically designed for adult learners. In general, the education supervisors understood the curriculum framework and adaptations provided to students with disabilities.

Form Reviews

The transition plans/individual educational plans (TP/IEPs) utilized by the Department of Corrections lack required components regarding modifications.

Instructional Staff

In general, the general education teachers were knowledgeable about the special education students in their classes, and the exceptional education teachers were knowledgeable about exceptional student education (ESE) policies and procedures. All of the instructional staff reported many opportunities for training and were positive about the trainings. Several facilities had vocational teachers who reported significant success with students with disabilities in their classes.

Instructional Assistants

There were some concerns about the appropriate use of instructional assistants in the facilities. This area needs to be explored with the facility staff to determine how the roles and responsibilities of instructional assistants are being defined.

Record Reviews

There were compliance concerns with individual student IEPs not containing the required components.

Reevaluation

Some concerns were expressed in regard to the way the reevaluation process was being implemented.

Student Input

Students had positive comments about the ESE programs in the facilities. There were a few instances in which the students were unable to identify the special education teachers assigned to them.

System Improvement Plan

In response to these findings, the Department of Corrections 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 indicators of change. The format for the system improvement plan, including a sample listing of the critical issues identified by the Bureau as most significantly in need of improvement, is provided at the end of this report.

Monitoring Process

Introduction

The Florida Department of Education, Bureau of Instructional Support and Community Services, in carrying out its roles of leadership, resource allocation, technical assistance, monitoring, and evaluation, is required to: (1) examine and evaluate procedures, records, and programs provided by the Department of Corrections; (2) provide information and assistance to the Department of Corrections in correcting deficiencies; and (3) otherwise assist the Department of Corrections in operating educational programs effectively and efficiently.

The monitoring procedures reflect the Department of Education's continuing commitment to conduct those activities necessary to ensure compliance with applicable federal and state laws, rules, and regulations.

Monitoring Activities

The monitoring activities were conducted by personnel from the Florida Department of Education and the Department of Corrections (DOC). Staff members reviewed student records and examined policies and procedures documents. Department of Education staff also conducted interviews with Department of Corrections' staff, teachers, and students and examined fiscal project documentation.

The following correctional facilities received on-site visits.

Broward Correctional Institution
Columbia Correctional Institution
DeSoto Correctional Institution
Lake Correctional Institution
Lancaster Correctional Institution
New River Correctional Institution

Monitoring Report

This is the report presented to the Department of Corrections following the monitoring activities. Department of Corrections program staff had the opportunity to review the draft preliminary report and provide additional information, identify inaccuracies, or clarify discrepancies.

The report first addresses findings discovered at a Department level, then addresses each of the six facilities visited. For clarity, findings are grouped according to areas addressed in the monitoring work papers within each facility.

A sample system improvement plan is included at the end of the report.

Preliminary Report

Subsequent to the on-site visit, Bureau staff prepares a preliminary written report. The preliminary report is sent to the Department, and Bureau program specialists are assigned to assist the Department in developing appropriate system improvements for necessary areas. Data for the report are compiled from sources that have been previously discussed in this document, including the following:

- reviews of student records
- reviews of forms
- classroom visits
- interview with district and school staff

The report is developed to include the following elements: a description of the monitoring process, background information specific to the DOC, reported information from monitoring activities, and a summary.

Final Report

In completing the system improvement section of the report, every effort should be made to link the system improvement activities for monitoring to the DOC's continuous improvement monitoring plan. In collaboration with Bureau staff, the DOC 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.

Within 30 days of the DOC's receipt of the preliminary report, a system improvement plan, including strategies and activities targeting specific findings, must be submitted to the Bureau for review. Within 30 days of the Bureau's receipt, a final report including the system improvement plan will be released.

Commendations

During the monitoring process, some exemplary practices were discovered.

- The general education teachers interviewed were knowledgeable regarding the students with disabilities enrolled in their classes. The teachers reported attending Individual Educational Plan (IEP) meetings and there was evidence of this upon review of the students' IEPs. The teachers were able to report appropriate and varied accommodations used with students. Additionally, the teachers appeared to feel supported in the provision of services through their collaboration with the special education teachers.
- The special educational teachers interviewed were generally knowledgeable about special education policies and procedures. They reported positive collaborative activities with general education teachers and there appeared to be a sincere effort and intent to share appropriate instructional practices.

- In general, education supervisors interviewed were knowledgeable about special education, demonstrated an understanding of the curriculum frameworks used and adaptations provided to students with disabilities. They generally understood priority consideration for placing special education students. Most were supportive of staff training opportunities.
- In some facilities the Bureau had an opportunity to tour the vocational training programs and meet the vocational instructors. Many of these teachers reported significant success with the students with disabilities who were enrolled in their programs.
- In some facilities it was evident that the teachers had made a special effort to create an interesting classroom environment. Some classrooms displayed information that would be of interest to a diverse population of adult learners.
- All facilities visited were using curriculums that were specifically designed for adult learners.
- All instructional staff interviewed reported many opportunities to participate in training activities. Staff were uniformly positive about the workshops provided by the Department of Corrections.
- Students interviewed expressed positive comments about their educational services. They indicated that they participated in TP/IEP meetings and their input was solicited throughout the process.

Feedback from Teacher Interviews

- Some teachers stressed the importance of offering recognition and rewards to students for their academic accomplishments. Additionally, teachers emphasized the importance of having an array of activities in order to hold the students' interest and making learning meaningful to the student.
- Some teachers felt that monthly consultation meetings with all the instructional staff, creating a "team approach," was extremely helpful in encouraging colleagues to share their knowledge and expertise on successful instructional strategies.
- One teacher believed that having the special education teacher provide small group instruction in the general education classroom on a regular basis was extremely helpful.

Concerns

Also discovered were some areas of concern, which, although not findings, were significant to the quality of programming.

- There were some concerns regarding the use of instructional assistants in facilities. There were several interviews that seemed to convey the impression that the instructional assistants (who may be paid out of varied fund sources) were providing a significant amount of the

instruction. This area needs to be explored with the facility staff to determine how roles and responsibilities are being defined.

- One instructional assistant, who is paid entirely through the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) funds, indicated that she occasionally “covers” a general education classroom in the teacher’s absence. It was assumed that this is a very infrequent occurrence. If instructional assistants are assisting disabled and nondisabled students at the same time, a description of such activities should be included in the project application in order to meet the IDEA “permissive use of funds” requirement.
- At many of the facilities visited, there was a general lack of correlation between areas of the TP/IEP. Issues, needs, and interests documented in one section of the TP/IEP were often not addressed in other sections of the document.
- Statements indicating how the student’s disability affects the student’s involvement in the general curriculum could have been expanded to better describe the difficulties the student had, and more specific information on the effect of the disability.
- A few students interviewed were unable to identify the special education teacher assigned to them.
- Some staff expressed concern about the reevaluation process. There was a general impression that the central office was directing test selection and that TP/IEP teams were not able to exercise their discretion in this area. It is recommended that the Department of Corrections review the process for reevaluation and revise forms that document the process. Further, there appeared to be inconsistent involvement of students in the reevaluation process as a whole.
- At one facility, a teacher stated that it was too difficult to provide accommodations for special education students for the GED testing. The teacher stated the approval process was too cumbersome and there was not adequate time to request accommodations.
- There was inconsistent understanding of change of FAPE.
- There was inconsistent documentation that students who were in “close management supervision,” continued to receive services indicated on the TP/IEP.
- Some annual goals included measurement criteria, such as 80 percent; however, the TP/IEP did not include a corresponding system to measure progress.
- A number of TP/IEPs included annual goals that addressed community objectives even though the student’s release date was more than one year in the future. For such students, community goals would better address the prison community rather than the community at large.
- There were a few present level statements that stated that the disability did not affect the student’s progress or, in one circumstance, the IEP stated that the student did not have a

disability. In circumstances like this, it would appear the student no longer has a need for special education and dismissal should be considered.

- Some of the quality indicators for IEPs that the DOC has emphasized, (e.g. addressing areas of “non-need”) were not always evident in our review.

Report of Findings

Broward Correctional Institution

Student notice of meeting

- In some student records, the purpose of the meeting (such as to discuss transition or reevaluation) was not indicated on the invitation to the transition plan/IEP meeting.

Student strengths

- For all of the TP/IEPs reviewed, student strengths were missing in some areas. In some areas, the student's strengths section did not reflect the strengths as determined by the TP/IEP meeting.

Present level of educational performance

- Some present levels of educational performance did not include information other than test scores.
- One present level of educational performance statements did not address the student's current performance, but included only the student's age and grade.

Effects of the student's disability on progress in the general curriculum

- One TP/IEP did not describe how the disability affected the student's progress.

Measurable annual goals

- All TP/IEPs reviewed included annual goals that were not measurable.

Short-term objectives

- Some short-term objectives were written as lists of activities, assignments, or tasks rather than measurable intermediate steps toward the annual goal.

Supports for school personnel

- Statements in this section of the TP/IEPs reviewed contained information about special education services provided to the student, rather than supports to school personnel.

Location of services

- One TP/IEP incorrectly listed the location of the provision of services when the student was moved to another setting.

Student's progress toward annual goals

- Most of the TP/IEPs lacked indication of how the student's progress toward annual goals would be measured. Information was sometimes included in the wrong section.
- Some monthly progress reports were not completed; some had areas left blank.

Receipt of services

- For one student, there was no evidence of monthly consultation indicated on the TP/IEP.

Transfer of student rights

- One TP/IEP identified the date of the transfer of rights but there was no documentation of this in the student's record.

Transition

- For most student records reviewed, the course of study statement was left blank.
- There was not always evidence that the student's interests were considered.
- Some transition service areas did not include goal statements.
- Some transition service areas did not include a statement about why the student had no need for services.

Reevaluation

- A student provided consent for reevaluation two times but there was no evidence that any reevaluation activities had been conducted.

Columbia Correctional Institution**Student notice of meeting**

- In some student records, the purpose of the meeting (such as to discuss transition or reevaluation) was not indicated on the invitation to the TP/IEP meeting.

Present level of educational performance

- Some present levels of educational performance did not include information other than test scores.
- Some statements did not address information about the student's performance in areas addressed elsewhere in the transition plan/individual educational plan (TP/IEP).

Student strengths

- For some TP/IEPs, the student's strengths were written only in the words of the student and did not also reflect the strengths determined by the TP/IEP team.

Extent of nonparticipation with nondisabled peers

- For some TP/IEPs, the extent of nonparticipation with nondisabled peers was not indicated.

Effects of the student's disability on progress in the general curriculum

- For some TP/IEPs, the statement indicating how the student's disability affects the student's involvement and progress in the general curriculum was not adequate.

Measurable annual goals

- The annual goals on some TP/IEPs were not measurable.
- One annual goal was written for two years.

- There was a lack of correlation, for some TP/IEPs between annual goals and needs identified elsewhere in the TP/IEP.

Short-term objectives

- Some short-term objectives on TP/IEPs were not measurable.
- The short-term objectives for one TP/IEP included only a list of topics.

Evaluation results

- One TP/IEP did not reflect the results of a reevaluation.

Receipt of services

- Some student records revealed lack of documentation that students were receiving services on their TP/IEP.

Transition

- For some TP/IEPs, there was a lack of evidence that the student's interests had been taken into account in the development of the TP/IEP.

Reevaluation

- Some TP/IEPs were not updated following the student's reevaluation.
- A reevaluation form indicated "N/A" in the area for a description of evaluation procedures, test, records, or reports used as the basis for the proposal or refusal to reevaluate.

DeSoto Correctional Institution

General

- There was a lack of correlation between areas of some transition plans/individual educational plans (TP/IEPs).
- One TP/IEP was developed after the initiation date of services.

Student strengths

- For most TP/IEPs, the student's strengths were written only in the words of the student and did not also reflect the strengths determined by the TP/IEP team.
- Most of the TP/IEPs had areas in which there were no student strengths included.

Evaluation results

- Some TP/IEPs lacked evaluation dates and data.

Present levels of educational performance

- Some present levels of educational performance did not include information other than test scores.
- Some present level of performance statements were written only in the student's words and did not also reflect the input of the TP/IEP team.

Effects of the student's disability on progress in the general curriculum

- The statements did not describe how the disability affected progress.

Measurable annual goals

- Most TP/IEPs reviewed included goals that were not measurable.
- One student's annual goal was inappropriate given the extended length of student's incarceration.

Short-term objectives

- Some objectives did not correlate with the annual goals.

Extent of nonparticipation with nondisabled peers

- For most TP/IEPs, there was no explanation of the extent of nonparticipation with nondisabled peers.

Location of services

- One TP/IEP lacked an indication of the location of services.

Progress toward annual goals

- TP/IEPs lacked an indication of how progress toward annual goals would be measured.
- Progress reports were not shared with the student, only with the teacher.

Reevaluation

- Some student records did not include current reevaluation information on the TP/IEP.
- Some reevaluation dates were incorrectly documented.

Lake Correctional Institution

Present level of educational performance

- Some present level of educational performance statements did not include any specific information about the student's performance.
- Some present levels of educational performance did not include information other than test scores.

Effects of the student's disability on progress in the general curriculum

- For one transition plan/individual educational plan (TP/IEP), the statement indicating how the student's disability affects the student's involvement and progress in the general curriculum lacked a description of how the disability affected progress.

Extent of nonparticipation with nondisabled peers

- For some TP/IEPs, the statement addressing the extent of nonparticipation with nondisabled peers indicated a lack of understanding of the information to be addressed in this section.

Support for school personnel

- Some TP/IEPs indicated that staff would receive consultation; however, there was no documentation that consultation had occurred.

Measurable annual goals

- The annual goals on most of the TP/IEPs reviewed were not measurable.

Short-term objectives

- Some short-term objectives on TP/IEPs were not measurable.
- Some short-term objectives did not relate to the annual goal

Student's progress toward annual goals

- Some TP/IEPs lacked indication of how often the student's progress toward annual goals would be measured.

Transition

- For some students' TP/IEPs, transition service areas were not addressed (left blank.)
- For one TP/IEP, there was a lack of individualization.

Reevaluation

- Facility staff demonstrated an inadequate understanding of the reevaluation process.

Change of Placement

- The change of placement form for one student was inconsistent with the actual changes reflected on the TP/IEP.

Lancaster Correctional Institution**Student notice of meeting**

- In some student records, the purpose of the meeting (such as to discuss transition or reevaluation) was not indicated on the student invitation to the meeting.

Supports for school personnel

- Some IEPs indicated that collaboration would be provided; however, there was no documentation to indicate that collaboration had occurred, nor was there always an indication of the purpose of the collaboration.

Present level of educational performance

- Some present levels of educational performance did not include information other than test scores.
- Some present level of educational performance statements did not address the student's current performance or did not provide specific information.

Effects of the student's disability on progress in the general curriculum

- For some TP/IEPs, the statement indicating how the student's disability affects the student's involvement and progress in the general curriculum merely named the student's disability.

Measurable annual goals

- The annual goals on most of the TP/IEPs reviewed were not measurable.
- Some TP/IEP annual goals included the criterion of "age appropriate levels" which is not measurable.

Short-term objectives

- Some short-term objectives were not measurable.
- Some TP/IEPs had short-term objectives which were curriculum frameworks rather than actual objectives.

Supplementary aids and services

- Some TP/IEPs lacked information in the area of supplementary aids and services.

Frequency of services

- One TP/IEP lacked frequency of services for small group instruction.

Student's progress toward annual goals

- Most of the TP/IEPs did not specifically indicate how, or how often, the student's progress toward annual goals would be measured.
- Some student records did not include completed progress reports.

Receipt of services on the TP/IEP

- The records of most students reviewed did not include documentation of the receipt of special education instruction, consultation, or therapy services.

Transition

- For one student, the course of study did not relate to the skill levels identified elsewhere in the TP/IEP.
- Some TP/IEPs did not include a statement which described the reason services were not needed in a given area.
- Some TP/IEPs indicated that, although the student's preferences were documented, they were not included in the student's transition plan.

Reevaluation

- Some TP/IEPs did not reflect the results of the most recent reevaluation.

Change of educational placement

- One student's record indicated that the student's placement was changed without prior written notification.

New River Correctional Institution

General

- Some records lacked forms required to review compliance.

Student notice of meeting

- In some student records, the purpose of the meeting (such as to discuss transition or reevaluation) was not indicated on the student invitation to the meeting.

Student strengths

- For some transition plans/individual educational plans (TP/IEPs), the student's strengths were missing in some areas.
- For some TP/IEPs, the student's strengths did not correspond to other statements in the TP/IEP.

Student's concerns

- In some TP/IEPs, the student's statements of concern were not relevant to the area in which they were recorded.

Evaluation results

- Some TP/IEPs did not include names of the evaluations administered during reevaluation.
- Some TP/IEPs included only the names of the evaluations administered during reevaluation, and did not include the results.

Present level of educational performance

- Some present levels of educational performance did not include information other than test scores.

Effects of the student's disability on progress in the general curriculum

- For some TP/IEPs, the statement indicating how the student's disability affects the student's involvement and progress in the general curriculum was not adequate.

Measurable annual goals

- The annual goals on most of the TP/IEPs reviewed were not measurable.
- Some annual goals addressed the student's release from incarceration, even though the release would not occur within the duration of the TP/IEP.
- Some annual goals contained information which would have been more appropriate in another goal area.
- Some TP/IEPs included annual goals which were unchanged from year to year.

Short-term objectives

- Some short-term objectives were not measurable.
- Some short-term objectives were identical for multiple instructional areas.
- Some short-term objectives were unchanged from year to year.

- One short-term objective included entry into a program over which the student had no control.

Extent of nonparticipation with nondisabled peers

- For some TP/IEPs, the statement addressing the extent of nonparticipation with nondisabled peers did not address the reason for the nonparticipation.
- For some TP/IEPs, the statement addressing the extent of nonparticipation with nondisabled peers indicated a lack of understanding of the information to be addressed in this section.

Special education services

- Some TP/IEPs did not indicate what type of direct instruction was provided.

Supplementary aids and services

- One TP/IEP did not specify the academic area in which the student needed consultation.

Student's progress toward annual goals

- Most of the TP/IEPs lacked indication of how, or how often, the student's progress toward annual goals would be measured.

Monitoring Findings

Project Monitoring

There were no findings related to projects funded under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).

Forms Review

The transition plan/individual educational plan (TP/IEP) form used by the Department of Corrections lacked the following required components.

- A statement of any individual accommodations or modifications in the administration of the assessments that are needed.
- Initiation and duration dates for modifications
- Frequency of modifications
- Location of modifications

Records Review

The results of the reviews of Individual Educational Plans for students with disabilities are listed under each facility.

Summary

The district is expected to develop a system improvement plan, in collaboration with Bureau staff, to address the findings described in this report. This plan should specify activities and strategies to address the identified findings in the following areas:

- forms review
- records review
- individual facility concerns

Following is a summary of the findings in each of the identified areas that requires an improvement plan, as well as a format for completion of the system improvement plan

Department of Corrections System Improvement Plan

The Department of Corrections is required to provide system improvement strategies to address identified findings, which must include an explanation of specific activities the district has committed to implementing, or it may consist of a broader statement describing planned strategies. This chart is an example of the System Improvement Plan that the Department of Corrections will develop. For each issue, the plan 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.

DOC/ Facility	Category	Findings	System Improvement Strategy	Evidence of Change (Including Target Date)
Department of Corrections	Forms Review	The Department must revise the TP/IEP to include a statement of individual modifications, and specify the initiation and duration dates, frequency, and location of modifications.	The Department will revise the current TP/IEP, and submit it to DOE for approval. New TP/IEP developed and given to field staff for use in April 2003.	The revised TP/IEP will be submitted to the DOE for approval by March 1, 2003
Individual Correctional Institution	Individual Education Plans and Transition Plans	Individual student IEPs must be appropriately completed with all of the required components.	Report on the baseline data of TP/IEP components provided to DOE by March 2003. DOE provides training on quality TP/IEP development in April 2003. Additional data obtained from field staff in October 2003. Report on data of TP/IEP components provided to DOE by January 2004.	85% of all TP/IEPs written in the Department of Corrections contain the required components, by January 2004.