

FINAL REPORT OF RANDOM MONITORING OF
EXCEPTIONAL STUDENT EDUCATION PROGRAMS IN

CHARLOTTE COUNTY

OCTOBER 21 - 24, 2002



FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
BUREAU OF INSTRUCTIONAL SUPPORT AND COMMUNITY SERVICES

FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION



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May 30, 2003

Mr. David Gayler, Superintendent
Charlotte County School District
1445 Education Way
Port Charlotte, Florida 33948

Dear Superintendent Gayler:

We are pleased to provide you with the Final Report of Random Monitoring of Exceptional Student Education Programs in Charlotte County. The report from our visit on October 21-24, 2002, 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 Charlotte County.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Shan Goff".

Shan Goff, Chief
Bureau of Instructional Support and Community Services

Enclosure

cc: Sue Sifrit, School Board Chairman
Members of the School Board
Michael McKinley, School Board Attorney
School Principals
Ann Eppler, ESE Director
Jim Warford, Chancellor

SHAN GOFF
Chief
Bureau of Instructional Support and Community Services

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Charlotte County School District
Random Monitoring Visit
October 21-24, 2002

Executive Summary

During the week of October 21-24, 2002, the Florida Department of Education, Bureau of Instructional Support and Community Services, conducted an on-site review of the exceptional student education programs in Charlotte County Public Schools. The purpose of the random monitoring visit was to ensure the district's compliance with federal and state laws, rules, and regulations regarding exceptional student education programs, as well as to assess the district's implementation of procedures related to requirements. In addition, the random monitoring process is intended to assist districts in the development of improvement plans related to compliance and implementation of exceptional student education programs designed to promote student educational outcomes. The results of the monitoring process are reported under ten categories or related areas that are considered to impact or contribute to procedural compliance and student progress.

Summaries of Findings

Parent Surveys, Individual Interviews, Case Studies, and Classroom Visits

General Supervision

General supervision at both the district and school level is very good and one of the strengths of the district. This district's administrative structure ensures strong support at the school level for compliance and program-related issues. At the school level, there is strong evidence of effective instructional leadership both in terms of compliance and programs. The district is to be commended for the depth and breadth of staff development activities made available to both ESE and regular education teachers regarding issues related to students with disabilities. There are no findings in this area.

Assessment

Most students with disabilities take the FCAT. All Exceptional Student Education (ESE) students take a Brigance as a pre/post test for diagnostic purposes. Accommodations are individualized for both testing and classroom needs. FCAT participation is based on Individual Educational Plan (IEP) team decisions as are diploma options. There are no findings in this area.

Behavior Management

Discipline did not appear to be a problem in the district and staff at most schools were familiar with Functional Behavior Assessments (FBA) and Behavior Intervention Plans (BIP). Both FBAs and BIPs were observed in use in case study students. Behavior intervention plans were included in IEPs when appropriate. There are no findings in this area.

Curriculum and Instruction

Most students with disabilities follow the same curriculum as regular education students. For those who don't, the district has developed an alternative curriculum for elementary, middle and high school that follows the Sunshine State Standards for Special Diploma. The district is to be commended for the amount of support provided both ESE and regular education teachers regarding materials and technical assistance as it relates to instruction for students with disabilities. There are no findings in this area.

Least Restrictive Environment

The district has a full continuum of placement options, ranging from consultative services to separate placement. It was reported that placement decisions are made at the IEP meetings with input from all stakeholders. All schools visited do a good job of mainstreaming. There are no findings in this area.

Post-School Transition

The district has good vocational and on-the-job training (OJT) programs, but has difficulty getting agency participation. The district has no interagency agreements. Such agreements may facilitate greater participation.

Pre-K Transition from Part C to Part B Programs

During the transition from Part C to B the district uses the information from the early intervention program and only tests if necessary. The district uses the High Scope curriculum, the same as the regular curriculum, with supplemental materials for children with disabilities. The district provides a range of services from inclusion to co-teaching to self-contained. The district has significant interagency involvement and meets with appropriate agencies once a month. There are no findings in this area.

Parent Involvement

All schools visited had appropriate procedures to invite parents to Individual Educational Plan (IEP) and re-evaluation meetings. Prior to each IEP and reevaluation meeting, parents are given a survey on which to provide input. At each IEP meeting, the parents are provided an assessment to be used to evaluate the meeting. The school and district analyze data from the surveys. The district is to be commended for the manner in which it involves parents and uses their input to make decisions. There are no findings in this area.

Gifted

The gifted program provides an adequate array of services for gifted students in grades K-8 and is to be commended for the additional funding provided for supplemental materials provided for the program. The district does not provide services for gifted students at the high school level.

Record and Forms Reviews

Student Record Reviews

The district is to be commended for the supervision given to teachers to assure compliance in the area of IEPs and Educational Plans (EPs). However, a federal funding adjustment was made for

one item of noncompliance for the record of one student. There were no systemic findings in the areas of IEPs and EPs.

Special Category IEP Reviews

Records relating to dismissal, ineligibility, transition from Part C to Part B, students placed in private schools by their parents, and temporary placement were reviewed for compliance. There were no findings in the area of special categories.

District Forms Reviews

Forms were submitted to Bureau staff for a review to determine compliance with federal and state laws. A finding was noted in the area of *Annual Notice of Confidentiality* that will need to be addressed immediately.

System Improvement Plan

In response to these findings, the district is required to develop a system improvement plan for submission to the Bureau. The 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 random 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 at the end of the report.

Monitoring Process

Authority

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: examine and evaluate procedures, records, and programs of exceptional student education; provide information and assistance to school districts; and otherwise assist school districts in operating effectively and efficiently (Section 229.565, Florida Statutes). In accordance with the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), the Department is responsible for ensuring that the requirements of IDEA are carried out and that each educational program for children with disabilities administered in the state meets the educational requirements of the state (Section 300.600(a)(1) and (2) of Title 34, Code of Federal Regulations).

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

Method

With guidance from a work group charged with the responsibility of recommending revisions to the Bureau's monitoring system, substantial revisions to the Bureau's monitoring practices were initiated during the 2000-2001 school year. Three types of monitoring processes were established as part of the system of monitoring and oversight. Those monitoring processes are identified as follows:

- focused monitoring
- continuous improvement/self assessment monitoring
- random monitoring

Random Monitoring

The purpose of random monitoring is to continue to ensure school districts' compliance with federal and state laws, rules, and regulations regarding exceptional student education programs and projects, as well as to assess the districts' implementation of procedures related to the requirements. Additionally, the random monitoring process is intended to assist districts in the development of improvement plans related to compliance and implementation of exceptional student services.

District Selection

In order for districts to be involved in the monitoring process in the most effective manner, a system was developed for the selection of districts for participation. After a review of the data associated with the key data indicators for focused monitoring, seven districts were selected for the focused monitoring process. The remaining districts, except those who had been involved in

monitoring activities during the previous three years, were eligible for selection for random monitoring. The selection process was based on a “random drawing.” Charlotte County School District was selected to be involved in the random monitoring process.

Off-Site Monitoring Activities

Surveys were 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 parents of gifted students. Results of the surveys will be discussed in the body of this report. Data from each of the surveys are included as appendix A.

Parent Surveys

Surveys were mailed to 4,258 parents of students with disabilities and 721 parents of gifted students, with 738 (17%) of the parents of students with disabilities and 232 (32%) of the parents of gifted students responding. Eighty-one (2%) of the surveys for parents of students with disabilities and four (<1%) of the surveys for parents of students who are gifted were returned as undeliverable. The surveys that were sent to parents were printed in both English and Spanish and included a cover letter and postage paid reply envelope.

Reviews of Student Records and District Forms

At the Department of Education (DOE), Bureau staff members conducted a compliance review of selected district forms and notices to determine if the required components were included. Bureau staff also conducted reviews of “special category” student records and procedures. The results of the review of student records, special categories, and district forms will be described in this report.

On-Site Monitoring Activities

The on-site monitoring visit occurred during the week of October 21, 2002. A team of three DOE staff and five DOE trained peer monitors conducted the on-site activities. On-site monitoring activities consisted of

- interviews with district and school level staff to gather information from multiple sources offering different points of view
- student case studies involving classroom visits to investigate classroom practices and interventions
- on-site reviews of selected student records

Prior to the on-site visit, Bureau staff notified district staff of the selection of the following schools to be visited: Crossroads Wilderness Institute, Charlotte High School, Port Charlotte Middle School, Charlotte Harbor Center School, Vineland Elementary School, and Peace River Elementary School.

Although the district is significantly lower than the state in the identification of African-American students as educable mentally handicapped (EMH) and emotionally handicapped/severely emotionally disturbed (EH/SED), the district does still have a disproportionate representation of African-American students in the EMH and EH/SED programs. The on-site selection of students for the case studies at each school was based on this

disproportionality and the disproportionate number of students in the specific learning disabled (SLD) program. Schools were asked to provide a list of students who were identified as gifted, SED, EH, EMH and/or SLD. Case study students were selected from those lists and were to include one student identified as a matrix cost factor of 254 or 255, one student identified as gifted, one student initially placed within the past twelve months, and one student randomly chosen. IEP reviews of the case study students were conducted.

Reporting Process

Exit Conference

The week after the monitoring visit, a phone conference was held with the district ESE administrator and district staff. Preliminary findings and concerns were shared at this time.

Preliminary Report

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

- Local Education Agency (LEA) profile
- parent surveys
- reviews of student records
- reviews of forms
- case studies and classroom visits
- interviews with district and school staff
- review of special category IEPs

The report is developed to include the following elements: a description of the monitoring process, background information specific to the district, reported information from monitoring activities, and a summary. Appropriate appendices with data specific to the district will accompany each report.

Final Report

In completing the system improvement section of the report, every effort should be made to link the system improvement activities for random monitoring to the district's continuous improvement monitoring plan. 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.

Within 30 days of the district's receipt of the preliminary report, the district's 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 of the district's proposed system improvement plan, a final report will be prepared for distribution, and will additionally be made available to the public via the Bureau's web site.

Background

Demographic Information

The data contained in this section of the report is a summary of the 2000-2001 data presented in the annual data profile provided to each district. Each element is reported over a period of three years and is presented with comparison data from the state and enrollment group for the district. Profiles are available from the Bureau and from individual districts upon request.

Charlotte County School District has a total school population (PK-12) of 17,302 with 20% of the students being identified as students with disabilities and 4% identified as gifted. Charlotte County is considered a “medium/small” district and is one of 14 districts in this enrollment group. Of the total Charlotte school population, 84% are White; 8% are Black; 4% are Hispanic; 1% are Asian/Pacific Islander; and 2% are multiracial. Of the students with disabilities, 53% are White; 29% are Black; and 16% are Hispanic. Forty-one percent of the district’s population is eligible for free/reduced lunch.

Charlotte County School District is comprised of ten elementary schools, four middle schools, four high schools, one center school, one childcare program, one technical center, and two DJJ facilities.

A review of the data related to the Florida Comprehensive Achievement Test (FCAT) for 2000-2001 indicates that the rate of participation for students with disabilities at the middle and high school level is above the enrollment group and the state average. The rates of participation are 75% in math and 74% in reading at the high school level while the rates for the enrollment group are 60% and for the state are 59% in both reading and math. The rate of participation at the elementary level is comparative with the state and enrollment group rate. At the elementary level, participation rates for students in Charlotte County are 85% in math and 83% in reading while the state average is 85% in both math and reading. While 19% of fifth grade students with disabilities scored at level three or above in math, the rate for eighth grade math increased to 27% and the rate for tenth grade decreased to 19%. In reading, the percentage of students with disabilities who scored at a level three or above was 31% in fourth grade, decreased to 19% in eighth grade and decreased again at tenth grade to 6%.

Charlotte County School District reports a standard diploma graduation rate of 76% for students with disabilities, compared to the enrollment group average of 50% and the state average of 51%. It also reports a lower retention rate for students with disabilities (2%) than the enrollment group (6%) and the state (7%). The dropout rate during the 2000-01 school year for students with disabilities in Charlotte County was 5%, the same as the enrollment group and state average.

A review of the data on student membership by selected disabilities indicates that the district has a disproportionate number of students identified as Specific Learning Disabled (SLD). Data indicates a higher rate (12%) of total population identified as SLD compared to the state rate of 7%. Data also indicates that 61% of all students with disabilities in Charlotte County are identified as SLD compared to the state rate of 45%.

Reporting of Information

Sources of Information

Data for this report are compiled from a variety of sources accessed before and during the on-site visit including:

- review of district forms
- surveys returned by 738 parents of students with disabilities
- surveys returned by 232 parents of students identified as gifted
- fifty individual district and school staff interviews
- sixteen Individual Educational Plan (IEP) reviews
- eight Educational Plan (EP) reviews
- review of fifteen special category IEPs

The data generated through the surveys, individual interviews, case studies, and classroom visits are summarized beginning on page 9, while the results from the review of student records and district forms are presented beginning on page 13 of the report. This report provides conclusions with regard to the areas related to the educational benefit for children and compliance with federal and state guidelines. These areas include:

- general supervision
- assessment
- behavior management
- curriculum and instruction
- least restrictive environment
- post-school transition
- Pre-K, transition from Part C to B programs
- parent involvement
- gifted

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

Parent Surveys, Individual Interviews, Case Studies, and Classroom Visits

General Supervision

District and regional support is readily available to support school personnel with few exceptions regarding program and compliance issues related to exceptional student education. The district is to be commended for its unique administrative structure. There are only two uniquely district

level positions. The rest of the district level support are site-based or are assigned to a few schools. This can account for the high level of compliance and monitoring of compliance and programmatic technical assistance that was reported at each school visited. It may also account for the reason that school-based staff appeared to be knowledgeable of their compliance responsibilities.

With regard to the gifted program, committees are developed to assist in making decisions on gifted programming and procedures. Parents, teachers of the gifted, administrators and district staff are on the committees that meet approximately five times per year. Current data and tracking of program initiatives is ongoing at the district level. Staff development is designed from the initiatives identified from the task force committee. Additional funding for gifted teachers comes from the county office.

The district uses a three tier monitoring process – 1) School Liaisons monitor the intervention assistance team; 2) staffing specialists monitor the child study team and IEP meetings; 3) district level staff monitor policy and procedures. The district makes extensive use of data to track processes from prereferral to placement and monitor student progress/discipline. Staffing specialists meet twice monthly to review policies and procedures. School Liaisons meet monthly to discuss programmatic issues. The district has a task force that meets to address programmatic issues. They evaluate data, pilot programs, and make recommendations to the superintendent who makes recommendations to the school board.

With regard to Pre-K, the district Pre-K staffing specialist serves on a team which meets monthly to discuss issues regarding Part C to B children. The district does have an excellent program to transition from Part C to Part B.

Interviews with school-based staff revealed that, in most schools, monitoring is the responsibility of the district liaison, principal and guidance counselor. Most schools have a leadership team that conducts these monitoring activities. The district liaison was very available to school based teams. Leadership was very strong in each of the schools visited, both in terms of monitoring and instruction.

Training at the school level included:

- New special diploma curriculum
- TEAM restraint
- TEACH material for students with Autism
- Behavior management
- Student training on behavior management
- Computer technology
- Creating Independence *through* Student-Owned Strategies (CRISS) training
- Direct Reading Assessment (DRA)
- Cultural training
- Graphic organizers
- Small group instruction

In summary, general supervision at both the district and school level is very good and one of the strengths of the district. This district's administrative structure ensures strong support at the school level for compliance and program related issues. At the school level there is strong evidence of effective instructional leadership both in terms of compliance and programs. The district is to be commended for the depth and breadth of staff development activities made available to both ESE and regular education teachers regarding issues related to students with disabilities.

Assessment

The district ensures that most students with disabilities take the FCAT. Decisions related to participation in the FCAT are made at IEP meetings and are not based on category of placement. The Brigance is the alternate assessment used by the district. Most elementary education students take the FCAT. All students with disabilities take the Brigance as a pre/post test for diagnostic purposes even if they take the FCAT.

The district reported that accommodations for the FCAT include all allowable accommodations prescribed by the particular test being given. Additional accommodations are provided in the classroom. Accommodation pages are provided to the regular education teachers.

Interviews and classroom observations in the schools revealed that at the Department of Juvenile Justice (DJJ) facility, FCAT decisions are determined at intake meetings. The school does monthly testing with Standardized Test for Assessment of Reading (STAR). With regard to the elementary and high schools visited, FCAT participation is based on IEP team decisions, as is the diploma option. It should be noted that at Vineland Elementary School, several students identified as Specific Learning Disability (SLD) did not take the reading portion of the FCAT because the IEP team determined that the test would not yield any significant results and frustration for the students would have been too high. Based on classroom visits, interviews, and records reviewed, accommodations are individualized for both testing and classroom instruction.

In summary, most students with disabilities take the FCAT. All ESE students take the Brigance as a pre/post test for diagnostic purposes. Accommodations are individualized for both testing and classroom needs. FCAT participation is based on IEP team decisions as are diploma options.

Behavior Management

Discipline did not appear to be a problem in the district and staff at most schools were familiar with Functional Behavior Assessments and Behavior Intervention Plans. The district reported that training was provided on FBAs and BIPs the week prior to the monitoring visit. Both FBAs and BIPs were observed in use in case study students. Behavior intervention plans were included in IEPs when appropriate.

In summary there were no findings in this area.

Curriculum and Instruction

All students have access to general education curriculum and supplemental curriculum. The district developed alternative curriculum for elementary, middle and high schools. Accommodations for students with disabilities were evident in all schools.

School level interviews and classroom observations revealed appropriate curriculum. At the DJJ facility, it was observed that there were multiple levels of academic instruction to meet both diploma options and IEP goals of the students. Students at the elementary and high schools follow the same curriculum as regular education students, sometimes with a different delivery model. In many schools, an accommodations handbook is provided to regular education teachers which includes students' accommodations pages from their IEPs. Implementation of the accommodations is monitored by school-based administrative staff. At each school visited, both regular education and ESE teachers interviewed noted that they had good support from school and district administration in terms of materials, technical assistance, and instructional leadership.

In summary, most students with disabilities follow the same curriculum as regular education students. For those who don't, the district has developed an alternative curriculum for elementary, middle and high school that follows the Sunshine State Standards for Special Diploma. The district is to be commended for the amount of support provided both ESE and regular education teachers regarding materials and technical assistance as it relates to instruction for students with disabilities.

Least Restrictive Environment

The district has a full continuum of placement options, ranging from consultative services to separate placement. It was reported that placement decisions are made at the IEP meetings with input from all stakeholders.

Gifted students at the elementary and middle school levels have a range of services from pullout to full-time programs. Gifted students at the high school level have access to advanced placement and honors classes.

School level interviews and classroom observations revealed appropriate placements. At the DJJ facility, although all students are served in a mainstream class, ESE students are working on different curriculum. Diploma options are determined at intake meetings based on credit history, intake scores and previous placement. At the secondary schools, academic performance factors in placement and the IEP drives placement decisions. All schools visited do a good job of mainstreaming. At the Center School, they use alternative education students as mentors for students with profound disabilities, have students with severe emotional disabilities move from class to class and have teachers move from class to class for those students who cannot be moved.

In summary, the district has a full continuum of placement options, ranging from consultative services to separate placement. It was reported that placement decisions are made at the IEP meetings with input from all stakeholders. All schools visited do a good job of mainstreaming.

Post-School Transition

The district reported that it has trouble with agency participation at transition IEP meetings. The district has no interagency agreements. At the high schools visited, transition had begun at the 8th grade. Agencies were invited. The high school had good student participation at

IEP/transition meetings. A workforce council was developed, as was a school to career committee. There was strong evidence of on-the-job training (OJT) and vocational education opportunities for students with disabilities. Of particular note were the multiple exit points from the vocational education programs.

In summary, the district has good vocational and OJT programs, but has difficulty getting agency participation. The district has no interagency agreements. Such agreements may facilitate greater participation.

Pre-K Transition from Part C to Part B Programs

During the transition from Part C to B the district uses the information from the early intervention program and only tests if necessary. The district uses the High Scope curriculum, the same as the regular curriculum, with supplemental materials for children with disabilities. The district provides a range of services from inclusion to co-teaching to self-contained. The district has significant interagency involvement and meets with appropriate agencies once a month.

In summary there are no findings in this area.

Parent Involvement

All schools had appropriate procedures to invite parents to IEP and re-evaluation meetings. Most schools reported good parental participation. In general, it appeared that parents played a major part in the decision-making process when they were at the IEP meeting to address placement and diploma options. The parent notice of meeting includes a survey on which parents can provide input if not able to attend IEP or reevaluation meetings. At each IEP meeting the parents are provided an assessment to be used to evaluate the meeting. The school and district analyzes data from these surveys.

With regard to Pre-K transition, monthly meetings are held. If the parents do not attend, someone goes to the home to give the parents the information.

Interviews and observations at the schools revealed strong parental involvement. Of particular note, at Charlotte High School it was reported that there was approximately 75% attendance at BIP meetings and 80-85% attendance at IEP meetings. At Charlotte Harbor School, telephone calls, letters, district parent input forms, and home visits were all reported to be regular methods of parental involvement. The Program Staffing Specialist reported that parent classes are available for parents in order to learn to use behavioral strategies at home.

In summary, all schools visited had appropriate procedures to invite parents to IEP and re-evaluation meetings. Prior to each IEP and reevaluation meeting, parents are given a survey on which to provide input. At each IEP meeting the parents are provided an assessment to be used to evaluate the meeting. The school and district analyze data from the surveys. The district is to be commended for the manner in which it involves parents and uses their input to make decisions.

Gifted

With regard to the gifted program all gifted students take the FCAT. For gifted students to qualify, the district first checks FCAT scores. The screening instrument is the Kaufman Brief Intelligence Test (KBIT). Students must score 124. They are then referred to psychological services for additional testing. The district uses the old Plan B but does not look at race. For services the district provides the following:

- Grades K-3: enrichment pullout with instructional units to supplement general curriculum
- Grades 4-5: two full-time programs in two schools; two schools on year round school have a pullout program
- Grades 6-8: two full-time programs in two schools with electives taken with general education students
- there is no high school gifted (only AP and honors)

The district is to be commended for the additional money expended for supplemental materials for students identified as gifted.

In summary, the gifted program provides an adequate array of services for gifted students in grades K-8 and is to be commended for the additional funding provided for supplemental materials provided for the program. The district does not provide services for gifted students at the high school level.

Student Record and District Form Reviews

Student Record Reviews: Students with Disabilities

Bureau staff reviewed a total of 16 student records of students with disabilities, including case study students. According to random monitoring guidelines, at least one student record identified as a cost factor 254 or 255 from each school was selected for review. A matrix review for each of those students was also conducted. The records were reviewed in the schools during the on-site visits. Of the 16 IEPs reviewed, all were current at the time of the review. Compliance with the requirements of federal and state laws in the area of reevaluation was noted on all IEPs reviewed.

- One record was reviewed at Port Charlotte Middle School that lacked a majority of measurable annual goals. The IEP team for this student has already been reconvened and the revised goals were submitted to the Bureau.
- Non-compliance items were found during the IEP review of one student at Charlotte High School that will result in adjustment in the district's federal funding. Consent for initial placement was not signed by the parent/guardian. It was signed by a CMS caseworker.

A total of 39 records were reviewed: 16 IEPs, eight EPs, and 15 special category records. Some of the records contained areas of noncompliance that did not appear to be systemic in nature. At

daily debriefings and the exit conference, these minor issues were not addressed. These findings are as follows:

- parent notice not provided (one record)
- report of progress not reported to parents as often as progress reported to parents of nondisabled students (three records)
- lack of appropriate signatures on IEP (Interpreter of Instructional Implications-one record)
- only one benchmark/objective provided for a goal (one record)
- lack of appropriate transition components (two records)

In summary, there were no systemic findings in the area of IEPs.

Student Record Reviews: Gifted

Bureau staff reviewed a total of eight records of students identified as gifted, including case study students. There were no compliance findings in the eight EPs reviewed.

District Forms Review

Forms were submitted to Bureau staff for a review to determine compliance with federal and state laws. Findings were noted on one of the forms. The district was notified of the specific findings via a separate letter dated September 17, 2002. An explanation of the specific findings may be found in appendix D.

- *Parent Notification of Individual Educational Plan (IEP) Meeting*
- *IEP Forms*
- *Notice and Consent for Initial Placement*
- *Informed Notice and Consent for Evaluation*
- *Informed Notice of Reevaluation*
- *Notification of Change of Placement*
- *Notification of Change of FAPE*
- *Informed Notice of Refusal*
- *Informed Notice of Dismissal*
- *Notice: Not Eligible for Exceptional Student Placement*
- *Documentation of Staffing/Eligibility Determination*
- *Summary of Procedural Safeguards*
- *Annual Notice of Confidentiality**

* indicates findings that require immediate attention

Special Category Record Reviews

Bureau staff reviewed a total of fifteen special category records. There were no findings in the special category records.

Summary

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

- General Supervision
- Assessment
- Behavior Management
- Curriculum and Instruction
- Least Restrictive Environment
- Post-School Transition
- Pre-K, Transition from Part C to Part B Programs
- Parent Involvement
- Gifted
- Student Record Reviews
- Special Category Record Reviews
- District Forms Review

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.

Charlotte County School District Random Monitoring System Improvement Plan

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

| Category | Findings | ESE | All | System Improvement Strategy | Evidence of Change (Including target date) |
|-------------------------------|---|------------|------------|------------------------------------|---|
| General Supervision | 1. There were no findings in this area. | | | | |
| Assessment | 2. There were no findings in this area. | | | | |
| Behavior/ Discipline | 3. There were no findings in this area. | | | | |
| Curriculum and Instruction | 4. There were no findings in this area. | | | | |
| Least Restrictive Environment | 5. There were no findings in this area. | | | | |

| Category | Findings | ESE | All | System Improvement Strategy | Evidence of Change (Including target date) |
|------------------------------------|---|-----|-----|--|---|
| Post-School Transition | 6. There is a need for effective transition services for students with disabilities, including interagency agreements. | X | | Develop an interagency agreement with appropriate agency(ies) | Copies of interagency agreement target date: 3/21/02 |
| Pre-K/ Part C to Part B Transition | 7. There were no findings in this area. | | | | |
| Parent Involvement | 8. There were no findings in this area. | | | | |
| Gifted | 9. There were no findings in this area. | | | | |
| Records and Forms Reviews | 10. The IEP team was required to reconvene for one student due to lack of measurable annual goals and objectives. This finding has been addressed at the time of this report. | X | | Meeting was reconvened, measurable goals and objectives were developed. | Copies provided to DOE. November, 2002 |
| | 11. There was a funding adjustment for one student record due to the lack of parent or surrogate parent consent for initial placement. | X | | Review surrogate parent and guardianship procedures with school. Reconvene meeting to obtain consent from parent/guardian. | Copy of Eligibility and Placement form with signature. Target date: 3/21/03 |

| Category | Findings | ESE | All | System Improvement Strategy | Evidence of Change (Including target date) |
|------------------------------------|---|-----|-----|--|--|
| Records and Forms Reviews (con't.) | 12. The form used to provide <i>Annual Notice of Confidentiality</i> must be revised to meet compliance to federal guidelines | | X | Form will be revised to meet compliance. | Copy of form target date: 3/21/03 |

Appendix A- Survey Results

**Charlotte County School District
Random Monitoring Report
Parent Survey Results**

Responding to the need to increase the involvement of parents and families of students with disabilities in evaluating the educational services provided to their children, the Florida Department of Education, Bureau of Instructional Support and Community Services contracted with the University of Miami to develop and administer a parent survey in conjunction with the Bureau's district monitoring activities. In 1999, the parent survey was administered in 12 districts; in 2000, it was administered in 15 districts and two special schools; and, in 2001, it was administered in four districts.

In conjunction with the 2002 Charlotte County monitoring activities, the parent survey was sent to parents of the 4,258 students with disabilities for whom complete addresses were provided by the district. A total of 738 parents (PK, n=44; K-5, n=328; 6-8, n=204; 9-12, n=162) representing 17% of the sample, returned the survey. Eighty-one surveys were returned as undeliverable, representing 2% of the sample.

Parents responded "yes" or "no" to each survey item, indicating that they either agreed or disagreed with the statement. The district response for each item was calculated as the percentage of respondents who agreed with the item.

| | % Yes |
|---|--------------|
| 1. Overall, I am satisfied with the exceptional education services my child receives. | 74% |
| 2. Overall, I am satisfied with my child's academic progress. | 70% |
| 3. Overall, I am satisfied with the amount of time my child spends with regular education students. | 77% |
| 4. Overall, I am satisfied with the effect of exceptional student education on my child's self-esteem. | 72% |
| 5. Overall, I am satisfied with the level of knowledge and experience of school personnel. | 74% |
| 6. Overall, I am satisfied with the way I am treated by school personnel. | 86% |
| 7. Overall, I am satisfied with the way special education teachers and regular education teachers work together. | 75% |
| 8. Overall, I am satisfied with how quickly services are implemented following an IEP (Individualized Educational Plan) decision. | 76% |
| 9. My child is usually happy at school. | 84% |
| 10. My child spends most of the school day involved in productive activities. | 80% |
| 11. My child has friends at school. | 94% |

**Charlotte County School District
2002 Parent Survey Report
Students with Disabilities**

| | % Yes |
|---|--------------|
| 12. My child is learning skills that will be useful later on in life. | 82% |
| 13. My child is aiming for a standard diploma. | 87% |
| 14. At my child's IEP meetings we have talked about ways that my child could spend time with students in regular classes. | 61% |
| 15. At my child's IEP meetings we have talked about whether my child needed services beyond the regular school year. | 51% |
| 16. At my child's IEP meetings we have talked about which diploma my child may receive.* | 44% |
| 17. At my child's IEP meetings we have talked about the requirements for different diplomas.* | 34% |
| 18. At my child's IEP meetings we have talked about whether my child would take the FCAT (Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test). | 61% |
| 19. At my child's IEP meetings we have talked about whether my child should get accommodations (special testing conditions), for example, extra time. | 66% |
| 20. My child's teachers set appropriate goals for my child. | 85% |
| 21. My child's teachers expect my child to succeed. | 93% |
| 22. My child's teachers give homework that meets my child's needs. | 72% |
| 23. My child's teachers call me or send me notes about my child. | 71% |
| 24. My child's teachers are available to speak with me. | 90% |
| 25. My child's teachers give students with disabilities extra time or different assignments, if needed. | 79% |
| 26. My child's school wants to hear my ideas. | 76% |
| 27. My child's school encourages me to participate in my child's education. | 83% |
| 28. My child's school informs me about all of the services available to my child. | 65% |
| 29. My child's school addresses my child's individual needs. | 77% |
| 30. My child's school makes sure I understand my child's IEP. | 84% |
| 31. My child's school explains what I can do if I want to make changes to my child's IEP. | 68% |
| 32. My child's school sends me information written in a way I understand. | 78% |
| 33. My child's school sends me information about activities and workshops for parents. | 55% |

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

**Charlotte County School District
2002 Parent Survey Report
Students with Disabilities**

| | % Yes |
|--|--------------|
| 34. My child's school encourages acceptance of students with disabilities. | 81% |
| 35. My child's school involves students with disabilities in clubs, sports, or other activities. | 69% |
| 36. My child's school provides students with disabilities updated books and materials. | 74% |
| 37. My child's school offers a variety of vocational courses, such as computers and business technology.* | 67% |
| 38. My child's school provides information to students about education and jobs after high school.* | 45% |
| 39. My child's school does all it can to keep students from dropping out of school. | 77% |
| 40. My child's school offers students with disabilities the classes they need to graduate with a standard diploma. | 78% |
| 41. I have attended one or more meetings about my child during this school year. | 93% |
| 42. I participate in school activities with my child. | 75% |
| 43. I am a member of the PTA/PTO. | 16% |
| 44. I belong to an organization for parents of students with disabilities. | 10% |
| 45. I have used parent support services in my area. | 20% |
| 46. I am comfortable talking about my child with school staff. | 92% |
| 47. I attend School Advisory Committee meetings concerning school improvement. | 23% |

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

**Charlotte County School District
2002 Parent Survey Report
Students Identified as Gifted**

Responding to the need to increase the involvement of parents and families of students identified as gifted in evaluating the educational services provided to their children, the Florida Department of Education, Bureau of Instructional Support and Community Services contracted with the University of Miami to develop and administer a parent survey in conjunction with the Bureau's district monitoring activities.

In conjunction with the 2002 Charlotte County monitoring activities, the parent survey was sent to parents of the 721 students identified as gifted for whom complete addresses were provided by the district. A total of 232 parents (K-5, n=86; 6-8, n=87; 9-12, n=59) representing 32% of the sample, returned the survey. Four surveys were returned as undeliverable, representing less than 1% of the sample.

Parents responded "yes" or "no" to each survey item, indicating that they either agreed or disagreed with the statement. The district response for each item was calculated as the percentage of respondents who agreed with the item.

| | % Yes | |
|--|----------------------------|---------------------------|
| 1. Overall, I am satisfied with the gifted services my child receives. | 79% | |
| 2. Overall, I am satisfied with my child's academic progress. | 85% | |
| 3. Overall, I am satisfied with the effect of gifted services on my child's self-esteem. | 83% | |
| 4. Overall, I am satisfied with how quickly services were implemented following an initial request for evaluation. | 74% | |
| 5. Overall, I am satisfied with gifted teachers' subject area knowledge. | 87% | |
| 6. Overall, I am satisfied with regular teachers' subject area knowledge. | 84% | |
| 7. Overall, I am satisfied with gifted teachers' expertise in teaching students identified as gifted. | 79% | |
| 8. Overall, I am satisfied with regular teachers' expertise in teaching students identified as gifted. | 62% | |
| | Regular Classes | Gifted Classes |
| 9. My child is usually happy at school. | 85% | 89% |
| 10. My child has his/her social and emotional needs met at school. | 77% | 83% |
| 11. My child has friends at school. | 95% | 96% |
| 12. My child is academically challenged at school. | 61% | 88% |

**Charlotte County School District
2002 Parent Survey Report
Students Identified as Gifted**

| | Regular Teachers | Gifted Teachers |
|---|-----------------------------|------------------------------|
| 13. My child has creative outlets at school. | 80% | 86% |
| 14. My child is learning skills that will be useful later on in life. | 89% | 93% |
| 15. My child's teachers set appropriate goals for my child. | 77% | 91% |
| 16. My child's teachers expect appropriate behavior. | 94% | 98% |
| 17. My child's teachers call me or send me notes about my child. | 47% | 55% |
| 18. My child's teachers are available to speak with me. | 91% | 91% |
| 19. My child's teachers give homework that meets my child's needs. | 71% | 84% |
| 20. My child's teachers provide coursework that includes representation of diverse ethnic, racial and cultural materials. | 86% | 91% |
| 21. My child's teachers have access to the latest information and technology. | 84% | 88% |
| 22. My child's teachers relate coursework to students' future educational and professional pursuits. | 69% | 78% |
| | Home School | 2nd School |
| 23. The school wants to hear my ideas. | 67% | 66% |
| 24. The school implements my ideas. | 47% | 40% |
| 25. The school treats me with respect. | 92% | 93% |
| 26. The school encourages me to participate in my child's education. | 75% | 81% |
| 27. The school addresses my child's individual needs. | 64% | 69% |
| 28. The school provides students identified as gifted with appropriate books and materials. | 76% | 87% |
| 29. The school informs me about all of the services available to my child. | 55% | 59% |
| 30. The school sends me information written in a way I understand. | 84% | 89% |
| 31. The school sends me information about activities and workshops for parents. | 48% | 52% |
| 32. The school involves me in developing my child's Educational Plan (EP or IEP). | 46% | 50% |
| 33. The school makes sure I understand my child's EP or IEP. | 51% | 63% |
| 34. The school explains what I can do if I want to make changes to my child's EP or IEP. | 45% | 38% |

**Charlotte County School District
2002 Parent Survey Report
Students Identified as Gifted**

| | % Yes |
|---|--------------|
| 35. Students identified as gifted have the option of taking a variety of vocational courses. | 75% |
| 36. Students identified as gifted are provided with information about options for education after high school. | 74% |
| 37. Students identified as gifted are provided with career counseling. | 72% |
| 38. Students identified as gifted are provided with the opportunity to participate in externships or mentorships. | 62% |
| 39. I have attended one or more meetings about my child during this school year. | 78% |
| 40. I participate in school activities with my child. | 82% |
| 41. I am a member of the PTA/PTO. | 31% |
| 42. I belong to an organization for parents of students identified as gifted. | 4% |
| 43. I have used parent support services in my area. | 7% |
| 44. I attend School Advisory Committee meetings concerning school improvement. | 25% |

Appendix B- ESE Monitoring Team Members

**Charlotte County School District
Random Monitoring Visit
ESE Monitoring Team Members**

October 21-24, 2002

Department of Education Staff

Iris Anderson, Program Specialist IV, ESE Program Administration and Quality Assurance
Gail Best, Program Specialist IV, ESE Program Administration and Quality Assurance
Lee Clark, Program Specialist IV, ESE Program Administration and Quality Assurance

Peer Monitors

Charles Dimter, Pinellas County Schools
Kathy Nelson, Highlands County Schools
Scott Peters, Alachua County Schools
Joanne Rosen, Miami-Dade County Schools
Deborah Tanguay, Palm Beach County Schools

Appendix C- Glossary of Acronyms

Glossary of Acronyms

| | |
|-----------|---|
| BIP | Behavior Intervention Plan |
| Bureau | Bureau of Instructional Support & Community Services |
| CRISS | Creating Independence <i>through</i> Student-Owned Strategies |
| CST | Child Study Team |
| DJJ | Department of Juvenile Justice |
| DOE | Department of Education |
| DRA | Direct Reading Assessment |
| EH | Emotionally Handicapped |
| EMH | Educable Mentally Handicapped |
| EP | Educational Plan |
| ESE | Exceptional Student Education |
| ESY | Extended School Year |
| FAPE | Free Appropriate Public Education |
| FBA | Functional Behavioral Assessment |
| FCAT | Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test |
| IDEA | Individuals with Disabilities Education Act |
| IEP | Individual Educational Plan |
| KBIT | Kaufman Brief Intelligence Test |
| LEA | Local Education Agency |
| OJT | On-the-job Training |
| PMH | Profoundly Mentally Handicapped |
| Pre-K(PK) | Prekindergarten |
| SED | Severely Emotionally Disturbed |
| SLD | Specific Learning Disability |
| STAR | Standardized Test for Assessment of Reading |
| TMH | Trainable Mentally Handicapped |
| VE | Varying Exceptionalities |

Appendix D- Forms Review

**Charlotte County School District
Random Monitoring Report
Forms Review**

This forms review was completed as a component of the random monitoring visit conducted on October 21-24, 2002. The following district forms were compared to the requirements of applicable State Board of Education rules, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), applicable sections of Part 300, Code of Federal Regulations, and the Monitoring Work Papers/Source Book for 2002. 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.

Parent Notification of Individual Educational Plan (IEP) Meeting

Form Notice of Staffing and/or IEP meeting

Source Book/Work Paper - IEP

Title 34 of the Code of Federal Regulation Section 300.345

This form contains the components for compliance.

Individual Educational Plan (IEP) Meeting

Form MIS-9033-42 Individual Educational Planning Committee Report

Source Book/Work Paper - IEP

Title 34 of the Code of Federal Regulation Section 300.347

After reviewing a copy of the form, the Bureau received a revised form stamped “draft.” This review was completed for the draft version. The draft version contains the components for compliance.

Notice and Consent for Initial Placement

Form MIS-9033-27 Informed Notice of Eligibility and Placement (draft)

Source Book/Work Paper - Program Areas

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

This form contains the components for compliance.

Informed Notice and Consent for Evaluation

Form MIS-9033-410 Informed Notice and Parent Consent for Formal Individual Evaluation

Source Book/Work Paper - Evaluation

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

This form contains the components for compliance.

The following comments are made in regard to this form.

- The notice requirements state that there must be a description of any options the district considered and the reasons why these options were rejected (e.g. Title 1, drop-out-prevention, ESOL, tutoring). The current form includes other “options” under the section that addresses “other factors,” which is also a required component of the notice. It is recommended that at the next printing of this form, the section be changed to “other options” considered, and the current line “other” be expanded to “other factors” to meet the requirement of listing “other factors relevant to the district’s proposal.”

Informed Notice of Reevaluation

Form MIS-9033-53 *Informed Notice and Parent Consent for Individual Re-Evaluation*
Source Book/Work Paper - Reevaluation
Title 34 of the Code of Federal Regulation Sections 300.503 and 300.505

This form contains the components for compliance.

Notification of Change in Placement (FAPE) Form

MIS-9033-27 *Informed Notice of Eligibility and Placement (draft)*
MIS 9033-42 (Insert) Individualized Educational Plan
Source Book/Work Paper - IEP
Title 34 of the Code of Federal Regulation Section 300.503

These forms contain the components for compliance.

Informed Notice of Refusal

Form MIS 9033-113 *Informed Notice of Refusal*
Source Book/Work Paper - IEP
Title 34 of the Code of Federal Regulation Section 300.503

This form contains the components for compliance.

Notice: Not Eligible for Exceptional Student Placement

Form MIS-9033-27 *Informed Notice of Eligibility and Placement (draft)*
Source Book/Work Paper - Ineligible
Title 34 of the Code of Federal Regulation Section 300.503

This form contains the components for compliance.

Notice: Informed Notice of Dismissal

Form MIS-9033-27 *Informed Notice of Eligibility and Placement (draft)*
Source Book/Work Paper - Dismissal
Title 34 of the Code of Federal Regulation Section 300.503

This form contains the components for compliance.

Documentation of Staffing/Eligibility Determination

Form MIS-9033-27 *Informed Notice of Eligibility and Placement (draft)*
Source Book/Work Paper - Staffing, IEP
Title 34 of the Code of Federal Regulation Section 300.534

This form contains the components for compliance.

Confidentiality of Information

Form *Guidelines for Education Records of Pupils and Adult Students*
Source Book/Work Paper - Confidentiality of Information
Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act, Part 99 Title 34 of the Code of Federal Regulation Title 34 of the Code of Federal Regulation Section 300.503

The district provided two publications, both entitled “Guidelines for Education Records of Pupils and Adult Students.” One was a pamphlet, the other a booklet with expanded coverage. Both publications were reviewed.

The following must be addressed.

- The following required component was not listed in the pamphlet but was found in the booklet: “If the educational agency has a policy of disclosing educational records to school officials determined to have a limited educational interest, the specification for determining who constitutes a school official and what constitutes a legitimate educational interest is specified.”
- Neither publication contains the required component that informs parents that they have a “right to file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Education concerning alleged failures by the district to comply with the requirements.”

The procedural safeguard form was reviewed and is in compliance.