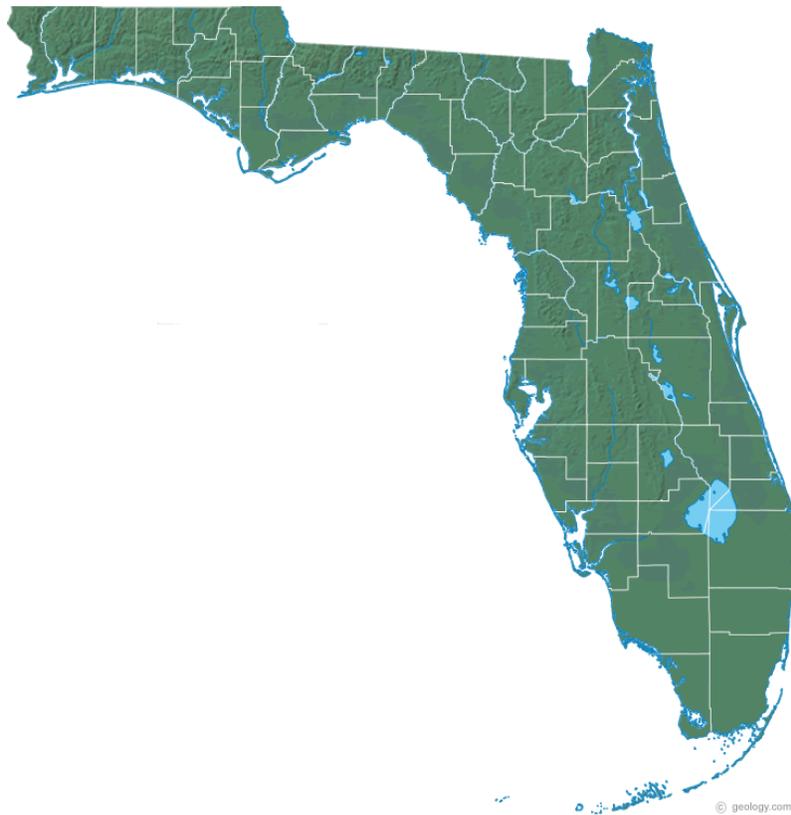


Glades County School District

Final Report: On-Site Monitoring

Exceptional Student Education Programs

February 23-24, 2010



Bureau of Exceptional Education and Student Services
Florida Department of Education

This publication is available through the Bureau of Exceptional Education and Student Services, Florida Department of Education. For additional information on this publication, or for a list of available publications, contact the Clearinghouse Information Center, Bureau of Exceptional Education and Student Services, Division of Public Schools, Florida Department of Education, Room 628 Turlington Building, Tallahassee, Florida 32399-0400.

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April 12, 2010

Mr. Wayne Aldrich, Superintendent
Glades County School District
400 10th Street
Moore Haven, FL 33471

Dear Superintendent Aldrich:

We are pleased to provide you with the *Final Report of On-Site Monitoring of Exceptional Student Education Programs* for Glades County School District. This report was developed by integrating multiple sources of information related to our on-site visit on February 23–24, 2010, including student record reviews, interviews with school and district staff, and classroom observations. The final report will be posted on the Bureau of Exceptional Education and Student Services' Web site and may be accessed at <http://www.fldoe.org/ese/mon-home.asp>.

The Glades County School District was selected for an on-site monitoring visit due to a pattern of poor performance over time as indicated in the State Performance Plan (SPP) indicators one and two: percent of youth with individual educational plans (IEPs) graduating from high school with a regular diploma and percent of youth with IEPs dropping out of high school. Ms. Janice Foster, Exceptional Student Education (ESE) Director, and her staff were very helpful during the Bureau's preparation for the visit and the on-site monitoring. In addition, the principal and other staff members at the school that was visited welcomed and assisted Bureau staff members. Although the district demonstrated promising practices relating to improving the graduation rate and decreasing the dropout rate, the Bureau's on-site monitoring activities identified some discrepancies that require corrective action.

BAMBI J. LOCKMAN

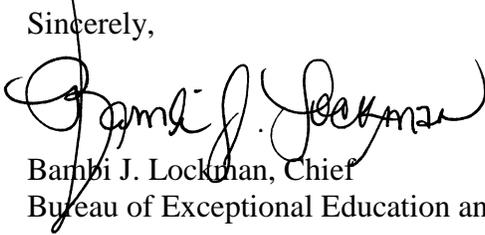
Chief

Bureau of Exceptional Education and Student Services

Mr. Wayne Aldrich
April 12, 2010
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Thank you for your commitment to improving services for exceptional education for students in Glades County. If there are any questions regarding this final report, please contact Patricia Howell, Program Director, Monitoring and Compliance, at (850) 245-0476 or via electronic mail at Patricia.Howell@fldoe.org.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Bambi J. Lockman". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "B" and "L".

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

cc: Janice Foster
Kim C. Komisar
Patricia Howell
Jill Snelson

**Glades County School District
Final Report: On-Site Monitoring
Exceptional Student Education Programs**

February 23–24, 2010

**Bureau of Exceptional Education and Student Services
Florida Department of Education**

Glades County School District

Final Report: On-Site Monitoring Exceptional Student Education Programs February 23–24, 2009

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Glades County School District

On-Site Monitoring Exceptional Student Education Programs February 23–24, 2009

Final Report

Authority

The Florida Department of Education (FDOE), Bureau of Exceptional Education and Student Services (Bureau), in carrying out its roles of leadership, resource allocation, technical assistance, monitoring, and evaluation, is required to oversee the performance of district school boards in the enforcement of all laws and rules (sections 1001.03(8) and 1008.32, Florida Statutes [F.S.]). In fulfilling this requirement, the Bureau conducts monitoring activities of the exceptional student education (ESE) programs provided by district school boards, in accordance with sections 1001.42 and 1003.57, F.S. Through these monitoring activities, the Bureau examines and evaluates procedures, records, and ESE programs; provides information and assistance to school districts; and otherwise assists school districts in operating effectively and efficiently. One purpose of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) is to assess and ensure the effectiveness of efforts to educate children with disabilities (section 300.1(d) of Title 34, Code of Federal Regulations [34 CFR §300.1(d)]). In accordance with IDEA, FDOE is responsible for ensuring that its requirements are carried out and that each educational program for children with disabilities administered in the state meets the educational requirements of the state (34 CFR §§300.120, 300.149, and 300.600). The monitoring system reflects FDOE's commitment to providing assistance, service, and accountability to school districts and is designed to emphasize improved educational outcomes for students while continuing to conduct those activities necessary to ensure compliance with applicable federal laws and regulations and state statutes and rules.

Monitoring Process

District Selection

For the 2009–10 school year, the Bureau's ESE monitoring system was comprised of basic (Level 1) and focused (Level 2) self-assessment activities as well as on-site visits conducted by Bureau staff (Level 3). This system was developed to ensure that school districts comply with all applicable laws, regulations, and state statutes and rules while focusing on improving student outcomes related to State Performance Plan (SPP) indicators.

All districts were required to complete Level 1 activities. In addition, those districts that were newly identified for targeted planning or activities by the Bureau SPP indicator teams for one or more selected SPP indicators were required to conduct Level 2 self-assessment activities using indicator-specific protocols. Districts selected for Level 3 monitoring conducted Level 1 and

Level 2 activities as applicable. Selection of districts for consideration for Level 3 monitoring was based on analysis of the districts' data, with the following criteria applied:

- Matrix of services:
 - Districts that report students for weighted funding at > 150 percent of the state rate for **at least one** of the following cost factors:
 - 254 (> 7.83 percent)
 - 255 (> 3.20 percent)
 - 254/255 combined (> 11.03 percent)
 - Districts that report students for weighted funding at > 125 percent of the state rate for **two or more** of the following cost factors:
 - 254 (> 6.53 percent)
 - 255 (> 2.66 percent)
 - 254/255 combined (> 9.19 percent)
- Timeliness of correction of noncompliance regarding corrective action(s) due between July 1, 2008, and June 30, 2009 – two or more of the following criteria:
 - Student-specific noncompliance identified through monitoring not corrected within 60 days
 - Systemic noncompliance identified through monitoring not corrected as soon as possible, but in no case longer than one year from identification
 - Noncompliance identified through a state complaint investigation or due process hearing not corrected within the established timeline
- Pattern of poor performance over time in one or more targeted SPP indicators, as evidenced by demonstrated progress below that of other targeted districts, **and** at least one of the following:
 - Targeted for a given SPP indicator or cluster of indicators for three consecutive years
 - Targeted for two or more SPP indicators or clusters of indicators for two consecutive years

SPP Indicators 1 and 2

In accordance with 34 CFR §300.157(a)(3), each state must have established goals in effect for students with disabilities that address graduation rates and dropout rates. In addition, there are established performance indicators to assess progress toward achieving the established goals. SPP Indicator 1 relates to the percent of youth with individual educational plans (IEPs) graduating from high school with a regular diploma. SPP Indicator 2 relates to the percent of youth with IEPs dropping out of high school. In a letter dated December 11, 2009, the Glades County School District superintendent was informed that the district was selected for a Level 3 on-site visit due to a pattern of poor performance over time regarding SPP indicators 1 and 2.

On-Site Activities

Monitoring Team

On February 23–24, 2009, Bureau staff members conducted an on-site monitoring visit that included meeting with district staff to discuss strategies in place to address graduation rates and dropout rates. The following Bureau staff members participated in the on-site visit:

- Jill Snelson, Program Specialist, Monitoring and Compliance (Team Leader)
- Patricia Howell, Program Director, Monitoring and Compliance

- Joyce Lubbers, Program Director, Program Development and Services
- Brenda Fisher, Program Specialist, Monitoring and Compliance
- Martha Murray, Program Specialist, Program Development and Services

School

Moore Haven Junior-Senior High School was selected for the on-site visit. In addition, Bureau staff members interviewed the teacher for the Educational Opportunity Center, an interim alternative educational setting (IAES) for the district.

Data Collection

Prior to the on-site visit, IEPs for 19 randomly selected students with disabilities enrolled in grades 8 through 12 in the Glades County School District were reviewed. In addition, monitoring activities included the following:

- District-level interviews – 3 participants
- School-level interviews – 11 participants
- Classroom observations – 14 students
- Case studies – 9 students

Review of Records

The district was asked to provide the following documents for each student selected for review:

- Current IEP
- Functional behavioral assessment (FBA)/behavioral intervention plan (BIP), if any
- Previous IEP
- Progress reports from current and past school year
- Report cards from current and past school year
- Discipline record
- Attendance record

Information from each document was used to determine compliance with those standards most likely to impact the earning of a standard diploma and a student’s decision to remain in school.

Results

The Glades County School District was targeted for SPP 2 (dropout) for Level 2 Spring Self-Assessment. However, the Bureau determined that the needed information could be obtained in conjunction with the on-site monitoring visit. The following results reflect the data collected through the activities of the on-site monitoring as well as commendations, concerns, and findings of noncompliance. Additional documentation was requested during the on-site visit to determine compliance with each standard.

Commendations

- A mentoring program was in place with all students participating in a small group with a staff member.
- All students observed were actively engaged in the classroom activities.
- The school has a career lab in place that has been used effectively by both ESE and general education students.

- Both general education and exceptional education students received assistance during inclusion classes.

Concerns

- Based upon teacher interviews, it appears that the positive behavior support program is not supported school wide.
- Although evidence of outreach to parents was provided, there appears to be inconsistency regarding parent contact.
- Teachers indicated a challenge regarding relevancy in the curriculum as it relates to this rural community and the population. Additionally, their comments supported an interest in an expanded vocational program.
- Two students observed in the in-school suspension program did not have their daily assignments from their regularly scheduled classes.

Findings of Noncompliance

The monitoring team reviewed 19 IEPs prior to the on-site visit. Upon final review, Bureau staff identified six instances of noncompliance in five student records. Identifying information regarding those students was provided to the district prior to the dissemination of this report.

In accordance with Office of Special Education Programs' (OSEP) guidance regarding findings that are identified through monitoring processes, within a given school district a finding of noncompliance is identified by the standard (i.e., regulation or requirement) that is violated, not by the number of times the standard is violated. Therefore, multiple incidents of noncompliance regarding a given standard that are identified through monitoring activities are reported as a single finding of noncompliance for that district. Noncompliance that is evident in ≥ 25 percent of records reviewed is considered systemic in nature. One of the findings of noncompliance was systemic. *Italicized font designates the systemic items.*

The following noncompliance requires revisions to the students' IEPs:

- *The IEP did not include a statement of whether the student was pursuing a course of study leading to a standard or special diploma (identified in two of the eight records for students who were 14 during the IEP year or in eighth grade [25 percent])*
- The student record did not address excessive unexcused absences as required (identified in one record)
- Representative of other agency was not invited to student's IEP team meeting when transition services are likely to be provided or paid for by the other agency (identified in one record)

Due to the nature of the standard, the following findings of noncompliance cannot be corrected for the individual student, but will require corrective action to ensure that such noncompliance will not occur in the future:

- The IEP did not contain a statement on the notice for an IEP team meeting that the purpose of the meeting was to identify the transition services needs of the student and that the student would be invited, when required (identified in one record)

- The IEP did not contain a statement containing the notice of the transfer of rights, which must be provided at the time of the student's 18th birthday (identified in one record)

Corrective Actions

1. No later than June 7, 2010, the Glades County School District shall provide to the Bureau its plan to correct the following area of systemic noncompliance:
 - No statement included on the IEP of whether the student was pursuing a course of study leading to a standard or special diploma (for students in the eighth grade, or during the school year in which the student turns 14)The plan must include a sampling process to demonstrate compliance with the requirements and a timeline for implementation. Documentation of implementation must be provided no later than September 15, 2010. Results of the sampling process shall be provided to the Bureau no later than November 1, 2010.
2. The Glades County School District shall reconvene the IEP teams for the three identified students and correct the students' IEPs with regard to those findings that are correctable. In accordance with 34 CFR §300.324(a)(4) and the district's *Exceptional Student Education Policies and Procedures* (SP&P), the IEPs may be amended without convening an IEP team if the parent and the local education agency (LEA) agree to the amendment. Documentation of correction, including a copy of the revised IEP, must be provided to the Bureau no later than June 7, 2010.
3. No later than June 7, 2010, the Glades County School District must provide a narrative description of the actions taken to ensure on-going compliance with the specific requirements identified as noncompliant for which correction at the individual student level is not possible.

Technical Assistance

Specific information for technical assistance, support, and guidance to school districts regarding the percent of youths with IEPs graduating from high school with a regular diploma and the percent of youths with IEPs dropping out of high school can be found in the *Exceptional Student Education Compliance Self-Assessment: Processes and Procedures Manual 2009–10*.

Bureau Contacts

The following is a partial list of Bureau staff available for technical assistance:

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**Florida Department of Education
Bureau of Exceptional Education and Student Services**

Glossary of Acronyms

BIP	Behavioral intervention plan
Bureau	Bureau of Exceptional Education and Student Services
CFR	Code of Federal Regulations
ESE	Exceptional student education
FBA	Functional behavioral assessment
FDOE	Florida Department of Education
F.S.	Florida Statutes
IDEA	Individuals with Disabilities Education Act
IEP	Individual educational plan
IAES	Interim alternative educational setting
LEA	Local education agency
OSEP	Office of Special Education Programs
SP&P	Exceptional Student Education Policies and Procedures
SPP	State Performance Plan



**Florida Department of Education
Dr. Eric J. Smith, Commissioner**

ESE 313026D