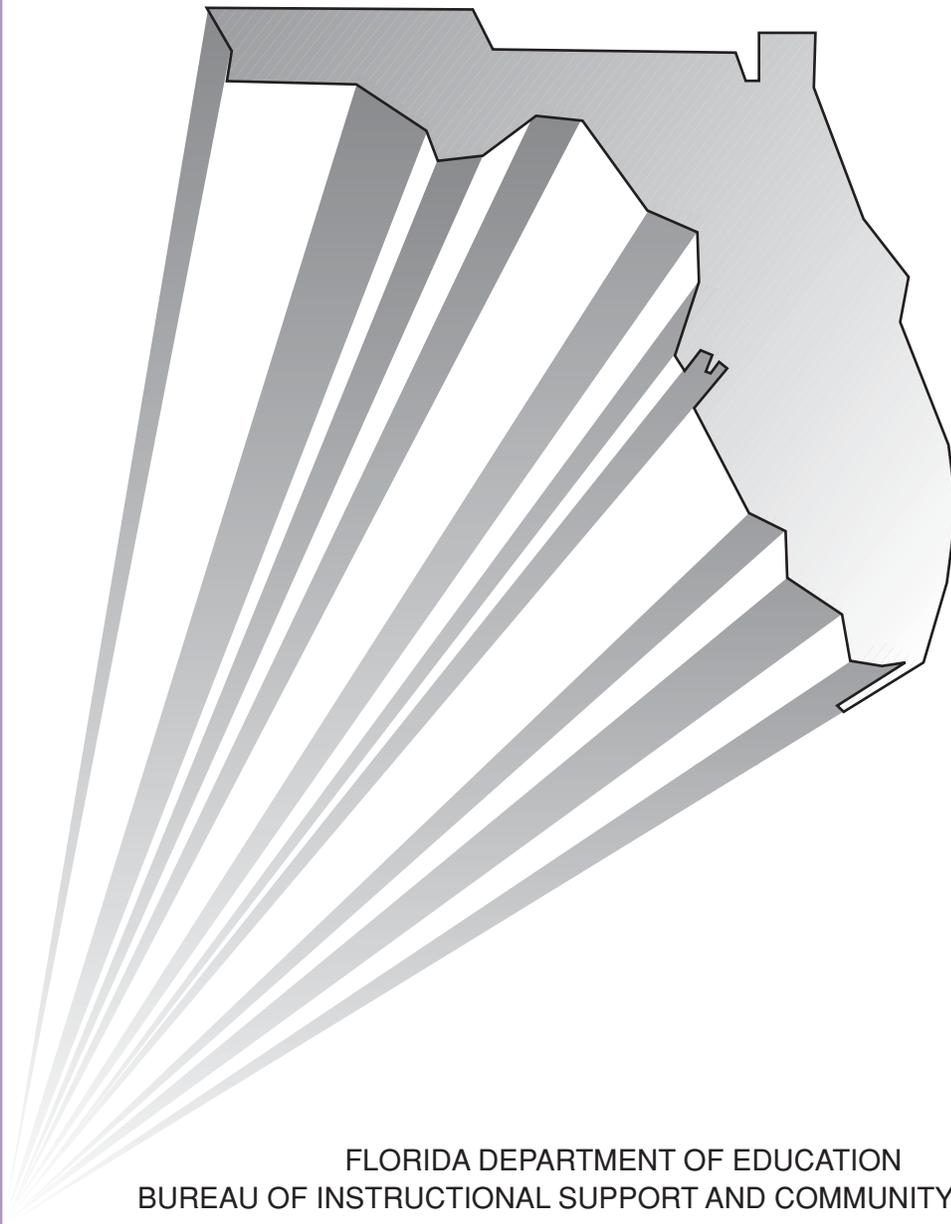


FINAL REPORT OF FOCUSED MONITORING OF
EXCEPTIONAL STUDENT EDUCATION PROGRAMS IN

NASSAU COUNTY

AUGUST 25-27, 2003



FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
BUREAU OF INSTRUCTIONAL SUPPORT AND COMMUNITY SERVICES

This is one of many publications available through the Bureau of Instructional Support and Community Services, Florida Department of Education, designed to assist school districts, state agencies which support educational programs, and parents in the provision of special programs. For additional information on this publication, or for a list of available publications, contact the Clearinghouse Information Center, Bureau of Instructional Support and Community Services, Florida Department of Education, Room 628, Turlington Bldg., Tallahassee, Florida 32399-0400.

telephone: (850) 245-0477

FAX: (850) 245-0987

Suncom: 205-0477

e-mail: cicbiscs@fldoe.org

website: <http://myfloridaeducation.com/commhome/>

FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION



STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

F. PHILIP HANDY, *Chairman*

T. WILLARD FAIR, *Vice Chairman*

Members

LINDA J. EADS, Ed.D.

CHARLES PATRICK GARCÍA

JULIA L. JOHNSON

WILLIAM L. PROCTOR, Ph.D.

LINDA K. TAYLOR

JIM HORNE
Commissioner of Education



March 25, 2004

Dr. John Ruis, Superintendent
Nassau County School District
1201 Atlantic Avenue
Fernandina Beach, Florida 32034-3499

Dear Superintendent Ruis:

We are pleased to provide you with the Final Report of Focused Monitoring of Exceptional Student Education Programs in Nassau County. This report was developed by integrating multiple sources of information including student record reviews; interviews with school and district staff; information from focus groups; and parent, teacher, and student survey data from our visit on August 25-27, 2003. The report includes a system improvement plan outlining the findings of the monitoring team. The final report will be placed on the Bureau of Instructional Support and Community Services' website and may be viewed at www.firn.edu/doe/commhome/mon-home.htm.

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

MICHELE POLLAND

Acting Chief

Bureau of Instructional Support and Community Services

Dr. John Ruis
March 25, 2004
Page 2

An update of outcomes achieved and/or a summary of related activities, as identified in your district's plan, must be submitted by June 30 and December 30 of each school year for the next two years, unless otherwise noted on the plan. A follow-up monitoring visit to your district will take place two years after your original monitoring visit.

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

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

Sincerely,

Michele Polland

Michele Polland, Acting Chief
Bureau of Instructional Support and Community Services

Enclosure

cc: Muriel Creamer, School Board Chair
Members of the School Board
Richard Withers, School Board Attorney
School Principals
Diane Patchen, ESE Director
Evy Friend
Kim Komisar

Nassau County Final Monitoring Report
Focused Monitoring Visit
August 25-27, 2003

Table of Contents

Executive Summary	1
Monitoring Process	13
Authority	13
Focused Monitoring	13
Key Data Indicators	13
District Selection	14
Sources of Information	14
On-Site Monitoring Activities	14
Interviews	14
Focus Group Interviews	15
Student Case Studies	15
Classroom Visits	15
Off-Site Monitoring Activities	15
Parent Surveys	15
Teacher Surveys	16
Student Surveys	16
Reviews of Student Records and District Forms	16
Reporting Process	17
Interim Reports	17
Preliminary Report	17
Final Report	17
Reporting of Information	19
Results	19
General Information	19
Service Delivery Models	20
Decision-making	21
Access to the General Curriculum/Resources	23
Staff Development	25
Parental Involvement	25
Stakeholder Opinions Related to the Indicator	26
Services to Gifted Students	26
Student Record Reviews	27
District Forms Review	29
District Response	29

System Improvement Plan.....	31
Recommendations and Technical Assistance	39
Recommendations.....	39
Technical Assistance.....	40
Appendix A: Development of the Monitoring Process.....	41
Appendix B: District Data	45
Appendix C: ESE Monitoring Team Members	57
Appendix D: Survey Results.....	61
Appendix E: Forms Review.....	75
Appendix F: Glossary of Acronyms	83

Nassau County School District
Focused Monitoring Visit
August 25-27, 2003

Executive Summary

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

During the week of August 25, 2003, the Florida Department of Education, Bureau of Instructional Support and Community Services, conducted an on-site review of the exceptional student education programs in Nassau County Public Schools. Diane Patchen, Director, Exceptional Student Education, served as the coordinator and point of contact for the district during the monitoring visit. In its continuing efforts to focus the monitoring process on student educational outcomes, the Bureau has identified four key data indicators: percentage of students with disabilities participating in regular classes (i.e., spending at least 80% of the school day with their nondisabled peers); dropout rate for students with disabilities; percentage of students with disabilities exiting with a standard diploma; and, participation in statewide assessments by students with disabilities. Nassau County was selected for monitoring on the basis of the percentage of students with disabilities participating in regular classes. The results of the monitoring process are reported under categories or topical issues that are considered to impact or contribute to the key data indicator. In addition, information related to services for gifted students and the results of records and forms reviews are reported.

Summary of Findings

Service Delivery Options

Nassau County provides a full range of service delivery models across the district. Instruction of students with disabilities in general education classrooms is most evident in elementary and high schools, with more middle school students being served in ESE settings. Recent initiatives have

focused on increasing inclusive education and meaningful access to the general curriculum for students with disabilities. One difficulty in the implementation of these initiatives may be the manner in which grade levels are distributed across the district, providing for a very limited range of grades or ages at some schools. In an effort to address this problem, the district implements a variety of “reverse mainstreaming” initiatives in which nondisabled peers engage in instructional and leisure activities with students with more significant disabilities. These activities appear to be very effective and well-received by students and staff, although they are not available in all schools.

Decision Making Process

The district has policies and procedures in place that are designed to encourage individual educational plan (IEP) teams to thoroughly consider what constitutes the least restrictive environment for individual students. Staff reported receiving training to address placement decisions, either through general IEP training sessions or in preparation for the transition to offering more inclusive settings. Parents and teachers report that there has been some resistance to inclusive placements on the part of parents, but that the programs implemented thus far have been successful. There is a concern that some students with specific learning disabilities may not receive services based on their needs as a result of their disability as determined by a review of all performance data, but rather based only on the results of a single standardized assessment conducted as part of a formal evaluation process.

Access to the General Curriculum/Resources

Access to the general curriculum for students with disabilities varies across the district, and is somewhat dependent on the initiatives in place at the individual schools. Access is more likely to be provided in general education classes at the elementary and high school level, with some level of support by ESE teachers. At the middle school level, instruction in the Sunshine State Standards is most likely to be provided in an ESE classroom (e.g., Yulee Middle School). Ample resources are provided by the district to support students with disabilities, including classroom and instructional materials, assistive technology, and staff (including substitute teachers and paraprofessional aids). Across the district, school administrators and teachers reported having a strong internal support system within their schools, as well as support from the district office.

Staff Development

Extensive staff development opportunities are available through the district ESE department as well as through individual school administrations; however, there is a need for continued training on the use of effective inclusive practices and instructional accommodations.

Parental Involvement

Reports of parent participation in the IEP team process varied across the district, with relatively greater participation reported in elementary schools. At Fernandina Beach High School parent attendance at IEP meetings was reported to have increased to almost 100% since the implementation of the inclusion initiative. Across the district, parents and teachers report that parents have a significant say in the placement decisions for students with disabilities.

Stakeholder Opinions Related to the Dropout Rate for Students with Disabilities

In general, respondents reported that the following are the most likely contributors to the relatively regular class placement rate for students with disabilities served in Nassau County's public schools: inaccurate data reporting, especially in schools with co-teaching models; the focus on intensive services for young (prekindergarten and primary aged) children; the fact that many of the inclusive practices in place in the district focus on students served at the separate class or self-contained level, which would not be reflected in this data element.

Gifted

Students at all grade levels have access to gifted classes, although the services vary by school across the district. Of particular note, there is a "reverse mainstreaming" program in place at Southside Elementary School that provides opportunities for students with significant disabilities to interact with their gifted peers, and for the gifted students to apply their skills and knowledge of technology and specific disabilities in a very practical way. While parents reported general satisfaction with the gifted services their children receive, they reported significantly less satisfaction with their children's experiences in regular education classes as compared to gifted classes.

Record Reviews

Systemic findings were noted in eight areas. Individual or non-systemic finding were identified in 17 areas. There were four findings which appeared in the review of both IEPs for gifted students. There were four fund adjustments, and eight IEP teams were required to reconvene due to a lack of a majority of measurable annual goals.

Form Reviews

Forms representing the following actions were found to require modification or revision:

- Individual Educational Plan Forms
- Informed Notice and Consent for Initial Placement
- Informed Notice and Consent for Evaluation
- Informed Notice of Dismissal
- Documentation of Staffing/Eligibility Determination
- Annual Written Notice of Confidentiality of Student Records

The district has addressed these findings; the forms were submitted to the Bureau for review and have been approved.

System Improvement Plan

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

issues identified by the Bureau as most significantly in need of improvement, is provided with this executive summary.

During the process of conducting the focused monitoring activities, including daily debriefings with the monitoring team and district staff, it is often the case that suggestions and/or recommendations related to interventions or strategies are proposed. Listings of these recommendations as well as specific discretionary projects and Florida Department of Education (DOE) contacts available to provide technical assistance to the district in the development and implementation of the plan also are included as part of this report.

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

Category	Findings	ESE	All	System Improvement Strategy	Evidence of Change and Target Date
5 Service Delivery Options	The manner in which grade levels are distributed across the district provides for a very limited range of grades or ages at some schools. The placement of specific programs for full-time ESE students in these schools limits the opportunities for grade- or age-appropriate interactions.	X		<p>Currently there are 6 classrooms for students with disabilities that are located in schools that do not provide access will be to age appropriate peer models.</p> <p>Beginning for 2004-2005 school year two classes will be reassigned to schools with age appropriate peers.</p> <p>Strategies to be used</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> on-going review of classroom placements to ensure access to appropriate peers 	<p>The district will report the number of students impacted by this reassignment.</p> <p>June, 2004 June, 2005</p>

Category	Findings	ESE	All	System Improvement Strategy	Evidence of Change and Target Date
Service Delivery Options (continued)				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> investigate other ways to provide access to age appropriate peers beginning 2005-06, put in place additional strategies to increase access to age appropriate peers 	
Decision-Making	Addressed in the Parent Involvement section.				
Access to the General Curriculum/ Resources	In some cases, access to the general curriculum is dependent on the initiatives in place at the individual schools, rather than the needs of the individual student (e.g., at Yulee Middle School, instruction in the Sunshine State Standards is most likely to be provided in an ESE classroom through a parallel curriculum model, even when the instruction is the same as that in a general education setting).	X		<p>Each of the middle school principals have been involved in training to provide them with information on other service delivery models that could be implemented over the next two years. Each school will identify training, equipment and or support services that will be required to implement changes. Visitations options will be provided to sites where the strategies or service delivery models are being used.</p> <p>Florida Inclusion Network (FIN) and Florida Diagnostic and Learning Resources System (FDLRS) will assist in providing any identified training. Documentation to be collected by the district will include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> in-service and travel logs schedules of ESE students 	<p>Beginning 2004-05 each school will implement at least one new delivery model.</p> <p>Plans will be developed by each school to describe the programming for ESE students for 2004-05.</p> <p>District report of self-assessment will describe: planned changes in service delivery at three targeted pilot sites; for schools with no co-teaching, the report will describe how ESE students will have increased access to the general curriculum.</p> <p>June 2004</p> <p>District report of self-</p>

Category	Findings	ESE	All	System Improvement Strategy	Evidence of Change and Target Date
Access to the General Curriculum/ Resources (continued.)				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • funds for visitations to effective programs <p>April 2004 committee will meet to plan changes in service delivery models. Minutes will be kept.</p> <p>Implementation of identified strategies will occur at three pilot schools. Training logs will be kept.</p> <p>If co-teaching is not implemented in the middle schools next year, then the principal will submit a plan by May 1 to describe how their school's programming will increase opportunities for ESE to be exposed to the general curriculum and the regular sunshine state standards</p> <p>A study was just completed by an outside consultant on issues related to EMH students having limited access to the general education curriculum.</p> <p>A committee will be established to review the results of this study and develop strategies to increase the time EMH students spent with non-disabled students.</p>	<p>assessment will describe planned changes in service delivery, and report the increased number of students served at a less restrictive level.</p> <p>June 2005</p>

Category	Findings	ESE	All	System Improvement Strategy	Evidence of Change and Target Date
Staff Development	Teachers across the district express the need for continued training on the use of effective inclusive practices and instructional accommodations.		X	<p>Staff development activities will continue to be provided.</p> <p>The staff development director will be involved to identify trainings impacting ESE have been requested by the schools.</p> <p>A survey will be conducted to determine what training the schools would like to have provided.</p> <p>FIN and FDLRS will assist in identifying and providing workshops that would present effective inclusive practices.</p>	<p>District-administered surveys and/or classroom observations related to the training reveals an increase in the level of competence on the part of participants.</p> <p>June, 2004 June, 2005</p>
Parental Involvement	At times, the IEP teams' placement decision is primarily based on parent request for ESE placement in lieu of placement in a general education setting with supports.			<p>The Parent Advisory Council will provide training in IEPs.</p> <p>IEP training for teachers will continue to stress data-based team decisions for placement in the least restrictive environment.</p>	<p>District-administered teacher surveys and/or observations of IEP team meetings by district staff indicate that placements in ESE classes result from consensus of the team and are not based solely on the request of the parent.</p> <p>June, 2004 June, 2005</p>

Category	Findings	ESE	All	System Improvement Strategy	Evidence of Change and Target Date
Gifted Services	While parents reported general satisfaction with the gifted services their children receive, they reported significantly less satisfaction with their children's experiences in regular education classes as compared to gifted classes.		X	<p>Discussion will occur with the elementary principals each month to brainstorm strategies to improve educational opportunities for students who are gifted while they are in general education. Minutes of these meeting will be kept.</p> <p>Timelines will be developed to implement the strategies identified by the principals. First strategy identified:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • provide differentiated instruction training to regular ed teachers <p>District will maintain logs of in-service trainings.</p>	<p>Report of district-administered surveys and/or classroom observations related to the training reveals an increase in the level of competence on the part of participants.</p> <p>June, 2004 June, 2005</p>
Records Review	<p>Systemic findings were noted in eight areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • lack of a majority of measurable annual goals • lack of progress reports as often as progress is reported to nondisabled students • inadequate short term objectives • progress reports do not describe progress 	X		<p>Training on the development of fully compliant IEPs/TIEPs will be provided to the ESE teachers and staff with special attention being provided to the audit findings. Training will be provided by the ESE office, FDLRS and FIN</p> <p>Training logs will be maintained.</p> <p>The IEP team will meet and revise the IEPs on the eight listed students.</p>	<p>IEPs will be randomly reviewed by school and/or district staff, using the Bureau monitoring work papers and source book; findings will be reported to the principal.</p> <p>District report of random self-assessment reveals compliance with required components.</p> <p>June, 2004 June, 2005</p>

Category	Findings	ESE	All	System Improvement Strategy	Evidence of Change and Target Date
Records Review (continued)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • toward the annual goal or the extent to which the student is expected to achieve the goal by the end of the year • lack of duration date for services • lack of • initiation/duration dates, frequency, and location of accommodations and/or modifications • present level statements, goals, and objectives do not support the services identified on the IEP • lack of indication that the results of the initial or most recent evaluations were considered. <p>Individual or non-systemic finding were identified in 17 areas.</p> <p>There were four fund adjustments for lack of</p>				IEPs were reconvened to address areas of need, and have been submitted to the Bureau for review.

Category	Findings	ESE	All	System Improvement Strategy	Evidence of Change and Target Date
Records Review (continued)	<p>prior written notice of change of placement.</p> <p>Eight IEP teams were required to reconvene due to a lack of a majority of measurable annual goals.</p>				
	<p>There were four findings which appeared in the review of both IEPs for gifted students:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • lack of individualization in the present level of • educational performance statements • lack of student outcomes • lack of evaluation criteria for the goal(s) • lack of evaluation schedule for the goal(s) 	X		<p>Training on the development of fully compliant EPs for gifted students will be provided to the ESE teachers and staff with special attention being provided to the findings. Training will be provided by district ESE staff.</p>	<p>Educational plans (EPs) for gifted students will be randomly reviewed by school and/or district staff, using the Bureau monitoring work papers and source book. Findings will be reported to the principal.</p> <p>District report of random self-assessment reveals compliance with all required components.</p> <p>June, 2004 June, 2005</p>
Forms Review	<p>The following forms required revision:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>IEP Forms</i> • <i>Notice and Consent for Initial Placement</i> • <i>Informed Notice and</i> 	X		<p>All forms will be revised to comply with rules.</p>	<p>Forms have been revised and will be submitted to the DOE by February 21, 2004.</p>

Category	Findings	ESE	All	System Improvement Strategy	Evidence of Change and Target Date
Forms Review (continued)	<i>Consent for Evaluation</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Informed Notice of Dismissal</i> • <i>Documentation of Staffing/Eligibility Determination</i> 				
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Annual Written Notice of Confidentiality of Student Information</i> 		X		Form has been revised and will be submitted to the DOE by February 21, 2004.

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

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. A description of the development of the current monitoring system in Florida is provided in appendix A.

Focused Monitoring

The purpose of the focused monitoring process is to implement a methodology that targets the Bureau's monitoring intervention on key data indicators that were identified as significant for educational outcomes for students. Through this process, the Bureau will use such data to inform the monitoring process, thereby implementing a strategic approach to intervention and commitment of resources that will improve student outcomes.

Key Data Indicators

Four key data indicators were recommended by the monitoring stakeholders' workgroup and were adopted for implementation by the Bureau. The key data indicators for the 2003 school year and their sources of data are as follows:

- percentage of students with disabilities participating in regular classes (i.e., spending at least 80% of the school day with their nondisabled peers) [Data source: Survey 9]

- dropout rate for students with disabilities [Data source: Survey 5]
- percentage of students with disabilities exiting with a standard diploma [Data source: Survey 5]
- participation in statewide assessments by students with disabilities [Data sources: performance data from the assessment files and Survey 3 enrollment data]

District Selection

Districts were selected to be monitored based on a review of data from the 2001-02 school year that was submitted electronically to the Department of Education (DOE) Information Database for Surveys 2, 3, 5, 9, and from the assessment files. This data is compiled into an annual data profile for each district or local educational agency (LEA Profile). The 2003 LEA profiles for all Florida school districts are available on the web at <http://www.firn.edu/doe/commhome/datapage.htm>.

In making the decision to include Nassau County in this year's focused monitoring visits, Bureau staff reviewed data related to the regular class placement rate for students with disabilities from survey 9. This review indicated that Nassau County's rate of 30.8% approached the lowest regular class placement rate for students with disabilities for all districts in the state. Nassau County School District's LEA profile and the listing of districts rank-ordered on regular class placement rate for students with disabilities is included in this report as appendix B.

Sources of Information

On-Site Monitoring Activities

The Bureau conducted the on-site focused monitoring visit from August 25 through 27, 2003. Five Bureau staff members, two contracted staff, and three peer monitors conducted site-visits to the following seven schools:

- Southside Elementary School
- Emma Love Hardee Elementary School
- Yulee Primary School
- Yulee Elementary School
- Yulee Middle School
- Hilliard Middle/High School
- Fernandina Beach High School

Peer monitors are exceptional student education personnel from other school districts who are trained to assist with the DOE's monitoring activities. In addition, two University of Miami research staff conducted focus group interviews. A listing of all participating monitors is provided as appendix C.

Interviews

Interviews with selected district- and school-level personnel are conducted using interview protocols developed specifically to address the key data indicator. In addition to the protocol developed specifically to examine regular class placement students with disabilities, separate protocols are used to address services to gifted students, services provided in charter schools, and services to students served in Department of Juvenile Justice (DJJ) facilities. In Nassau County,

interviews were conducted with 68 people, including 5 district-level administrators or support staff, 20 school-level administrators or support staff, 28 ESE teachers, and 15 general education teachers. Currently, there are no charter schools or DJJ programs in the district.

Focus Group Interviews

Focus groups for parents, teachers and students are conducted by the University of Miami to gather information related to the regular class placement rate for students with disabilities. In order to provide maximum opportunity for input about the district's ESE services, a minimum of four separate focus group interviews are conducted. The participant groups include: parents of students with disabilities; teachers and other service providers (ESE and general education); students with disabilities who are pursuing a standard diploma, and students with disabilities who are pursuing a special diploma. Separate sessions are conducted for each participant group.

In conjunction with the 2003 Nassau County monitoring activities, 16 parents participated in the parent focus group, representing 18 students with disabilities in elementary, middle, and high school. Nine ESE teachers and staff, representing elementary, middle, and high schools, participated in the teacher focus group. There were 15 participants in the standard diploma student focus group and 12 participants in the focus group for students pursuing a special diploma.

Student Case Studies

Student case studies are conducted for the purpose of performing an in-depth review of the services a student receives in accordance with his or her IEP. As part of this process, the student's records are reviewed, Bureau staff or peer monitors observe the case study student in class, and teachers are interviewed regarding the implementation of the student's IEP. Ten in-depth case studies were conducted in Nassau County.

Classroom Visits

Classroom visits are conducted in both ESE and general education classrooms. Some visits are conducted in conjunction with individual student case studies, while others are conducted as general observations of classrooms that include exceptional students. Curriculum and instruction, classroom management and discipline, and classroom design and resources are observed during the general classroom visits. A total of 36 classrooms (20 ESE and 16 general education) were visited during the focused monitoring visit to Nassau County.

Off-Site Monitoring Activities

Surveys are designed by the University of Miami research staff in order to provide maximum opportunity for input about the district's ESE services from parents of students with disabilities and students identified as gifted, ESE and regular education teachers, and students with disabilities in grades 9-12. Results of the surveys are discussed in the body of this report. Data from each of the surveys are included as appendix D.

Parent Surveys

The survey that is sent to parents is printed in English, Spanish, and Haitian Creole where applicable. It includes a cover letter and a postage paid reply envelope. In addition, the survey to parents of students with disabilities includes a notice regarding the opportunity to participate in a focus group.

In conjunction with the 2003 Nassau County monitoring activities, the parent survey was sent to parents of 1,667 students with disabilities for whom complete addresses were provided by the district. A total of 219 parents (PK, n=15; K-5, n=99; 6-8, n=62; 9-12, n=43) representing 13% of the sample, returned the survey. Surveys from 150 families were returned as undeliverable, representing 9% of the sample for students with disabilities. The parents represented the following students with disabilities: 85 specific learning disabled, 32 emotionally handicapped, 23 educable mentally handicapped, 23 speech impaired, 16 other health impaired, 11 developmentally delayed, 6 language impaired, 4 trainable mentally handicapped, 4 orthopedically impaired, 4 severely mentally handicapped, 3 profoundly mentally handicapped, 3 visually impaired, 1 deaf or hard of hearing, 3 autistic, and 1 traumatic brain injured.

For gifted students, the survey was sent to parents of 213 students identified as gifted for whom complete addresses were provided by the district. A total of 58 parents (K-5, n=19; 6-8, n=29; 9-12, n=10) representing 27% of the sample, returned the survey. Surveys from 6 families were returned as undeliverable, representing 3% of the sample.

Teacher Surveys

Surveys developed for teachers and other service providers were mailed to each school, with a memo explaining the key data indicator and the monitoring process. All teachers, both general education and ESE, were provided an opportunity to respond. Surveys were returned from 298 teachers (50% of all teachers in the district), representing 14 (82%) of the district's 17 schools.

Student Surveys

A sufficient number of surveys were provided to allow all students with disabilities, grades 9-12, to respond. Instructions for administration of the survey by classroom teachers, including a written script, were provided for each class or group of students. Since participation in this survey is not appropriate for some students whose disabilities might impair their understanding of the survey, professional judgment is used to determine appropriate participants. Surveys from 188 students, representing 44% of the high school students with disabilities in the district, were returned from the Nassau County administration. Data are from 2 (25%) of the district's schools with students in grades 9-12.

Reviews of Student Records and District Forms

Prior to the on-site monitoring visit, Bureau staff conducts a compliance review of student records that are randomly selected from the population of exceptional students. The record of at least one student with a matrix rating of 254 or 255 may be reviewed at each school during the on-site visit, if available. In addition to the compliance reviews, selected student records are reviewed at the school site in conjunction with student case studies and classroom visits. In Nassau County, 30 records were reviewed for compliance.

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

Reporting Process

Interim Reports

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

Preliminary Report

Subsequent to the on-site visit, Bureau staff prepare a written report. The report is developed to include the following elements: an executive summary, a description of the monitoring process, and the results section. A description of the development of the current monitoring system for exceptional student education is included as an appendix. Other appendices with data specific to the district also accompany each report. The report is sent to the district ESE director. The director has the opportunity to discuss and clarify with Bureau staff any concerns regarding the report before it became final.

Final Report

Upon final review and revision by Bureau staff based on input from the ESE director, the final report is issued. This report is sent to the district, and is posted to the Bureau's website at www.firn.edu/doe/commhome/mon-home.htm.

Within 30 days of the district's receipt of the final report, the system improvement plan, including activities targeting specific findings, must be submitted to the Bureau for review. In developing this plan, every effort should be made to link the system improvement plan for focused monitoring to the district's continuous improvement 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. Upon approval of the system improvement plan, the plan is posted on the website noted above.

Reporting of Information

The data generated through the surveys, focus group interviews, individual interviews, case studies, and classroom visits are summarized in this report. The results from the review of student records and district forms are also presented in this report. This report provides conclusions with regard to the key data indicator and specifically addresses topical issues that may contribute to or impact the indicator. For the regular class placement rate for students with disabilities, these include the following:

- general information
- service delivery models
- decision-making
- access to the general curriculum/resources
- staff development
- parental involvement
- stakeholder opinion related to the indicator

In addition, information related to services for gifted students, the results of the records reviews, and the results of the form reviews are reported.

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. Strategies that are identified as long-term approaches toward improving the district's issue related to the key data indicator are also addressed through the district's continuous improvement monitoring plan.

Results

General Information

This section provides demographic and background information specific to the district. Nassau County School District has a total school population of 10,521 (PreK-12), with 16% identified as students with disabilities (including 2% identified eligible as speech impaired only), and 2% identified as gifted. As reported in the 2003 LEA Profile, 34% of the students with disabilities in Nassau County were served at the regular class level during the 2002-03 school year, compared to 46% for the enrollment group and 48% for the state as a whole. Separate class placement rates for students identified as educable mentally handicapped (EMH) also were significant, with 90% served at the separate level, compared to 60% for the enrollment group and 61% for the state as a whole.

Nassau County is considered a small/middle sized district, and is one of 15 districts in this enrollment group. The district has an uncommon school attendance plan, and is comprised of the

following types of schools (number of schools by grade range): one PK-1; two PK-2; one PK-5; one K-5; one 2-3; two 3-5; one 4-5; three 6-8; one 6-12; two 9-12. One effect of this attendance plan is that some students who need more intensive services attend schools that do not include general education classes for the grade levels to which they are assigned (e.g., students with severe to profound handicaps, ages 3 through 21, served at Southside Elementary School, which is a PK-1 school; a self-contained classroom for middle and high school students with moderate mental handicaps served at Fernandina Beach High School).

Service Delivery Models

This section provides information regarding the service delivery options available in Nassau County. A full range of placement options are available across the district, from inclusion and co-teaching to a separate-school program for students who are severely emotionally disturbed (SED). While the majority of ESE students are served at their home-zone school, as noted above the classroom for students with severe to profound mental handicaps, ages 3 through 21, is located at Southside Elementary School. In addition, some students with specific needs are bused to self-contained classes at schools such as Emma Love Hardee, Fernandina Beach High School (FBHS), and Yulee Elementary School. The attendance plan described above has the effect, in some cases, of limiting access to age-appropriate nondisabled peers for some students with disabilities.

In the past, the district provided a parallel curriculum for students with disabilities who were pursuing a standard diploma. These classes provided instruction in the Sunshine State Standards (SSS), they were taught by ESE teachers, and they included only students with disabilities. In response to concerns regarding the possible impact this model might have on the students' access to the general curriculum, the district initiated a service delivery model in which students pursuing a standard diploma are enrolled in general education courses taught within the general education setting. This initially was implemented on a large scale at FBHS during the 2002-03 school year, and currently is in place at other high schools in the district. Two "bridge" teachers were available for the first quarter of the pilot year to provide support and assistance to the newly inclusive classes at FBHS. Teachers and administrators reported that this support was critical to the success of the program, and they expressed concern that lack of funding prevented these positions from being in place this year.

In addition to the high school initiative described above, inclusion classrooms were observed in several of the schools visited, including Yulee Primary and Yulee Elementary. In addition, co-teaching and/or collaborative consultation was reported at Fernandina Beach H.S. and Southside Elementary. In contrast, at Yulee Middle School it was reported that the majority of students with disabilities receive instruction in ESE classrooms for most or all of the school day. Even remedial courses such as Intensive Reading Lab and Intensive Math Lab run parallel sections, in which essentially the same curriculum is taught to classes comprised of all ESE or all struggling nondisabled students. In general, it appears that, across the district, there are more opportunities and support for inclusion of students with disabilities in the general classroom at the elementary and high school levels, with less inclusion in evidence at the middle school level.

Through classroom visits across the district, the monitoring team observed relatively small class sizes in both general education and exceptional student education classes. Despite this, some of

the general education classes were reported to have enrollments of 30-50% ESE students (e.g., Fernandina Beach H.S.). All of the schools visited by Bureau staff operated under a traditional schedule, with the exception of Hilliard Middle/Senior High School. In order to optimize common planning time, that school operates under a block schedule, which may decrease the number of students served in the regular setting (as defined for the purposes of focused monitoring).

In addition to students with disabilities being provided instruction in general education classrooms with nondisabled peers, Bureau staff observed several instances in which general education students routinely participated in activities with students with disabilities in ESE class settings or in extra-curricular and/or leisure activities (e.g., Southside Elementary, Emma Love Hardee Elementary, Fernandina Beach H.S.). A disability awareness program at Southside Elementary was particularly notable for level of instruction provided to general education students regarding the use of assistive technology, mobility and medical aids, alternative communication systems, and other issues related to individuals with disabilities. First grade students in the disability awareness lab were observed to have a surprising depth of understanding and sophistication of response for students so young. While Bureau staff observed a variety of activities designed to foster inclusive environments and acceptance of disabilities across the district, some parents in the focus group reported a lack of acceptance of students with disabilities in Nassau County schools. In addition, two teachers in the teachers' focus group recommended that all students participate in handicapped awareness activities or courses designed to foster "tolerance, character education, and diversity."

In summary, Nassau County provides a full range of service delivery models across the district. Instruction of students with disabilities in general education classrooms is most evident in elementary and high schools, with more middle school students being served in ESE settings. Recent initiatives have focused on increasing inclusive education and meaningful access to the general curriculum for students with disabilities. One difficulty in the implementation of these initiatives may be the manner in which grade levels are distributed across the district, providing for a very limited range of grades or ages at some schools. In an effort to address this problem, the district implements a variety of "reverse mainstreaming" initiatives in which nondisabled peers engage in instructional and leisure activities with students with more significant disabilities. These activities appear to be very effective and well-received by students and staff, but they are not available in all schools.

Decision-making

This category refers to issues and concerns referenced by school and district staff when IEP teams make placement decisions for students with disabilities. The IEP form in use in the district includes a separate page used to assist in the decision-making process for determining the least restrictive environment (LRE) for each student. In the past, the use of this "LRE checklist" was required by the DOE; it is no longer required as a separate page. District staff reported that they have chosen to continue to require that IEP teams use this checklist in an effort to focus the attention of the participants on the critical issues related to placement of students with disabilities. Teachers across the district reported that they had received training on placement decisions, either incorporated into IEP training, or through training related to district initiatives in inclusion.

It was reported that the district encourages IEP teams to conduct full reevaluations of students before implementing a change in placement. This is done in an effort to ensure that decisions regarding placement are based on a thorough understanding of the current strengths and needs of the students, and that all possible options are considered. Perhaps as an unintended consequence of this informal policy, and of concern to Bureau staff, teachers at Emma Love Hardee Elementary School reported that students with specific learning disabilities (SLD) may only be served in the subject areas in which they have a statistically significant deficit, based on a standardized assessment. As a result, teachers reported that some students with SLD were struggling in general education classes, without adequate support from their ESE teachers.

Through interviews with district and school staff, as well as through observations and case studies conducted at individual schools, it was apparent that the district is making progress in increasing the extent to which students with disabilities receive instruction in general education classes, as well as in providing opportunities for students with significant disabilities to interact in meaningful ways with their nondisabled peers. Efforts to educate IEP team members on the use of less restrictive settings are being implemented. Despite these efforts, concerns were noted through the interviews and surveys as well as the focus groups. Teachers at some schools reported that parents often resist service in general education classrooms, and that the school staff have to work hard to convince them to try it (e.g., Emma Love Hardee Elementary School, Yulee Middle School, Fernandina Beach High School). This was supported by the statements of some parents in the parent focus group who noted that the perceived lack of acceptance of disabilities has resulted in parents choosing to keep their children in ESE classrooms, and not encouraging placement in inclusive general education classrooms. This view was repeated by teachers in the teachers' focus group, who reported that parental pressure is a primary factor in placement decisions, and that many parents prefer that their children be placed in ESE classes, which they perceive to be smaller, more supportive, and less rigorous. It should be noted that, in the schools visited by the Bureau where inclusive initiatives were evident, staff reported that families were generally pleased with the results of the programs.

Of the parents who responded to the survey, 81% indicated that they were satisfied with the amount of time their child spends with regular education students. In contrast, 66% reported that the IEP team discussed ways that their child could spend time with students in regular classes, and 67% of teachers who responded indicated that their school places students with disabilities into general education classes whenever possible.

In summary, the district has policies and procedures in place that are designed to encourage IEP teams to thoroughly consider what constitutes the least restrictive environment for individual students. Staff reported receiving training addressing placement decisions, either through general IEP training sessions or in preparation for the transition to offering more inclusive settings. Parents and teachers report that there has been some resistance to inclusive placements on the part of parents, but that the programs implemented thus far have been successful. There is a concern that some students with specific learning disabilities may not receive services based on their needs as a result of their disability as determined by a review of all performance data, but rather based only on the results of a single standardized assessment conducted as part of a formal evaluation process.

Access to the General Curriculum/Resources

This category refers to the manner in which students with disabilities are provided access to the general curriculum as well as the resources provided to promote this access. As reported above, the Nassau County School District has, in the past, provided a parallel curriculum for high school students with disabilities who were pursuing a standard diploma. Recent initiatives have changed the focus to providing access to the general curriculum to ESE students through enrollment in general education classes. Some of these classes are co-taught by ESE teachers, while in others students with disabilities are provided with support through the use of learning strategies classes or consultative/facilitative services by ESE teachers.

At the elementary level, the manner in which students with disabilities access the general curriculum vary by school site, with some schools providing co-teaching on a regular basis in one or more classrooms (e.g., Yulee Primary School, Yulee Elementary School) while others rely more heavily on a resource or “pull-out” model of instruction (e.g., Emma Love Hardee Elementary School). Many schools reported using the Science Research Associates (SRA) curriculum for reading.

For the most part, students in elementary and high schools are provided access to the Sunshine State Standards through general education classes, and to a modified standards-based program in ESE classrooms. Yulee Middle School was an exception to this; 29% (24 students) of the students are served at the regular class level, with the remaining 71% served at the resource or separate level. It was reported that many of the students who are expected to pursue a standard diploma are enrolled in ESE classes that teach the Sunshine State Standards, with accommodations. As noted above under “Service Delivery Models,” ESE sections of almost all general education courses are offered at Yulee Middle School, including remedial courses such as Intensive Math Lab and Intensive Reading Lab. Two concerns regarding this system were noted by both Bureau staff and some of the interviewees at the school. The first concern is that the curriculum in some of the ESE classes may not adhere to the Sunshine State Standards to the extent intended. The second concern reflects the opposite situation. If, for example, the Intensive Reading Labs all cover the same curriculum and utilize the same instructional strategies as reported, there does not appear to be a justification to enroll all students with disabilities in the same section.

Teachers and parents in the focus groups expressed the opinion that students with disabilities must have exposure to the general curriculum, either through ESE or regular education classes, in order to succeed to their greatest potential. General education teachers at all schools reported being aware of and implementing the accommodations identified on the IEPs of specific students. This was supported by the classroom observations conducted by the monitors, although teachers in the focus group indicated that not all high school classes provide accommodations consistently.

While some students in the focus groups indicated that they did not find their ESE classes to be adequately challenging, most reported feeling supported and comfortable in their ESE classes. Students from both focus groups indicated that the regular education teachers do not always understand their disabilities. This difference in opinion regarding ESE and general education

teachers is evident in the student survey results (see appendix D). Ninety-two percent reported that ESE teachers give extra help as needed, compared to 52% for regular education teachers. While 90% reported that ESE teachers believe ESE students can learn, 72% reported that regular education teachers hold that belief.

Across the district, administrators and staff reported ample resources in the way of classroom materials and small class sizes. Staff at several schools indicated that the district has provided LoTTIE (Low Tech Tools for Inclusive Education) kits to each school, and that these have been helpful in providing appropriate accommodations for students with disabilities. The district has a related services specialist who is available to assist school staff and IEP teams in determining what assistive technology or other resources are needed to promote access to inclusive settings for all students, and a LATS team (local area technology specialist) is available as well.

When asked to discuss the resources they have available to support students with disabilities in general education settings, teachers and administrators across the district consistently reported that their own school staff were their greatest resources. Although few schools reported formal opportunities for team planning, most schools reported informal support systems in place to provide assistance as needed. This was contradicted somewhat by the responses to the teacher survey, in which only 47% of the respondents indicated that their schools encourage collaboration among ESE teachers, general education teachers, and related service providers.

Some schools reported having the ability to assign students to the teachers most likely to match their needs and personalities. Many respondents reported flexibility in scheduling, so that ESE teachers are able to assist students in general education settings. Despite this, the absence of formally assigned “bridge” or consultation/facilitation teachers was noted as a concern by several staff members at Fernandina Beach High School. Schools across the district reported the availability of substitute teachers for staff to attend training sessions and/or IEP team meetings, as well as the use of paraprofessional aids for students who need them.

Teachers across the district reported strong support for mainstreaming by school- and district-level administrators. At Yulee Middle School, where relatively few students are served at the regular class level, teachers reported a strong commitment by the school administration to address the situation, including providing the behavioral and academic support needed to increase the numbers of students with disabilities in general education.

The monitors observed instruction in 24 classrooms (13 ESE and 11 general education) across the seven schools visited. Teaching activities in all classrooms observed were found to be consistently or generally planned and implemented in ways that promote student learning and ensure access to the appropriate (general or modified) curriculum. Effective behavior management strategies were observed to be implemented in all classrooms observed. With the exception of two classrooms at Hilliard Middle/Senior High School that were crowded, classroom facilities and design were appropriate for instruction.

In summary, access to the general curriculum for students with disabilities varies across the district, and is somewhat dependent on the initiatives in place at the individual schools. Access is more likely to be provided in general education classes at the elementary and high school level,

with some level of support by ESE teachers. At the middle school level, instruction in the Sunshine State Standards is most likely to be provided in an ESE classroom (e.g., Yulee Middle School). Ample resources are provided by the district to support students with disabilities, including classroom and instructional materials, assistive technology, and staff (including substitute teachers and paraprofessional aids). Across the district, school administrators and teachers reported having a strong internal support system within their schools, as well as support from the district office.

Staff Development

This category refers to any staff development activities that directly target the placement of students with disabilities in the least restrictive environment and that promote increased time with nondisabled peers. Interviews with district staff revealed that training has been provided recently in differentiated instruction, the use of instructional accommodations and accommodations for FCAT, and use of the LoTTIE kits. Training on effective reading instruction is on-going. Additional staff development activities reported across the district include training:

- at targeted schools prior to the implementation of the inclusion initiative, including administrators, teachers, students and parents
- on the use of SRA materials and other reading curricula/initiatives
- in social skills instruction and behavior management
- on the use of accommodations and modifications for general education teachers
- on functional behavior assessments (FBAs)
- on inclusive practices and the development of inclusive environments

Teachers and administrators across the district reported that ample staff development opportunities exist in the district, and that they have only to request training on a topic and Ms. Patchen, the ESE director, will ensure that it is provided. Despite this, in interviews as well as in the teacher and parent focus groups, it was reported that additional training opportunities are needed to address the implementation of effective inclusive practices, and especially on the use of instructional accommodations.

In summary, while extensive staff development opportunities are available through the district ESE department as well as through individual school administrations, there is a need for continued training on the use of effective inclusive practices and instructional accommodations.

Parental Involvement

This category refers to parent involvement as it relates directly to the placement of students in with disabilities in the least restrictive environment. Reports of parent participation in the IEP team process varied across the district, with relatively greater participation reported in elementary schools. It should be noted that at Fernandina Beach High School parent attendance at IEP meetings was reported to have increased to almost 100% since the implementation of the inclusion initiative. Some of this was attributed to the extensive parent-education activities conducted prior to the transition. Across the district, parents and teachers report that parents have a significant say in the placement decisions for students with disabilities. At times this results in students with more significant disabilities being served in the general education setting for a

large portion of the day when parent advocate for inclusion; at other times it results in students with milder disabilities being served in ESE classrooms for a significant portion of the school day, when parents are hesitant to remove their children from the perceived protection of the ESE setting.

Stakeholder Opinions Related to the Indicator

This category refers to respondents' views on issues directly related to the regular class placement rate for students with disabilities. When asked their opinion on the likely contributors to the relatively low regular class placement rate for students with disabilities in Nassau County, the following issues were cited:

- Inaccurate reporting of time with nondisabled peers for students in inclusion classrooms with co-teaching misrepresents the true situation.
- The district was selected based on placement data from the 2001-02 school year; data from the current school year (2003-04) would reflect significantly higher rates of regular class placement, as a result of on the inclusion initiatives being implemented.
- Many of the inclusive activities undertaken by specific schools involve “reverse inclusion” of nondisabled peers into ESE settings and target students served at the separate class level or in self-contained settings; these activities will not be reflected in the regular class placement rate.
- A focus on providing intensive services at the prekindergarten and primary level, with the intent of gradually “weaning” the students from ESE services, results in these students being served at a resource or separate level.

Services to Gifted Students

All gifted students at the elementary level are served once per week. Nassau County currently provides gifted services to five parentally placed private school students in addition to the regularly enrolled students in the district. Students in the western portion of the district receive services through an itinerant teacher who comes to the schools. Students in the eastern portion of the district are bused to Southside Elementary School one day per week for gifted services. Southside Elementary also is the site of the classroom for profoundly mentally handicapped (PMH) students ages 3-21, and it serves students from across the district. As a part of the gifted program at Southside, the students visit the PMH class for 30-50 minutes per day, and interact with the students with disabilities in a variety of ways. For example, the fifth graders research specific disabilities, and assist in the creation of assistive communication devices and computer programs for the students with disabilities. This program is reported to be very well-received by all students involved, and to provide opportunities for meaningful interaction among the students. With the rotating schedule, a different class of gifted students is in the PMH classroom each day of the week.

Hilliard Middle/Senior High School and West Nassau High School operate on a block schedule, so students at those schools may enroll in a gifted class for one semester per year. The teacher of the gifted is available to provide consultative services to students who require them during the semester in which they are not enrolled in the gifted course.

At the high school level, the service model varies by school. Students at Fernandina Beach High School may enroll in a gifted humanities course and a gifted studies course. In addition, there is a learning strategies class for gifted ninth graders.

The gifted curriculum at the middle and high school level was described as an enrichment program of advanced activities related to the Sunshine State Standards. At the elementary level, it is reported to be project-based and to revolve around units developed by the teachers in response to the interests of the students. The elementary teachers plan together, to promote consistency across the district, and the activities are designed to include language arts, social studies, math, science, and technology.

It was reported that the district uses the Renzulli Checklist for Teachers and the Otis-Lennon School Ability Test (OLSAT) as screening instruments. Students may be referred by parents or by teachers, and all students who achieve A/B honor roll are screened. It was reported that students are rarely dismissed from the gifted program; this only occurs when students at the high school level choose not to enroll in gifted courses. The district currently documents services for gifted students on IEPs, although staff requested information from the monitors regarding a shift to using EPs. The IEPs are reviewed annually, and include all of the components of the IEPs developed for students with disabilities.

Of the 58 parents who responded to the survey for gifted students, 79% reported satisfaction with services their child receives. While 93% reported satisfaction with the gifted teachers' expertise in teaching students identified as gifted, only 45% reported satisfaction with the general education teachers' expertise in that area. Also reflecting this discrepancy between the general education setting and the gifted classes, 86% of respondents reported that their child is academically challenged in gifted classes, while only 48% reported that their child is challenged in the regular education classes. These findings are of some concern, and may indicate a need for additional training for general education teachers related to the characteristics and needs of the gifted students in their classrooms.

Nassau County is currently addressing under-representation of minority students in its gifted program, targeting an increase in the referral rate in an effort to decrease disproportionality in the program.

In summary, students at all grade levels have access to gifted classes, although the services vary by school across the district. Of particular note, there is a "reverse mainstreaming" program in place at Southside Elementary School that provides opportunities for students with significant disabilities to interact with their gifted peers, and for the gifted students to apply their skills and knowledge of technology and specific disabilities in a very practical way. While parents reported general satisfaction with the gifted services their children receive, they reported significantly less satisfaction with their children's experiences in regular education classes as compared to gifted classes.

Student Record Reviews

A total of 30 student records, randomly selected from the population of exceptional students in Nassau County, were reviewed for compliance. The records were sent to the DOE for review by

Bureau staff prior to the on-site visit. The review included 28 IEPs for students with disabilities, and two IEPs for students identified as gifted. The sample group included records of elementary, middle, and high school students.

Systemic findings are those that occur with sufficient frequency that the monitoring team could reasonable infer a system-wide problem. The following areas of noncompliance appeared to be systemic in nature:

- lack of a majority of measurable annual goals
- lack of progress reports as often as progress is reported to nondisabled students
- inadequate short term objectives
- progress reports do not describe progress toward the annual goal or the extent to which the student is expected to achieve the goal by the end of the year
- lack of duration date for services
- lack of initiation/duration dates, frequency, and location of accommodations and/or modifications
- present level statements, goals, and objectives do not support the services identified on the IEP
- lack of indication that the results of the initial or most recent evaluations were considered.

In addition, individual or non-systemic findings were as follows:

- lack of appropriate signatures on the IEP (LEA, special education teacher, interpreter of instructional implications, general education teacher, agency representative)
- lack of correspondence between annual goals and objectives and the needs identified in the present level of educational performance
- inadequate statements indicating how the student's disability affects the student's involvement in the general curriculum
- lack of identification of the purpose of the meeting (transition)
- lack of prior informed notice of change of free appropriate public education (FAPE)
- lack of prior informed notice of change of placement
- lack of student invitation to meeting, for students aged 14 or older
- lack of transfer of rights at least one year prior to the student's 18th birthday
- lack of separate transfer of rights closer to the student's 18th birthday
- lack of adequate present level of education performance statements
- lack of documentation of parental input into the reevaluation process
- lack of statement indicating how the student's progress toward the annual goals will be measured
- lack of statement indicating how parents will be notified of the student's progress toward annual goals
- lack of documentation that the concerns of the parent were considered
- lack of indication that the results of the most recent state or district assessments were considered
- lack of indication that instruction was addressed on the transition IEP

Fourteen of the 28 IEPs reviewed had at least one goal that was not measurable. For eight of the 28 students a majority of the goals were not measurable, and the IEP teams must be reconvened to address this finding. The district was notified of the specific students requiring reconvened IEPs in a facsimile message on September 5, 2003. In addition, there will be fund adjustments for four students for lack of prior informed notice of change of placement, lack of an IEP on the first day of school, or lack of an IEP on the day of the federal funding count. The aforementioned facsimile message also provided notification of the students for whom fund adjustments will be made.

Educational plans for gifted students must include expected student outcomes. These outcomes must identify what the student is expected to achieve during the course of the IEP. The two IEPs for gifted students that were reviewed were in compliance on many items; however, there were several areas of noncompliance that appeared on both:

- lack of individualization in the present level of educational performance statements
- lack of student outcomes
- lack of evaluation criteria for the goal(s)
- lack of evaluation schedule for the goal(s)

In summary, systemic findings were noted in eight areas. Individual or non-systemic findings were identified in 17 areas. There were four findings which appeared in the review of both EPs. There were four fund adjustments, and eight IEP teams were required to reconvene due to a lack of a majority of measurable annual goals.

District Forms Review

Forms representing the thirteen areas identified below were submitted to Bureau staff for a review to determine compliance with federal and state laws. Findings were noted in six of the areas, and changes are required on those forms. The district was notified of the specific findings via a separate letter dated July 16, 2003. A detailed explanation of the specific findings may be found in appendix E. The following forms required revision:

- *IEP Forms*
- *Notice and Consent for Initial Placement*
- *Informed Notice and Consent for Evaluation*
- *Informed Notice of Dismissal*
- *Documentation of Staffing/Eligibility Determination*
- *Annual Written Notice of Confidentiality of Student Information*

District Response

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

monitoring plan. Following is 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.

During the course of conducting the focused monitoring activities, including daily debriefings with the monitoring team and district staff, it is often the case that suggestions and/or recommendations related to interventions or strategies are proposed. A listing of these recommendations as well as specific discretionary projects and DOE contacts available to provide technical assistance to the district in the development and implementation of the plan are included following the plan format.

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

31

Category	Findings	ESE	All	System Improvement Strategy	Evidence of Change and Target Date
Service Delivery Options	The manner in which grade levels are distributed across the district provides for a very limited range of grades or ages at some schools. The placement of specific programs for full-time ESE students in these schools limits the opportunities for grade- or age-appropriate interactions.	X		<p>Currently there are 6 classrooms for students with disabilities that are located in schools that do not provide access will be to age appropriate peer models.</p> <p>Beginning for 2004-2005 school year two classes will be reassigned to schools with age appropriate peers.</p> <p>Strategies to be used</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • on-going review of classroom placements to ensure access to appropriate peers 	<p>The district will report the number of students impacted by this reassignment.</p> <p>June, 2004 June, 2005</p>

Category	Findings	ESE	All	System Improvement Strategy	Evidence of Change and Target Date
Service Delivery Options (continued)				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> investigate other ways to provide access to age appropriate peers beginning 2005-06, put in place additional strategies to increase access to age appropriate peers 	
Decision-Making	Addressed in the Parent Involvement section.				
Access to the General Curriculum/ Resources	In some cases, access to the general curriculum is dependent on the initiatives in place at the individual schools, rather than the needs of the individual student (e.g., at Yulee Middle School, instruction in the Sunshine State Standards is most likely to be provided in an ESE classroom through a parallel curriculum model, even when the instruction is the same as that in a general education setting).	X		<p>Each of the middle school principals have been involved in training to provide them with information on other service delivery models that could be implemented over the next two years. Each school will identify training, equipment and or support services that will be required to implement changes. Visitations options will be provided to sites where the strategies or service delivery models are being used.</p> <p>Florida Inclusion Network (FIN) and Florida Diagnostic and Learning Resources System (FDLRS) will assist in providing any identified training. Documentation to be collected by the district will include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> in-service and travel logs schedules of ESE students 	<p>Beginning 2004-05 each school will implement at least one new delivery model.</p> <p>Plans will be developed by each school to describe the programming for ESE students for 2004-05.</p> <p>District report of self-assessment will describe: planned changes in service delivery at three targeted pilot sites; for schools with no co-teaching, the report will describe how ESE students will have increased access to the general curriculum.</p> <p>June 2004</p> <p>District report of self-</p>

Category	Findings	ESE	All	System Improvement Strategy	Evidence of Change and Target Date
<p>Access to the General Curriculum/ Resources (continued.)</p>				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • funds for visitations to effective programs <p>April 2004 committee will meet to plan changes in service delivery models. Minutes will be kept.</p> <p>Implementation of identified strategies will occur at three pilot schools. Training logs will be kept.</p> <p>If co-teaching is not implemented in the middle schools next year, then the principal will submit a plan by May 1 to describe how their school's programming will increase opportunities for ESE to be exposed to the general curriculum and the regular sunshine state standards</p> <p>A study was just completed by an outside consultant on issues related to EMH students having limited access to the general education curriculum.</p> <p>A committee will be established to review the results of this study and develop strategies to increase the time EMH students spent with non-disabled students.</p>	<p>assessment will describe planned changes in service delivery, and report the increased number of students served at a less restrictive level.</p> <p>June 2005</p>

Category	Findings	ESE	All	System Improvement Strategy	Evidence of Change and Target Date
Staff Development	Teachers across the district express the need for continued training on the use of effective inclusive practices and instructional accommodations.		X	<p>Staff development activities will continue to be provided.</p> <p>The staff development director will be involved to identify trainings impacting ESE have been requested by the schools.</p> <p>A survey will be conducted to determine what training the schools would like to have provided.</p> <p>FIN and FDLRS will assist in identifying and providing workshops that would present effective inclusive practices.</p>	<p>District-administered surveys and/or classroom observations related to the training reveals an increase in the level of competence on the part of participants.</p> <p>June, 2004 June, 2005</p>
Parental Involvement	At times, the IEP teams' placement decision is primarily based on parent request for ESE placement in lieu of placement in a general education setting with supports.			<p>The Parent Advisory Council will provide training in IEPs.</p> <p>IEP training for teachers will continue to stress data-based team decisions for placement in the least restrictive environment.</p>	<p>District-administered teacher surveys and/or observations of IEP team meetings by district staff indicate that placements in ESE classes result from consensus of the team and are not based solely on the request of the parent.</p> <p>June, 2004 June, 2005</p>

Category	Findings	ESE	All	System Improvement Strategy	Evidence of Change and Target Date
Gifted Services	While parents reported general satisfaction with the gifted services their children receive, they reported significantly less satisfaction with their children's experiences in regular education classes as compared to gifted classes.		X	<p>Discussion will occur with the elementary principals each month to brainstorm strategies to improve educational opportunities for students who are gifted while they are in general education. Minutes of these meeting will be kept.</p> <p>Timelines will be developed to implement the strategies identified by the principals. First strategy identified:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • provide differentiated instruction training to regular ed teachers <p>District will maintain logs of in-service trainings.</p>	<p>Report of district-administered surveys and/or classroom observations related to the training reveals an increase in the level of competence on the part of participants.</p> <p>June, 2004 June, 2005</p>
Records Review	<p>Systemic findings were noted in eight areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • lack of a majority of measurable annual goals • lack of progress reports as often as progress is reported to nondisabled students • inadequate short term objectives • progress reports do not describe progress 	X		<p>Training on the development of fully compliant IEPs/TIEPs will be provided to the ESE teachers and staff with special attention being provided to the audit findings. Training will be provided by the ESE office, FDLRS and FIN</p> <p>Training logs will be maintained.</p> <p>The IEP team will meet and revise the IEPs on the eight listed students.</p>	<p>IEPs will be randomly reviewed by school and/or district staff, using the Bureau monitoring work papers and source book; findings will be reported to the principal.</p> <p>District report of random self-assessment reveals compliance with required components.</p> <p>June, 2004 June, 2005</p>

Category	Findings	ESE	All	System Improvement Strategy	Evidence of Change and Target Date
Records Review (continued)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • toward the annual goal or the extent to which the student is expected to achieve the goal by the end of the year • lack of duration date for services • lack of • initiation/duration dates, frequency, and location of accommodations and/or modifications • present level statements, goals, and objectives do not support the services identified on the IEP • lack of indication that the results of the initial or most recent evaluations were considered. <p>Individual or non-systemic finding were identified in 17 areas.</p> <p>There were four fund adjustments for lack of</p>				IEPs were reconvened to address areas of need, and have been submitted to the Bureau for review.

Category	Findings	ESE	All	System Improvement Strategy	Evidence of Change and Target Date
Records Review (continued)	prior written notice of change of placement. Eight IEP teams were required to reconvene due to a lack of a majority of measurable annual goals.				
	There were four findings which appeared in the review of both IEPs for gifted students: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • lack of individualization in the present level of • educational performance statements • lack of student outcomes • lack of evaluation criteria for the goal(s) • lack of evaluation schedule for the goal(s) 	X		Training on the development of fully compliant EPs for gifted students will be provided to the ESE teachers and staff with special attention being provided to the findings. Training will be provided by district ESE staff.	Educational plans (EPs) for gifted students will be randomly reviewed by school and/or district staff, using the Bureau monitoring work papers and source book. Findings will be reported to the principal. District report of random self-assessment reveals compliance with all required components. June, 2004 June, 2005
Forms Review	The following forms required revision: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>IEP Forms</i> • <i>Notice and Consent for Initial Placement</i> • <i>Informed Notice and</i> 	X		All forms will be revised to comply with rules.	Forms have been revised and will be submitted to the DOE by February 21, 2004.

Category	Findings	ESE	All	System Improvement Strategy	Evidence of Change and Target Date
Forms Review (continued)	<i>Consent for Evaluation</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Informed Notice of Dismissal</i> • <i>Documentation of Staffing/Eligibility Determination</i> 				
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Annual Written Notice of Confidentiality of Student Information</i> 		X		Form has been revised and will be submitted to the DOE by February 21, 2004.

Recommendations and Technical Assistance

As a result of the focused monitoring activities conducted in Nassau County during the week of August 25, 2003, the Bureau has identified specific findings related to regular class placement rate for students with disabilities in the district. The following are recommendations for the district to consider when developing the system improvement plan and determining strategies that are most likely to effect change. The list is not all-inclusive, and is intended only as a starting point for discussion among the parties responsible for the development of the plan. A partial listing of technical assistance resources is also provided. These resources may be of assistance in the development and/or implementation of the system improvement plan.

Recommendations

- Request assistance from the Bureau's Program Evaluation section to ensure that student placement (percent of time removed from general education) is reported accurately at the school and district levels
- Continue to implement and expand current initiatives that provide for interaction among students with significant disabilities and their nondisabled peers.
- Review/revise the placement options at the middle school level, focusing on the use of parallel curricula and its affect on access to the general curriculum for students with disabilities.
- Review the use of learning strategies classes; consider expanding the availability of this course, especially at the middle school level.
- Review the content and student enrollment of remedial courses to determine if ESE sections of these classes are required for effective instruction, or if student enrollment can be mixed to include students with disabilities and nondisabled peers.
- Review the placement of separate class programs for students with significant or low-incidence disabilities across the district; can students be scheduled in a manner to allow for more interaction with age-appropriate nondisabled peers?
- Provide training to general education teachers on the characteristics and needs of gifted students.
- Provide training to teachers on: effective inclusive practices; use of instructional accommodations; IEP development, including placement in the least restrictive environment through the use of supplemental aids and services

Technical Assistance

Florida Inclusion Network

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

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

Bureau of Instructional Support and Community Services

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

SLD, IEPs

Paul Gallaher
(850) 245-0478

Behavior/Discipline

EH/SED

Lee Clark
(850) 245-0478

Gifted, EPs

Donnajo Smith
(850) 245-0478

Mentally Handicapped/Autism

Sheryl Brainerd
(850) 245-0478

ESE Program Monitoring (Compliance)

Eileen Amy
Kim Komisar
Gail Best
David Katcher
April Katine
Barbara McAnelly
(850) 245-0475

Program Evaluation (Data Reporting)

Karen Denbroeder
Marie LaCap
(850) 245-0475

Clearinghouse Information Center

cicbiscs@FLDOE.org

APPENDIX A:
DEVELOPMENT OF THE MONITORING PROCESS

Development of the Monitoring Process 1999-2003

With guidance from a work group of parent, school and district representatives and members of the State Advisory Committee for Exceptional Students, substantial revisions to Bureau monitoring practices were initiated during the 1999-2000 school year. The shift to a focused monitoring approach began at the national level, with the monitoring of state departments of education by the Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP). The revisions reflect a change in the focus of the monitoring process from one that relies primarily on procedural compliance to one that focuses on improved outcomes for students with disabilities, as measured by key data indicators. As a result of the efforts of the monitoring stakeholders' workgroup, three types of monitoring processes were established as part of the Florida DOE's system of exceptional student education monitoring and oversight. Those monitoring activities were identified as focused monitoring, random monitoring, and continuous improvement monitoring.

Beginning in 1999, Bureau staff and the stakeholders' workgroup developed a system whereby districts would be selected for monitoring based on their performance on key data indicators related to student performance, and the monitoring activities would focus on determining the root cause of the district's performance on that indicator. The following key data indicators were recommended by the monitoring restructuring work group and were adopted for implementation by the Bureau. The identified indicators and the sources of the data used are

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

While districts were selected for focused monitoring based on their performance on key data indicators, they were randomly selected for the more procedural/ compliance-oriented random monitoring process. All 67 districts participate in the continuous improvement monitoring process. The focused monitoring activities applied only to students with disabilities, while random monitoring and continuous improvement monitoring involved both students with disabilities and students identified as gifted.

The change to the monitoring process also resulted in an adjustment to what is considered a "monitoring year." Historically, compliance monitoring activities in the state have been conducted in a cycle, and over the course of a school year. While the collection and analysis of data and implementation of system improvement plans for the continuous improvement monitoring process continue to be based on the traditional school year (e.g. 2002-03), the quality assurance visits conducted by the Bureau are conducted over the course of a calendar year (e.g., January to December, 2003).

During the transition year of 1999-2000 districts were asked to conduct extensive self-evaluations. Beginning in the 2000-01 school year, the focused monitoring process was

instituted. Four districts were selected for focused monitoring during the 2001 pilot year: Jackson County– standard diploma rate; Lee County– dropout rate; Osceola County– participation in statewide assessment; and, Taylor County– regular class placement.

During the 2002 monitoring cycle, seven districts were chosen for focused monitoring visits based on their state rankings, and three districts were selected at random for the more procedural/compliance-oriented random monitoring. The districts and the indicators they were selected on are as follows: Polk and Gadsden Counties – dropout rate; Madison and Franklin Counties – participation in statewide assessment; and, Dade and Lafayette Counties – regular class placement. Bradford County was selected on the basis of standard diploma rate, but that visit was changed to a random monitoring visit when it was determined that data reporting errors had resulted in a significant misrepresentation of the district’s ranking. Charlotte, Glades, and Duval Counties also were selected for random monitoring.

The continuous improvement monitoring process began during the 2001-02 school year. At that time, school districts were asked to examine key data indicators for exceptional students and to self-select two indicators (one for students with disabilities and one for gifted students) to target for improvement. In the fall of 2001, districts were required to develop a plan to conduct an in-depth analysis during the 2001-02 school year of the selected data indicators for both populations, and to submit the plan to the Bureau for review and approval. While all districts were required to submit a plan for data collection during the initial year of continuous improvement monitoring, on-site visits by the Bureau were not conducted to review these activities.

For the 2002-2003 school year, based on the results of the data collection and analysis conducted during the 2001-02 school year, districts were required to submit continuous improvement monitoring plans (CIMPs) designed to improve outcomes for students with disabilities and for gifted students.

In an effort to utilize resources most effectively, activities related to random monitoring and continuous improvement monitoring visits have been consolidated. Therefore, during 2003 the Bureau is conducting on-site visits to eight districts chosen for focused monitoring based on key data indicators, and to two districts chosen at random for a review of the continuous improvement monitoring activities undertaken by the district. In addition, the Bureau will conduct follow-up visits to the four districts that participated in the focused monitoring process during 2001. Compliance reviews of selected policies, procedures, and student records are incorporated in varying degrees into all of the monitoring visits.

APPENDIX B:
DISTRICT DATA



**Florida Department of Education
Bureau of Instructional Support and Community Services
2003 LEA Profile**

District: Nassau	PK-12 Population: 10,521
Enrollment Group: 7,000 to 20,000	Percent Disabled: 16%
	Percent Gifted: 2%

Introduction

The LEA profile is intended to provide districts with a tool for use in planning for systemic improvement. The profile contains a series of data indicators that describe measures of educational benefit, educational environment, and prevalence for exceptional students. The data are presented for the district, districts of comparable size (enrollment group) and the state. Where appropriate and available, comparative data for general education students are included.

Data presented as indicators of **educational benefit** (*Section One*)

- Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test (FCAT) participation and performance
- Standard diploma rate
- Dropout rate
- Retention rate

Data presented as indicators of **educational environment** (*Section Two*)

- Regular class / natural environment placement
- Separate class placement
- Discipline rates

Data presented as indicators of **prevalence** (*Section Three*)

- Student membership by race/ethnicity
- Gifted membership by free/reduced lunch and Limited English Proficiency (LEP) status
- Student membership in selected disabilities by race/ethnicity
- Selected disabilities as a percent of all disabilities and as a percent of total PK-12 population

Four of the indicators included in the profile, Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test (FCAT) participation, graduation rate, dropout rate, and regular class placement, are also used in the selection of districts for focused monitoring. Indicators describing the prevalence and separate class placement of students identified as educable mentally handicapped (EMH) are included to correspond with provisions of the Bureau's partnership agreement with the Office for Civil Rights.

Data Sources

The data contained in this profile were obtained from data submitted electronically by districts through the Department of Education Information Database in surveys 2, 9, 3 and 5 and from the assessment files. School year data are included for **1999-00** through **December 2002**.

Section One: Educational Benefit

Educational benefit refers to the extent to which children benefit from their educational experience. Progression through and completion of school are dimensions of educational benefits as are post-school outcomes and indicators of consumer satisfaction. This section of the profile provides data on indicators of student performance and school completion.

Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test (FCAT) participation and performance data found in this section includes students who were reported in February (survey 3) **and** had a reported score on the multiple choice portion of the FCAT for the 1999-00, 2000-01, and 2001-02 administrations. (Scores are not reported in cases where the student identification number is missing, incorrect or where the student did not attempt to answer the test questions.) Students who had a reported FCAT score but were not reported in February (survey 3) are not included. Data for students with disabilities and students who are gifted includes only students with a primary exceptionality reported in February (survey 3). Students who had a reported FCAT score but did not have a primary exceptionality in February are not included in the disabled or gifted data. The statewide student match rate for students with disabilities and students identified as gifted in February (survey 3) and the FCAT files was between 98 and 99 percent across the reported grade levels.

Participation Rate in Statewide Assessments:

The number of students with disabilities reported in February (survey 3) who had a reported FCAT score divided by the total number enrolled during February (survey 3) of the same year. The resulting percentages are reported for the three-year period from **1999-00** through **2001-02**.

Grade 3 Participation FCAT Math					Grade 3 Participation FCAT Reading
1999-00	2000-01	2001-02	1999-00	2000-01	2001-02
*	97%	91%	*	97%	93%
*	87%	87%	*	86%	87%
*	85%	87%	*	85%	87%
Nassau Enrollment Group			State		
Grade 5 Participation FCAT Math			Grade 4 Participation FCAT Reading		
1999-00	2000-01	2001-02	1999-00	2000-01	2001-02
94%	92%	91%	86%	93%	93%
84%	87%	87%	82%	86%	87%
84%	85%	88%	83%	85%	88%
Nassau Enrollment Group			State		
Grade 8 Participation FCAT Math			Grade 8 Participation FCAT Reading		
1999-00	2000-01	2001-02	1999-00	2000-01	2001-02
85%	86%	93%	85%	86%	94%
80%	79%	81%	80%	79%	81%
76%	76%	80%	76%	76%	80%
Nassau Enrollment Group			State		
Grade 10 Participation FCAT Math			Grade 10 Participation FCAT Reading		
1999-00	2000-01	2001-02	1999-00	2000-01	2001-02
80%	72%	70%	83%	75%	69%
64%	60%	64%	63%	60%	65%
58%	59%	62%	58%	59%	62%
Nassau Enrollment Group			State		

* Not administered in 1999-00.

** Reported number participating exceeds enrollment.

Performance on Statewide Assessments: FCAT Reading

The following tables show the percent of students in the district scoring at Level 1, Level 2, and Level 3 and above on the **2000-01** and **2001-02** FCAT for students with disabilities, all students, and gifted students. The bars in the graph display the percent of students in the district scoring at or above achievement level 3 for **2000-01** and **2001-02**.

	Grade 3 Achievement Level					
	Level 1		Level 2		Level 3+	
	2000-01	2001-02	2000-01	2001-02	2000-01	2001-02
students with disabilities	nr	42%	nr	19%	nr	38%
all students	nr	17%	nr	14%	nr	69%
gifted students	nr	0%	nr	0%	nr	100%

	Grade 4 Achievement Level					
	Level 1		Level 2		Level 3+	
	2000-01	2001-02	2000-01	2001-02	2000-01	2001-02
students with disabilities	58%	59%	12%	12%	30%	29%
all students	25%	25%	15%	15%	60%	60%
gifted students	0%	0%	0%	0%	100%	100%

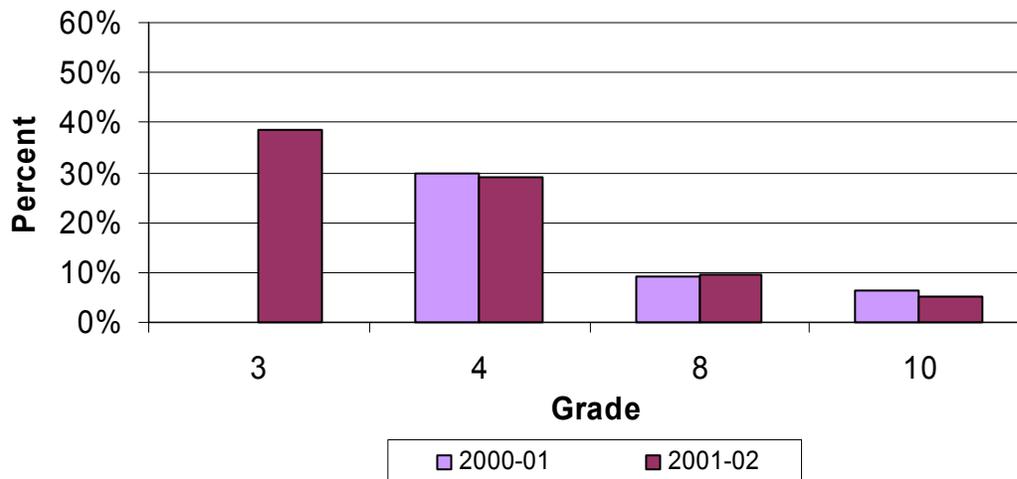
	Grade 8 Achievement Level					
	Level 1		Level 2		Level 3+	
	2000-01	2001-02	2000-01	2001-02	2000-01	2001-02
students with disabilities	63%	64%	28%	26%	9%	9%
all students	24%	24%	30%	29%	45%	48%
gifted students	0%	0%	0%	6%	100%	94%

	Grade 10 Achievement Level					
	Level 1		Level 2		Level 3+	
	2000-01	2001-02	2000-01	2001-02	2000-01	2001-02
students with disabilities	70%	75%	23%	19%	6%	5%
all students	28%	29%	33%	36%	39%	34%
gifted students	0%	0%	0%	0%	100%	100%

nr = not reported

Percent of Students with Disabilities at Achievement Level 3 or Higher

FCAT Reading



Performance on Statewide Assessments: FCAT Math

Grade 3 Achievement Level							
		Level 1		Level 2		Level 3+	
		2000-01	2001-02	2000-01	2001-02	2000-01	2001-02
students with disabilities		nr	38%	nr	19%	nr	43%
all students		nr	15%	nr	18%	nr	67%
gifted students		nr	0%	nr	0%	nr	100%

Grade 5 Achievement Level							
		Level 1		Level 2		Level 3+	
		2000-01	2001-02	2000-01	2001-02	2000-01	2001-02
students with disabilities		62%	55%	20%	31%	18%	14%
all students		25%	22%	27%	30%	48%	48%
gifted students		0%	0%	0%	0%	100%	100%

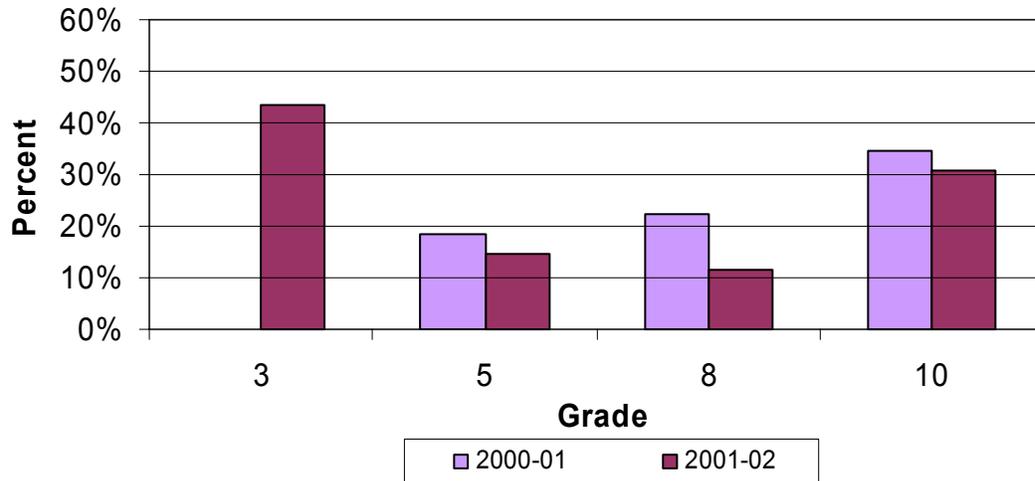
Grade 8 Achievement Level							
		Level 1		Level 2		Level 3+	
		2000-01	2001-02	2000-01	2001-02	2000-01	2001-02
students with disabilities		53%	63%	25%	26%	22%	11%
all students		17%	17%	22%	22%	61%	61%
gifted students		0%	0%	0%	0%	100%	100%

Grade 10 Achievement Level							
		Level 1		Level 2		Level 3+	
		2000-01	2001-02	2000-01	2001-02	2000-01	2001-02
students with disabilities		45%	42%	21%	27%	35%	31%
all students		14%	14%	23%	21%	63%	65%
gifted students		0%	0%	0%	0%	100%	100%

nr = not reported

Percent of Students with Disabilities at Achievement Level 3 or Higher

FCAT Math



Standard Diploma Graduation Rate:

The number of students with disabilities graduating with a standard diploma (withdrawal code W06) divided by the total number of students with disabilities who completed their education (withdrawal codes W06-10, W27) as reported in end of year survey 5. The resulting percentages are reported for the three-year period from **1999-00** through **2001-02**.

	1999-00	2000-01	2001-02
Nassau	79%	96%	93%
Enrollment Group	57%	50%	52%
State	56%	51%	48%

Retention Rate:

The number of students retained divided by the total year enrollment as reported in end of year survey 5. Total enrollment is the count of all students who attended school at any time during the school year. The results are reported for students with disabilities and all PK-12 students for **2001-02**.

		2001-02	
		Students with Disabilities	All Students
Nassau		3%	4%
Enrollment Group		5%	4%
State		7%	6%

Dropout Rate:

The number of students grades 9-12 for whom a dropout withdrawal reason (DNE, W05, W11, W13-W23) was reported, divided by the total enrollment of grade 9-12 students and students who did not enter school as expected (DNEs) as reported in end of year survey 5. The resulting percentages are reported for students with disabilities, all PK-12 students, and gifted students for the years **1999-00** through **2001-02**.

		Students with Disabilities		
		1999-00	2000-01	2001-02
Nassau		4%	5%	8%
Enrollment Group		5%	5%	5%
State		6%	5%	5%

		All Students		
		1999-00	2000-01	2001-02
Nassau		4%	5%	3%
Enrollment Group		3%	3%	3%
State		5%	4%	3%

		Gifted Students		
		1999-00	2000-01	2001-02
Nassau		0%	0%	0%
Enrollment Group		<1%	<1%	<1%
State		<1%	<1%	<1%

Section Two: Educational Environment

Educational environment refers to the extent to which students with disabilities receive special education and related services in natural environments, classes or schools with their nondisabled peers. This section of the profile provides data on indicators of educational environments.

Regular Class Placement, Ages 6-21:

The number of students with disabilities ages 6-21 who spend 80 percent or more of their school week with nondisabled peers divided by the total number of students with disabilities ages 6-21 reported in December (survey 9). The resulting percentages are reported for the three years from **2000-01** through **2002-03**.

	2000-01	2001-02	2002-03
Nassau	34%	31%	34%
Enrollment Group	44%	45%	46%
State	48%	48%	48%

Natural Environments, Ages 3-5:

The number of students with disabilities ages 3-5 who receive all of their special education and related services in educational programs designed primarily for children without disabilities or in their home divided by the total number of students with disabilities ages 3-5 reported in December (survey 9). The resulting percentages are reported for the three years from **2000-01** through **2002-03**.

	2000-01	2001-02	2002-03
Nassau	3%	0%	<1%
Enrollment Group	5%	5%	5%
State	6%	7%	7%

Separate Class Placement of EMH Students, Ages 6-21:

The number of students ages 6-21 identified as educable mentally handicapped who spend less than 40 percent of their day with nondisabled peers divided by the total number of EMH students reported in December (survey 9). The resulting percentages are reported for three years from **2000-01** through **2002-03**.

	2000-01	2001-02	2002-03
Nassau	84%	90%	90%
Enrollment Group	56%	58%	60%
State	61%	62%	61%

Discipline Rates:

The number of students who served in-school or out-of-school suspensions, were expelled, or moved to alternative placement at any time during the school year divided by the total year enrollment as reported in end of year (survey 5). The resulting percentages are reported for students with disabilities and nondisabled students for **2001-02**.

		2001-02							
		In-School Suspensions		Out-of-School Suspensions		Expulsions		Alternative Placement *	
		Students with Disabilities	Nondisabled Students						
Nassau		13%	10%	10%	6%	0%	<1%	1%	<1%
Enrollment Group		15%	10%	14%	7%	<1%	<1%	<1%	<1%
State		13%	8%	15%	7%	<1%	<1%	<1%	<1%

* Student went through expulsion process but was offered alternative placement.

Section Three: Prevalence

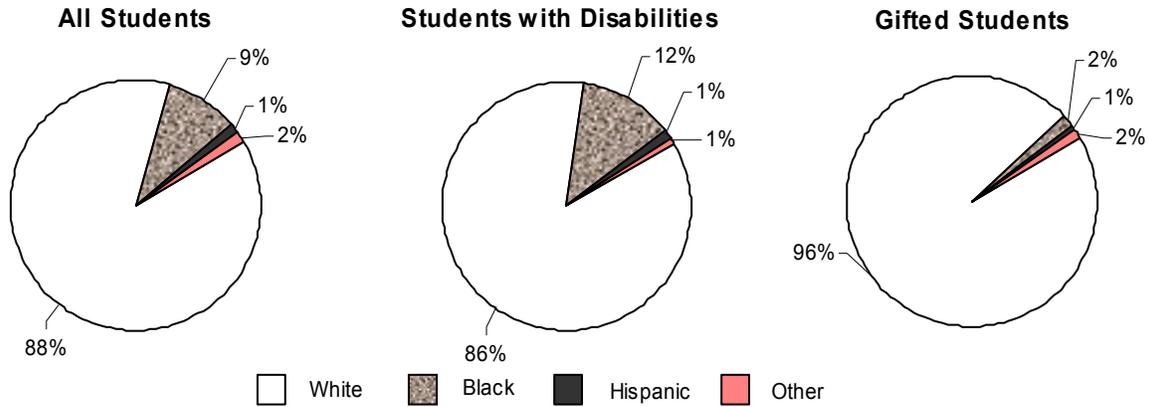
Prevalence refers to the proportion of the PK-12 population identified as exceptional at any given point in time. This section of the profile provides prevalence data by demographic characteristics.

Student Membership by Racial/Ethnic Category:

The three columns on the left show the statewide racial/ethnic distribution for all PK-12 students, all students with disabilities, and all gifted students as reported in **October 2002** (survey 2). Statewide, there is a larger percentage of black students in the disabled population than in the total PK-12 population (28 percent vs. 24 percent) and a smaller percentage of black students in the gifted population (10 percent vs. 24 percent). Similar data for the district are reported in the three right hand columns and displayed in the graphs.

	State			District		
	All Students	Students with Disabilities	Gifted Students	All Students	Students with Disabilities	Gifted Students
White	51%	52%	64%	88%	86%	96%
Black	24%	28%	10%	9%	12%	2%
Hispanic	21%	17%	19%	1%	1%	<1%
Asian/Pacific Islander	2%	<1%	4%	<1%	<1%	<1%
Am Ind/Alaskan Nat	<1%	<1%	<1%	<1%	<1%	<1%
Multiracial	2%	2%	3%	<1%	<1%	<1%

District Membership by Race/Ethnicity



Free/Reduced Lunch and LEP:

The percent of all students and all gifted students in the district and the state on free/reduced lunch. The percent of all students and all gifted students in the district and in the state who are identified as Limited English Proficient (LEP). These percentages are based on data reported in **October 2002** (survey 2).

	State		District	
	All Students	Gifted Students	All Students	Gifted Students
Free / Reduced Lunch	44%	20%	33%	8%
LEP	12%	3%	<1%	0%

Selected Disabilities by Racial/Ethnic Category:

Racial/ethnic data for all students as well as students with a primary disability of specific learning disabled (SLD), emotionally handicapped or severely emotionally disturbed (EH/SED), and educable mentally handicapped (EMH) are presented below. The data are presented for the state and the district as reported in **October 2002** (survey 2).

	All Students		SLD		EH/SED		EMH	
	State	District	State	District	State	District	State	District
White	51%	88%	54%	87%	48%	86%	33%	75%
Black	24%	9%	24%	11%	39%	13%	53%	23%
Hispanic	21%	1%	20%	1%	11%	0%	13%	<1%
Asian/Pacific Islander	2%	<1%	<1%	0%	<1%	<1%	<1%	0%
Am Ind/Alaskan Nat	<1%	<1%	<1%	<1%	<1%	0%	<1%	0%
Multiracial	2%	<1%	1%	<1%	2%	<1%	<1%	<1%

Selected Disabilities as Percent of Disabled and PK-12 Populations:

The percentage of the total disabled population and the total population identified as SLD, EH or SED, EMH, and speech impaired (SI) for the district and for the state. Statewide, seven percent of the total population is identified as SLD and 46 percent of all students with disabilities are SLD. The data are presented for the district and state as reported in **October 2002** (survey 2).

	All Students		All Disabled	
	State	District	State	District
SLD	7%	7%	46%	46%
EH/SED	1%	3%	10%	17%
EMH	1%	1%	8%	8%
SI	2%	2%	14%	14%

Districts in Nassau's Enrollment Group:

Charlotte, Citrus, Columbia, Flagler, Gadsden, Hendry, Hernando, Highlands, Indian River, Jackson, Martin, Monroe, Nassau, Okeechobee, Putnam



Jim Horne, Commissioner

**Nassau County School District
 Focused Monitoring Visit
 August 25-27, 2003**

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

#	District	Size	6-21 ESE	# in Regular Class	%
1	Lafayette	S	110	22	20.0
2	Miami Dade	LV	38,640	7,856	20.3
3	Nassau	MS	1,624	497	30.6
4	Franklin	S	197	63	32.0
5	Marion	M	5,956	2,130	35.8
6	Charlotte	MS	3,252	1,202	37.0
7	Gadsden	MS	1,188	441	37.1
8	Madison	S	752	281	37.4
9	Citrus	MS	2,727	1,023	37.5
10	Martin	MS	2,631	1,000	38.0
11	Polk	L	12,207	4,763	39.0
12	Hendry	MS	1,309	520	39.7
13	Hillsborough	LV	23,648	9,492	40.1
14	Taylor	S	607	246	40.5
15	Calhoun	S	373	154	41.3
16	Escambia	L	6,848	2,843	41.5
17	Dixie	S	432	184	42.6
18	Suwannee	S	685	292	42.6
19	Bay	M	4,466	1,911	42.8
20	Holmes	S	514	222	43.2
21	Union	S	306	135	44.1
22	Glades	S	183	81	44.3
23	Gulf	S	317	141	44.5
24	Jefferson	S	357	159	44.5
25	Jackson	MS	1,377	623	45.2
26	Alachua	M	5,012	2,268	45.3
27	Volusia	L	10,268	4,660	45.4
28	Walton	S	881	406	46.1
29	Highlands	MS	1,996	920	46.1
30	Columbia	MS	1,504	694	46.1
31	Wakulla	S	753	348	46.2
32	Washington	S	467	217	46.5
33	Lee	L	8,730	4,094	46.9
34	Osceola	M	4,960	2,369	47.8

#	District	Size	6-21 ESE	# in Regular Class	%
35	St. Johns	M	2,982	1,433	48.1
36	Gilchrist	S	496	240	48.4
37	St. Lucie	M	4,100	1,987	48.5
38	Hardee	S	985	495	50.3
39	Seminole	L	7,331	3,715	50.7
40	Indian River	MS	2,051	1,042	50.8
41	Hamilton	S	334	170	50.9
42	Palm Beach	LV	20,466	10,446	51.0
43	Levy	S	1,235	631	51.1
44	Sumter	S	1,116	574	51.4
45	Monroe	MS	1,375	708	51.5
46	Orange	LV	23,066	11,960	51.9
47	Baker	S	490	260	53.1
48	Clay	M	5,089	2,728	53.6
49	DeSoto	S	833	448	53.8
50	Putnam	MS	1,978	1,070	54.1
51	Lake	M	4,721	2,587	54.8
52	Pinellas	LV	19,033	10,659	56.0
53	Hernando	MS	2,763	1,555	56.3
54	Santa Rosa	M	3,532	2,037	57.7
55	Brevard	L	9,932	5,790	58.3
56	Leon	M	5,421	3,165	58.4
57	Sarasota	M	6,117	3,591	58.7
58	Okeechobee	S	1,226	728	59.4
59	Pasco	L	9,407	5,589	59.4
60	Bradford	S	871	521	59.8
61	Manatee	M	6,956	4,171	60.0
62	Duval	LV	18,645	11,353	60.9
63	Flagler	S	1,174	726	61.8
64	Collier	M	5,195	3,234	62.3
65	Broward	LV	25,554	17,056	66.7
66	Liberty	S	265	181	68.3
67	Okaloosa	M	4,531	3,491	77.0
	District Total		344,547	166,598	48.4

APPENDIX C:
ESE MONITORING TEAM MEMBERS

**Nassau County School District
Focused Monitoring Visit
August 25-27, 2003**

Monitoring Team Members

Department of Education Staff

Shan Goff, Chief, Bureau of Instructional Support and Community Services
Eileen Amy, Administrator, ESE Program Administration and Quality Assurance
Kim Komisar, Program Director, Monitoring
Iris Anderson, Program Specialist
Gail Best, Program Specialist
April Katine, Program Specialist
Lezlie Cline, Program Specialist

Peer Reviewers

Angela Spornraft, Hardee County Schools
Kim Dotts-Hoehnle, P.K. Yonge Developmental Lab School
Pat Lawson, Lake County Schools

Contracted Staff

Batya Elbaum, Project Director, University of Miami
Emily Joseph, University of Miami
James Kohnstamm, University of Miami
Hope Nieman, Consultant
Denise Stewart, Consultant

APPENDIX D:
SURVEY RESULTS

**Nassau County School District
2003 Parent Survey Report
Students with Disabilities**

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

In conjunction with the 2003 Nassau County School District monitoring activities, the parent survey was sent to parents of 1,667 students with disabilities for whom complete addresses were provided by the district. A total of 219 parents (PK, n=15; K-5, n=99; 6-8, n=62; 9-12, n=43) representing 13% of the sample, returned the survey. Surveys from One hundred and fifty surveys were returned as undeliverable, representing 9% 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
Overall, I am satisfied with:	
• the way I am treated by school personnel.	86
• the amount of time my child spends with regular education students.	81
• the level of knowledge and experience of school personnel.	78
• the way special education teachers and regular education teachers work together.	
• the exceptional education services my child receives.	75
• the effect of exceptional student education on my child's self-esteem.	75
• how quickly services are implemented following an IEP (Individualized Educational Plan) decision.	73
• my child's academic progress.	69

My child:

• has friends at school.	95
• is aiming for a standard diploma.	87
• is usually happy at school.	86
• is learning skills that will be useful later on in life.	80
• spends most of the school day involved in productive activities.	79

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

• whether my child would take the FCAT (Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test).	66
---	----

	% Yes
• ways that my child could spend time with students in regular classes.	66
• whether my child should get accommodations (special testing conditions), for example, extra time.	64
• whether my child needed services beyond the regular school year.	59
• which diploma my child may receive.*	59
• the requirements for different diplomas.*	54

My child's teachers:

• expect my child to succeed.	92
• are available to speak with me.	90
• set appropriate goals for my child.	84
• give students with disabilities extra time or different assignments, if needed.	77
• call me or send me notes about my child.	73
• give homework that meets my child's needs.	73

My child's school:

• makes sure I understand my child's IEP.	85
• encourages me to participate in my child's education.	83
• encourages acceptance of students with disabilities.	82
• sends me information written in a way I understand.	81
• involves students with disabilities in clubs, sports, or other activities.	78
• addresses my child's individual needs.	76
• does all it can to keep students from dropping out of school.	76
• wants to hear my ideas.	76
• offers students with disabilities the classes they need to graduate with a standard diploma.	74
• provides students with disabilities updated books and materials.	71
• explains what I can do if I want to make changes to my child's IEP.	69
• sends me information about activities and workshops for parents.	68
• informs me about all of the services available to my child.	66
• offers a variety of vocational courses, such as computers and business technology.*	64
• provides information to students about education and jobs after high school.*	54

Parent Participation

• I have attended one or more meetings about my child during this school year.	92
• I am comfortable talking about my child with school staff.	91
• I participate in school activities with my child.	76
• I am a member of the PTA/PTO.	27
• I attend School Advisory Committee meetings concerning school improvement.	27

* Answered by parents of students in grades 8 and above

	% Yes
• I have used parent support services in my area.	13
• I belong to an organization for parents of students with disabilities.	10

**Nassau County School District
2003 Parent Survey Report
Students Identified as Gifted**

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

In conjunction with the 2003 Nassau County School District monitoring activities, the parent survey was sent to parents of 445 students identified as gifted for whom complete addresses were provided by the district. A total of 58 parents (K-5, n=19; 6-8, n=29; 9-12, n=10) representing 27% of the sample, returned the survey. Surveys from 6 families were returned as undeliverable, representing 3% 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.

Overall, I am satisfied with:	% Yes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the effect of gifted services on my child's self-esteem. • gifted teachers' expertise in teaching students identified as gifted. • gifted teachers' subject area knowledge. • my child's academic progress. • the gifted services my child receives. • regular teachers' subject area knowledge. • how quickly services were implemented following an initial request for evaluation. • regular teachers' expertise in teaching students identified as gifted. 	<p>97</p> <p>93</p> <p>91</p> <p>86</p> <p>79</p> <p>74</p> <p>62</p> <p>45</p>
In regular classes, my child:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • has friends at school. • is learning skills that will be useful later on in life. • has his/her social and emotional needs met at school. • is usually happy at school. • has creative outlets at school. • is academically challenged at school. 	<p>96</p> <p>91</p> <p>88</p> <p>86</p> <p>70</p> <p>48</p>

In gifted classes, my child:

- has friends at school. 100
- is usually happy at school. 95
- has his/her social and emotional needs met at school. 95
- is learning skills that will be useful later on in life. 93
- has creative outlets at school. 92
- is academically challenged at school. 86

My child's regular teachers:

- expect appropriate behavior. 96
- are available to speak with me. 88
- provide coursework that includes representation of diverse ethnic, racial, and other groups. 74
- have access to the latest information and technology. 68
- set appropriate goals for my child. 62
- give homework that meets my child's needs. 61
- relate coursework to students' future educational and professional pursuits. 60
- call me or send me notes about my child. 54

My child's gifted teachers:

- are available to speak with me. 100
- provide coursework that includes representation of diverse ethnic, racial, and other groups. 100
- expect appropriate behavior. 98
- set appropriate goals for my child. 86
- give homework that meets my child's needs. 80
- have access to the latest information and technology. 77
- relate coursework to students' future educational and professional pursuits. 75
- call me or send me notes about my child. 59

My child's home school:

- treats me with respect. 98
- encourages me to participate in my child's education. 87
- makes sure I understand my child's EP or IEP. 80

% Yes

- involves me in developing my child's Educational Plan (EP or IEP). 79
- sends me information written in a way I understand. 79
- wants to hear my ideas. 76
- implements my ideas. 60
- provides students identified as gifted with appropriate books and materials. 59
- addresses my child's individual needs. 57
- sends me information about activities and workshops for parents. 57
- explains what I can do if I want to make changes to my child's EP or IEP. 52
- informs me about all of the services available to my child. 50

My child's 2nd school:

- sends me information written in a way I understand. 100
- encourages me to participate in my child's education. 92
- treats me with respect. 92
- provides students identified as gifted with appropriate books and materials. 91
- addresses my child's individual needs. 85
- makes sure I understand my child's EP or IEP. 77
- wants to hear my ideas. 75
- informs me about all of the services available to my child. 75
- implements my ideas. 70
- involves me in developing my child's Educational Plan (EP or IEP). 67
- explains what I can do if I want to make changes to my child's EP or IEP. 67
- sends me information about activities and workshops for parents. 50

Students identified as gifted: (primarily for high school students)

- have the option of taking a variety of vocational courses. 70
- are provided with information about options for education after high school. 70
- are provided with career counseling. 70
- are provided with the opportunity to participate in externships or mentorships. 70

Parent Participation

- I participate in school activities with my child. 93
- I have attended one or more meetings about my child during this school year. 82
- I am a member of the PTA/PTO. 59
- I attend School Advisory Committee meetings concerning school improvement 40
- I have used parent support services in my area. 9
- I belong to an organization for parents of students identified as gifted. 4

**Nassau County School District
2003 Student Survey Report
Students with Disabilities**

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

In conjunction with the 2003 Nassau County School District monitoring activities, a sufficient number of surveys were provided to allow all students with disabilities, grades 9-12, to respond. Instructions for administration of the survey by classroom teachers, including a written script, were provided for each class or group of students. Since participation in this survey is not appropriate for some students whose disabilities might impair their understanding of the survey, professional judgment is to be used to determine appropriate participation.

A total of 188 surveys representing approximately 44% of students with disabilities in grades 9-12 in the district were returned. Data are from 2 (25%) of the district's 8 schools with students in grades 9-12.

% Yes

I am taking the following ESE classes:

- | | |
|--|----|
| • English | 59 |
| • Math | 52 |
| • Electives (physical education, art, music) | 52 |
| • Social Studies | 46 |
| • Science | 41 |
| • Vocational (woodshop, computers) | 21 |

At my school:

- | | |
|--|----|
| • ESE teachers give students extra help, if needed. | 92 |
| • ESE teachers believe that ESE students can learn. | 90 |
| • ESE teachers teach students in ways that help them learn. | 87 |
| • ESE teachers understand ESE students' needs. | 85 |
| • ESE teachers teach students things that will be useful later on in life. | 82 |
| • ESE teachers give students extra time or different assignments, if needed. | 81 |
| • ESE teachers provide ESE students with updated books and materials. | 69 |

I am taking the following regular/mainstream classes:	% Yes
• Electives (physical education, art, music)	70
• Science	50
• English	48
• Social Studies	47
• Math	44
• Vocational (woodshop, computers)	36

The following section was filled out by students who are taking any regular/mainstream classes.

At my school:

• Regular education teachers believe that ESE students can learn.	72
• Regular education teachers teach ESE students things that will be useful later on in life.	64
• Regular education teachers give ESE students extra help if needed.	52
• Regular education teachers understand ESE students' needs.	47
• Regular education teachers teach ESE students in ways that help them learn.	42
• Regular education teachers give ESE students extra time or different assignments if needed.	37

At my school, ESE students:

• can take vocational classes such as computers and business technology.	87
• get work experience (on-the-job training) if they are interested.	84
• are encouraged to stay in school.	84
• get the help they need to well in school.	84
• get information about education after high school.	81
• participate in clubs, sports, and other activities.	80
• fit in at school.	76
• spend enough time with regular education students.	73
• are treated fairly by teachers and staff.	71

Diploma Option

• I know the difference between a regular and a special diploma.	93
• I know what courses I have to take to get my diploma.	89
• I agree with the type of diploma I am going to receive.	84
• I had a say in the decision about which diploma I would get.	79
• I will probably graduate with a regular diploma.	69

% Yes

IEP

- I was invited to attend my IEP meeting this year. 82
- I attended my IEP meeting this year. 79
- I had a say in the decision about which classes I would take. 72
- I had a say in the decision about special testing conditions I might get for the FCAT or other tests. 51
- I had a say in the decision about whether I need to take the FCAT or a different test. 37

FCAT

- Teachers help ESE students prepare for the FCAT. 83
- I took the FCAT this year. 78
- In my English/reading classes, we work on the kinds of skills that are tested on the reading part of the FCAT. 73
- In my math classes, we work on the kinds of problems that are tested on the math part of the FCAT. 65
- I received accommodations (special testing conditions) for the FCAT. 61

**Nassau County School District
2003 Teacher Survey Report
Students with Disabilities**

Responding to the need to increase the involvement of the service providers 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 teacher survey in conjunction with the Bureau's district monitoring activities.

Surveys developed for teachers and other service providers were mailed to each school, with a memo explaining the key data indicator and the monitoring process. All teachers, both general education and ESE, were provided an opportunity to respond. Surveys were returned from 298 teachers (50% of all teachers in the district) from fourteen of the seventeen schools in Nassau County.

Teachers responded "consistently," "to some extent," "minimally," or "not at all" to each survey item. The district response for each item was calculated as the percentage of respondents reported that it consistently occurs.

% Consistently

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

- places students with disabilities into general education classes whenever possible. 67
- ensures that students with disabilities feel comfortable when taking classes with general education students. 66
- modifies and adapts curriculum for students as needed 62
- addresses each student's individual needs. 61
- ensures that the general education curriculum is taught in ESE classes to the maximum extent possible. 53
- encourages collaboration among ESE teachers, GE teachers and service providers. 47
- offers teachers professional development opportunities regarding curriculum and support for students with disabilities. 36
- provides adequate support to GE teachers who teach students with disabilities. 35

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

- provides students with appropriate testing accommodations. 84
- provides teachers with FCAT test preparation materials. 82
- aligns curriculum for students with the standards that are tested on the FCAT. 63
- gives students in ESE classes updated textbooks. 61

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

- develops IEPs according to student needs. 86
- makes an effort to involve parents in their child's education. 82
- conducts ongoing assessments of individual students' performance. 76
- allows students to make up credits lost due to disability-related absences. 73
- encourages participation of students with disabilities in extracurricular activities. 69
- ensures that classroom material is grade- and age-appropriate. 69
- ensures that classroom material is culturally appropriate. 63
- provides positive behavioral supports. 58
- ensures that students are taught strategies to manage their behavior as needed. 50
- provides social skills training to students as needed. 49
- implements a dropout prevention program. 27

The following items relate primarily to middle and high schools. One of the available choices was not applicable.

To encourage students with disabilities to stay in school, my school:

- %
- implements an IEP transition plan for each student. 84
- provides students with information about options after graduation. 68
- coordinates on-the-job training with outside agencies. 45
- provides students with job training. 44
- teaches transition skills for future employment and independent living. 42

To ensure that as many students with disabilities as possible graduate with a standard diploma, my school:

- informs students through the IEP process of the different diploma options and their requirements. 74
- provides extra help to students who need to retake the FCAT. 73
- encourages students to aim for a standard diploma when appropriate. 72

APPENDIX E:
FORMS REVIEW

**Nassau County School District
Focused Monitoring Report
Form Reviews**

This form reviews were completed as a component of the focused monitoring visits that will be conducted during the week of August 25, 2003. The following district forms were compared to the requirements of applicable State Board of Education rules, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), and applicable sections of Part 300, Code of Federal Regulations. The review includes required revisions and 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 Conference Form 6
Title 34 of the Code of Federal Regulation Section 300.345

This form contains the components for compliance.

Individual Educational Plan (IEP) Meeting
Form Individual Education Plan Forms 1-4
Title 34 of the Code of Federal Regulation Section 300.347

The following must be addressed:

- The form does not have the required component of a projected date for the beginning of the accommodations described nor the anticipated frequency, location, and duration of the accommodations.
- In the section reporting student progress, the district needs to add the required component that the parents will receive a progress report at least as often as parents of nondisabled students.

The following recommendation is made in regard to this form:

- It is recommended that at the next printing of this form, the district include in the transition section, the language of the IDEA reflecting that beginning at age 14 the student's IEP must have a statement of the transition services needs related to the applicable components of the IEP focusing on the student's courses of study, and that beginning at age 16, a statement of needed transition services including, when appropriate, a statement of the interagency responsibilities or any needed linkages. While these components are included in the transition plan, the requirements for each age group are not specified.

Notice and Consent for Initial Placement
Form Consent for Educational Placement
Title 34 of the Code of Federal Regulation Sections 300.503 and 300.505

The following must be addressed:

- The section of the form which states that the “Administrator and/or Designee approved the following:” must be changed to the “Administrator and/or Designee reviewed the following:”
- This form does not contain the required component of a description of each evaluation procedure, test, record, or report the district used as a basis for the placement recommendation by the IEP team. While there is a list of evaluation procedures, it is listed as procedures used by the staffing committee to determine eligibility.
- The form does not contain the required component of providing sources for a parent to contact to obtain assistance in understanding the provisions of the IDEA.

The following recommendation is made in regard to this form:

- It is recommended that at the next printing of this form, the phrase “...specific rights (Procedural Safeguards)...” be changed to “...protections under the procedural safeguards of the Individuals with Disabilities Educations Act (IDEA)...”

Informed Notice and Consent for Evaluation

Form Permission for Evaluation

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

This form contains the components for compliance.

The following recommendations are made in regard to this form:

- It is recommended that at the next printing of this form, the sentence “Federal and State regulations require that you be informed of your rights as a parent. Your rights (procedural safeguards) are...” be changed to “As a parent you have protections under the procedural safeguards of the Individuals with Disabilities Educations Act (IDEA). A copy of the procedural safeguards is...”
- It is recommended that at the next printing of this form, the phrase, “If you have any questions please call...” be changed to, “To obtain assistance in understanding the provisions of IDEA you may call...”

Informed Notice and Consent for Reevaluation

Form Permission for Evaluation, Informed Notice of Reevaluation

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

The district submitted two forms regarding notice and consent for reevaluation. Each of these forms was reviewed separately.

Permission for Evaluation

This form contains the components for compliance.

The following recommendations are made in regard to this form:

- It is recommended that at the next printing of this form, the sentence “Federal and State regulations require that you be informed of your rights as a parent. Your rights (procedural Safeguards) are...” be changed to “As a parent you have protections under the procedural safeguards of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). A copy of the procedural safeguards is...”
- It is recommended that at the next printing of this form, the phrase, “If you have any questions please call...” be changed to, “To obtain assistance in understanding the provisions of IDEA you may call....”

Informed Notice of Reevaluation (The district stated that this form is used as notice to the parent when it is determined by the IEP team that additional evaluations were not required.)

The following must be addressed:

- This form does not match the purpose described by the district, incorrectly describes the reevaluation process, and does not contain the components for informed notice. This form needs to be eliminated. The district needs to develop a new form, or revise an existing form, such as the Permission for Evaluation form, to notify parents that the reevaluation team did not recommend additional testing. The new or revised form needs to have a place where the parent can indicate agreement or disagreement with the IEP team’s decision.

Notice of Change in Placement Form

Form Informed Notice of Change in Educational Placement

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

This form contains the components for compliance.

The following recommendations are made in regard to this form:

- It is recommended that at the next printing of this form, the phrase “...specific rights (Procedural Safeguards)...” be changed to “...protections under the procedural safeguards of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)...”
- It is recommended that at the next printing of this form, the phrase, “Should you want any additional information please contact...” be changed to, “To obtain assistance in understanding the provisions of IDEA please contact....”

Notice of Change in FAPE

Form Related Services Informed Notice of Change (In FAPE)

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

The following must be addressed:

- The form presented as informed parental notice of change in FAPE is actually a letter inviting the parent to an IEP meeting in which a change of services (occupational therapy, physical therapy, and assistive technology) will be discussed. It is noted that the conference notice sent to parents inviting them to an IEP meeting covers both reevaluation and review/revision of the IEP.
- The district needs to develop a new form, or revise an existing one, to provide the parent with notice of an IEP team's recommendation of change of FAPE after the team (including the parent) has met and revised the IEP. A change in FAPE may occur under a variety of circumstances and it not limited to a change in related services as listed in the current letter.
- The current form reads that the ESE Administrator approves the recommendations of the IEP team. The ESE Administrator reviews the recommendations of a staffing committee in regard to eligibility. The ESE Administrator does not review the recommendations of the IEP team.

Informed Notice of Refusal

Form

Title 34 of the Code of Federal Regulation Section 300.503

The following must be addressed:

- The form does not inform parents of where a copy of the procedural safeguards may be obtained. The district may want to put "attached" in the sentence addressing the procedural safeguards, or modify the section listing "Notification Method" to include notification of the procedural safeguards.
- The form includes only one source for the parents to contact. The requirement is that at least two sources must be given.

The following recommendations are made in regard to this form:

- It is recommended that the phrase "...specific rights concerning this decision which are described in the Procedural Safeguards..." be changed to "...protections under the procedural safeguards of the Individuals with Disabilities Educations Act (IDEA)..."
- It is recommended that the phrase, "Should you want additional information please contact...." be changed to, "To obtain assistance in understanding the provisions of IDEA please contact...."

Notice of Dismissal

Form *Staffing and Notice of Dismissal/Change in Identification*

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

The following must be addressed:

- This form indicates that a staffing committee determined that a student should be dismissed. An IEP team determines dismissal after a reevaluation. This form must be revised to indicate

that, as a result of reevaluation the IEP team determined that the student should be dismissed. The term “staffing” needs to be removed from the title of this form.

- The section indicating that the ESE Administrator reviewed the staffing committee recommendation needs to be eliminated.

The following recommendations are made in regard to this form:

- It is recommended that the phrase “...specific rights concerning this decision which are described on the attached form “Procedural Safeguards”...” be changed to “...protections under the procedural safeguards of the Individuals with Disabilities Educations Act (IDEA)...”
- It is recommended that the phrase, “Should you want additional information please contact...” be changed to, “To obtain assistance in understanding the provisions of IDEA please contact...”

Notice of Ineligibility

Form *Staffing and Notice of Ineligibility*

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

This form contains the components for compliance.

The following recommendations are made in regard to this form:

- It is recommended that at the next printing of this form, the phrase “...specific rights concerning this decision which are described on the attached form “Procedural Safeguards” be changed to “...protections under the procedural safeguards of the Individuals with Disabilities Educations Act (IDEA)...”
- It is recommended that at the next printing of this form, the phrase, “Should you want additional information please contact...” be changed to, “To obtain assistance in understanding the provisions of IDEA please contact...”

Documentation of Staffing/Eligibility Determination

Form *Staffing Committee Report*

Title 34 of the Code of Federal Regulation Sections 300.534, 300.503

The following must be addressed:

- The section that provides that the recommendation of the staffing committee was reviewed and is approved or is disapproved must be revised to “The ESE Administrator and/or Designee reviewed the recommendation.”
- Under staffing committee recommendations, this form lists dismissal as a function of the staffing committee. Dismissal is determined by the IEP team. The district must remove dismissal from the staffing committee options.
- Under staffing committee recommendations, this forms lists “continues to be eligible for placement.” Continuing placement in an ESE program is determined after a reevaluation. The

reevaluation process and recommendations are determined by an IEP team, not a staffing committee. The district must remove continuing placement from the staffing committee options.

<p>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</p>
--

The following must be addressed:

- The statement that the parents or eligible student have the right to inspect and review the student’s educational records, does not include the required component of informing the parents or eligible student of the procedures to exercise this right.
- The statement that the parents or eligible student have the right to seek amendment of the student’s education records does not include the procedures to request such an amendment.
- The notice does not include the right of the parents or the eligible student to file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Education concerning alleged failures by the district to comply with the requirements of FERPA.

It was noted that the district utilizes the procedural safeguards wording provided by the Bureau of Instructional Support and Community Services.

APPENDIX F:
GLOSSARY OF ACRONYMS

Glossary of Acronyms

Bureau	Bureau of Instructional Support and Community Services
CIMP	Continuous Improvement Monitoring Plan
DJJ	Department of Juvenile Justice
DOE	Department of Education
EH	Emotionally Handicapped
EMH	Educable Mentally Handicapped
EP	Educational Plan (for gifted students)
ESE	Exceptional Student Education
FAPE	Free Appropriate Public Education
FBA	Functional Behavioral Assessment
FCAT	Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test
FDLRS	Florida Diagnostic and Learning Resources System
FERPA	The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act
FIN	Florida Inclusion Network
IDEA	Individuals with Disabilities Act
IEP	Individual Educational Plan (for students with disabilities)
LATS	Local Area Technology Specialist
LEA	Local Educational Agency
LoTTIE	Low Tech Tools for Inclusive Education
LRE	Least Restrictive Environment
OLSAT	Otis-Lennon School Ability Test
OSEP	Office of Special Education Programs
PMH	Profoundly Mentally Handicapped
PreK (PK)	Pre-kindergarten
SED	Severely Emotionally Disturbed
SIP	System Improvement Plan
SLD	Specific Learning Disability
SRA	Science Research Associates
SSS	Sunshine State Standards