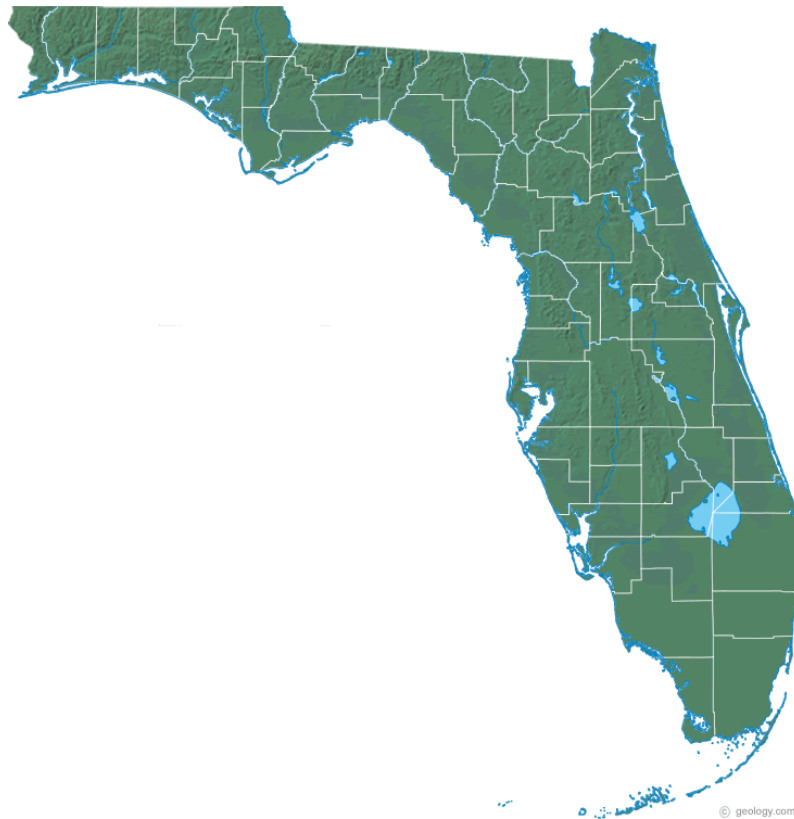


Bradford County School District

Final Report: On-Site Monitoring

Exceptional Student Education Programs

May 10–11, 2010



Bureau of Exceptional Education and Student Services
Florida Department of Education

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Telephone: (850) 245-0477

Fax: (850) 245-0987

E-mail: cicbiscs@FLDOE.org

Website: <http://www.fldoe.org/ese>

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July 9, 2010

Dr. Beth Moore, Superintendent
Bradford County School District
501 West Washington Street
Starke, FL 32091-2525

Dear Superintendent Moore:

We are pleased to provide you with the *Final Report of On-Site Monitoring of Exceptional Student Education Programs* for Bradford County School District. This report was developed by integrating multiple sources of information related to an on-site visit to your district on May 10–11, 2010, including student record reviews, interviews with school and district staff, classroom observations, and a student focus group. The final report will be posted on the Bureau of Exceptional Education and Student Services' website and may be accessed at <http://www.fldoe.org/ese/mon-home.asp>.

The Bradford County School District was selected for an on-site monitoring visit due to a pattern of poor performance over time in State Performance Plan (SPP) indicator two, percent of youth with individual educational plans (IEPs) dropping out of high school. Ms. Barbara Johns, Exceptional Student Education (ESE) and Student Services Director, and her staff were very helpful during the Bureau's preparation for the visit and during the on-site monitoring. In addition, the principals and other staff members at the schools that were visited welcomed and assisted Bureau staff members. Although the district demonstrated promising practices relating to dropout prevention, the Bureau's on-site monitoring activities identified four discrepancies that require corrective action.


BAMBI J. LOCKMAN
Chief

Bureau of Exceptional Education and Student Services

Dr. Beth Moore
July 9, 2010
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Thank you for your commitment to improving services for exceptional education for students in Bradford County. If there are any questions regarding this final report, please contact Patricia Howell, Program Director, Monitoring and Compliance, at (850) 245-0476 or via e-mail at Patricia.Howell@fldoe.org.

Sincerely,



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

Enclosure

cc: Barbara Johns
Kim C. Komisar
Patricia Howell
Brenda Fisher
Anne Bozik

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

May 10–11, 2010

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

Bradford County School District

**Final Report: On-Site Monitoring
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Bradford County School District

On-Site Monitoring Exceptional Student Education Programs May 10–11, 2010

Final Report

Authority

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

Monitoring Process

District Selection

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

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

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

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

SPP Indicator 2

In accordance with 34 CFR §300.157(a)(3), each state must have established goals in effect for students with disabilities that address dropout rates. Established performance indicators include SPP Indicator 2 relating to the percent of youth with individual educational plans (IEPs) dropping out of high school. In a letter dated December 11, 2009, the Bradford County School District superintendent was informed that the district was selected for a Level 3 on-site visit due to a pattern of poor performance over time regarding SPP Indicator 2. In addition, the district was targeted for SPP Indicator 2 for Level 2 Spring Cycle Self-Assessment. However, the Bureau determined that the needed information could be obtained in conjunction with the on-site monitoring visit and waived the requirement that the district complete the self-assessment.

On-Site Activities

Monitoring Team

On May 10–11, 2010, Bureau staff members conducted an on-site monitoring visit, which included meeting with district staff to discuss strategies in place to address the dropout rate. The following Bureau staff members participated in the on-site visit:

- Anne Bozik, Program Specialist, Monitoring and Compliance (Team Leader)

- Patricia Howell, Program Director, Monitoring and Compliance
- Joyce Lubbers, Program Director, ESE Program Services

Schools

The following schools were selected for an on-site visit:

- Bradford Middle School
- Bradford High School
- Bradford-Union Area Career Technical Center (BUACTC)

Student Focus Group

A student focus group was conducted by Bureau staff at Bradford High School. A total of six students participated in a student focus group; these students were selected from a group of students whose records were reviewed at the school site. Focus questions included the following topics:

- IEP Team Meetings and Transition Services
- Current ESE Services
- Extracurricular Activities
- Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test (FCAT) and Diploma Options
- Dropout
- Suspension and Expulsion
- Job Training
- College

Data Collection

Monitoring activities included the following:

- District-level interviews – 4 participants
- School-level administrators interviews – 12 participants
- Other school-level interviews – 6 participants
- Case studies – 11 students
- Student focus group – 6 participants

Review of Records

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

- Current IEP
- Functional behavioral assessment (FBA)/behavioral intervention plan (BIP), if any
- Previous IEP
- Progress reports from current and past school year
- Report cards from current and past school year
- Discipline record, to include documentation of manifestation determination(s), if applicable
- Attendance record, to include documentation of referral(s) to Child Study Team, if applicable
- Schedule

Information from each document was used to determine compliance with those standards most likely to impact a student's decision to remain in school.

Results

The following results reflect the data collected through the activities of the on-site monitoring as well as commendations, concerns, recommendations, and findings of noncompliance.

Commendations

All of the sites visited are to be commended for the following:

- Strong, well-informed, and creative leadership
- High level of professionalism and commitment to the students demonstrated by faculty and other staff members
- Mentoring and counseling opportunities
- The Florida Portable Assisted Study Sequence (PASS) program offered to address the needs of migrant students
- Opportunities for overage students to progress through the curriculum with the BUACTC, the Academy of Academics, and the three-year accelerated program
- Credit recovery opportunities
- Numerous and varied vocational opportunities, including the BUACTC; the eighth-grade agricultural program; dual enrollment at Santa Fe Community College; and employment through The Arc, the Vocational Rehabilitation Center, and the Florida Works program
- Strong collaboration between the middle and high schools and the technical center
- Parent outreach efforts, including Freshman Connection, booths at the local fair, parent liaisons, community rallies during which free school supplies are offered, brochures describing programs, Constant Contact e-mail service, the use of local newspaper and radio stations, and a student showcase with student band, chorus, and dance performances
- Relationships with both private and public community resources, including a local car dealer who provides a free car for a lottery drawing for perfect school attendance

In addition, the following commendations relate to Bradford Middle School:

- Middle Schoolers Exploring Tomorrow (MSET) co-taught class, afterschool snack shop through a Project 10 grant, and a radio-control airplane club, providing opportunities to increase student interest in staying in school
- Academic interventions, including the use of Think Tank as a potential FCAT predictor, a voluntary after-school tutoring program with transportation provided during the school year and summer months, and individual tutoring by teachers, both before and after school

The following commendations relate to Bradford High School:

- ESE students' knowledge of the IEP process and how it affects them personally, including information about their present levels of academic achievement and functional performance and the steps they need to take to achieve future goals
- Students at risk for dropout identified through eighth-grade FCAT scores, with subsequent referral to guidance counselors
- Willingness to continually research and add new methods to address dropout prevention, such as the Freshman Foundation with Success program to be provided to all freshmen students during the 2010–11 school year

- Plans for the 2010–11 school year to schedule ESE students first in order to address individual needs
- Students in focus group aware of resources available in the school and district to assist them in pursuing their postsecondary goals

The following commendations are specific to BUACTC:

- Opportunity for Renaissance Center students to reduce their time at this alternative school placement when the students and their families participate in a six-week educational program
- State recognition of Randy Starling, Director, as one of five recipients of the Council for Exceptional Children’s (CEC) “Making a Difference” award for his efforts to promote advancement for persons with disabilities
- Opportunities for students to satisfy their community service requirements by volunteering at the center two evenings per week
- Industry certification of all instructors
- Advisory committees for all programs
- Discussion with students of market trends for various employment options to facilitate informed career choice decisions
- Full-time occupational specialist

Concerns

One of the FBAs had been conducted without an observation of the student.

Findings of Noncompliance

Bureau staff identified noncompliance in four student records. Identifying information regarding the students was provided prior to the dissemination of this report.

In accordance with the Office of Special Education Programs’ (OSEP) guidance regarding findings that are identified through monitoring processes, within a given school district a finding of noncompliance is identified by the standard (i.e., regulation or requirement) that is violated, not by the number of times the standard is violated. Therefore, multiple incidents of noncompliance regarding a given standard that are identified through monitoring activities are reported as a single finding of noncompliance for that district. Noncompliance that is evident in ≥ 25 percent of records reviewed is considered systemic in nature. None of the findings of noncompliance were systemic.

A student’s progress toward meeting the annual goals is to be measured and the report of progress is to be provided as stated on the IEP (Rule 6A-6.03028(3)(h)7., Florida Administrative Code (F.A.C.)). Noncompliance for this standard was identified in two student records. One of the student’s progress toward meeting annual goals was not reported. The other student’s progress was not reported in a clear or understandable manner.

If a student has had at least five unexcused absences, or absences for which the reasons are unknown within a calendar month or 10 unexcused absences or absences for which the reason is unknown within a 90-calendar-day period, the student’s primary teacher must report that the student may be exhibiting a pattern of nonattendance. Unless there is clear evidence otherwise,

the student must be referred to the school's child study team. If an initial meeting does not resolve the problem, interventions must be implemented (s. 1003.26(1), F.S.). One of the students had more than five unexcused absences in one calendar month, and a child study team meeting was not held.

The IEP must include annual goals and services to meet the needs identified in the present level of academic and functional performance statement (34 CFR §300.320(a)). One of the student's IEPs included a priority educational need that was not referenced in the annual goals or services.

Corrective Actions

For the noncompliance related to progress reporting, the Bradford County School District has been directed to reconvene the IEP teams **no later than September 8, 2010**, to address each student's progress toward the annual goals. In accordance with 34 CFR §300.324(a)(4) and the district's *Exceptional Student Education Policies and Procedures* (SP&P), the IEPs may be amended without convening an IEP team if the parent and the local education agency (LEA) agree to the amendment. Documentation of correction, including a copy of the revised IEP, must be provided to the Bureau **no later than September 15, 2010**. In addition, **no later than September 8, 2010**, training shall be provided to staff who are responsible for measuring these students' progress toward annual goals and reporting the progress to parents as specified on the IEPs. Documentation regarding the provision of the targeted training for the school staff responsible for this procedure shall be provided to the Bureau **no later than September 15, 2010**.

For the noncompliance related to absenteeism, the district has been directed to convene a meeting of the school's child study team to review student attendance and address any concerns. Documentation of the correction of this noncompliance, including a copy of meeting notes and proposed interventions, if applicable, must be provided to the Bureau **no later than September 8, 2010**.

For the noncompliance related to IEP content, the district has been directed to reconvene the student's IEP team to revise the IEP or amend the IEP with agreement between the parent and the school district. Documentation of the correction of this noncompliance, including a copy of the revised IEP, must be provided to the Bureau **no later than September 8, 2010**.

Technical Assistance

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

Bureau Contacts

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

ESE Program Administration and Quality Assurance

(850) 245-0476

Kim Komisar, Ph.D., Administrator
Kim.Komisar@fldoe.org

Patricia Howell, Program Director
Monitoring and Compliance
Patricia.Howell@fldoe.org

Brenda Fisher, Program Specialist
Bradford County School District's
Bureau-District Monitoring Liaison
Brenda.Fisher@fldoe.org

Anne Bozik, Program Specialist
Monitoring and Compliance
Anne.Bozik@fldoe.org

Program Development and Services

Sheryl Sandvoss, Program Specialist
Program Development and Services
Sheryl.Sandvoss@fldoe.org

Clearinghouse Information Center

(850) 245-0477

cicbiscs@FLDOE.org

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

Glossary of Acronyms

BIP	Behavioral intervention plan
BUACTC	Bradford-Union Area Career Technical Center
BUREAU	Bureau of Exceptional Education and Student Services
CEC	Council for Exceptional Children
CFR	Code of Federal Regulations
ESE	Exceptional student education
F.A.C.	Florida Administrative Code
FBA	Functional behavioral assessment
FCAT	Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test
FDOE	Florida Department of Education
F.S.	Florida Statutes
IDEA	Individuals with Disabilities Education Act
IEP	Individual educational plan
LEA	Local education agency
MSET	Middle Schoolers Exploring Tomorrow
OSEP	Office of Special Education Programs
PASS	Portable Assisted Study Sequence
SP&P	Exceptional Student Education Policies & Procedures
SPP	State Performance Plan



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

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