

FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION



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DPS: 03-027

MEMORANDUM

TO: District School Superintendents

FROM: Betty Coxe *BC*

DATE: September 10, 2002

SUBJECT: **Continuous Improvement/Self Assessment Plan, 2002-03**

Consistent with the "new" Department of Education's focus on improved outcomes for exceptional students and the federal regulations implementing the 1997 Amendments to the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), the Bureau of Instructional Support and Community Services is continuing to implement the continuous improvement/self assessment process. The purpose of this memo is to describe the procedure by which school districts will annually examine key data indicators related to student performance and develop a plan for improvement.

For the 2001-02 school year, all districts were required to submit data collection plans designed to capture the information necessary to delineate a methodology for exploring areas that hold the greatest potential for improvement. Using data from the 1999-00 LEA profile and other district level sources, districts identified key indicators for students with disabilities and students identified as gifted. As stated in previous correspondence to your district's ESE director (Bureau Memorandum #01-56, July 24, 2001), if there were significant concerns related to prevalence data for specific districts that

corresponded to the provisions of the Department's resolution agreement with the Office for Civil Rights regarding disproportionate identification of students as EMH, racial/ethnic disparity of students identified as EMH, and placement of EMH students in self contained settings, the district was required to address all areas related to those data indicators identified.

A listing of the districts and the specific indicators they selected for continuous monitoring is included with this memo. In addition, contact persons at the Bureau are identified for each indicator. Staff from our ESE Program Development and Services Section (PD&S) are available to assist with improvement strategies to address program issues, while staff from the ESE Program Administration and Evaluation Section (PA&E) are available to provide technical assistance regarding the development of the continuous improvement plan itself.

Based on the information obtained through the data collection plan in place during the 2001-02 school year, districts are required to develop targeted improvement plans that incorporate, improve upon, or expand current district initiatives related to students with disabilities and students identified as gifted. Districts must identify specific actions that will be undertaken to improve performance, and, as necessary, allocate funds accordingly to achieve desired outcomes.

2002-03 School Year

For the 2002-03 school year, districts will be required to submit two action plans, one targeting students with disabilities and the other targeting students identified as gifted. The action plans must include strategies that will result in improved outcomes for students related to the indicators selected during the 2001-02 school year. The framework for the action plan must include the following components:

- Purpose – This section consists of a statement that summarizes the overall outcome anticipated as a result of the district's implementation of a continuous improvement monitoring plan. For districts with more than one indicator (e.g., districts involved in the Department's resolution agreement with the Office for Civil Rights), it is expected that a separate plan will be submitted for each indicator.
- Baseline Data – This section reflects the data collected on targeted indicators during the 2001-02 school year. It is not expected that all data collected during 2001-02 will be included as baseline. Only data that speaks to areas targeted for change need to be included in this section. This baseline will be the starting point for determining change over time.

- Improvement Strategies – This section includes the strategies that will be utilized to enable the district to improve from the level identified in the baseline statement to the level identified as the evidence of change. This may include a description of specific activities the district has committed to implementing, or it may consist of a broader statement describing planned strategies.
- Evidence of Change (Goal[s] and Benchmarks) – This section defines the measurable evidence of whether or not the desired outcome has been achieved. Each goal must correspond to its related baseline data element. The **goal** indicates the level to which the district aspires to achieve over a long-term period (approximately three to five years). The **benchmarks**, which will be updated annually, will enable the district to measure the short-term effects of the improvement strategies in achieving the goal.

Three completed sample forms and the blank form to be used for submission to the Bureau are included with this memo. The district's director of ESE has been provided with both electronic and print versions of all documents for ease of submission. In addition, you may access a copy of the blank form at the Bureau website at [www.myfloridaeducation.com/commhome/mon-home.htm]. Districts are required to submit completed plans to the Bureau for review by October 15, 2002.

Districts will be required to submit a status report annually, which will include an update of their evidence of change data (goal[s] and benchmarks). In addition, any revisions to evidence of change measures or improvement strategies that the district deems necessary through the process of implementation and analysis must be submitted as well. We anticipate submission of this document in late summer or early fall of 2003.

If you have questions regarding the plan format or the continuous improvement/self assessment monitoring process itself, please contact Eileen L. Amy, Administrator, Program Administration and Evaluation, (850) 488-1216, or by e-mail at Eileen.Amy@fldoe.org.

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

BC/sga

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cc: ESE Directors
Student Services Directors
FDLRS Directors