

FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION



CHARLIE CRIST
Commissioner

BERNARDO A. GARCIA, CHIEF
BUREAU OF EQUITY, SAFETY
AND SCHOOL SUPPORT

MEMORANDUM

TO: Title I District Coordinators

FROM: Rony Joseph

DATE: October 3, 2002

SUBJECT: United States Department of Education (USDE) Report Based on a Team Review

As you may know, on April 22-26, 2002, a team of eight from USDE reviewed the administration of the Title I program at the state level and in two school districts: Palm Beach and Calhoun Counties. Attached, for your information, is the USDE team's report to the Commissioner.

Please note, both districts were commended for having exceeded the state aggregate in the proportion of students at or above the proficiency level on the FCAT in both reading and mathematics for two consecutive years. We encourage you to read the complete report. We will, however, highlight below some areas that may guide your activities, as you implement the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act of 2001.

1. The USDE Team's approach was an achievement-focused monitoring approach. The team requested data from the state and reviewed reports and relevant information from the Florida Department of Education (FDOE) Web Site prior to the on-site visit. This approach is evidence of how the USDE will evaluate programs under NCLB. It behooves us to emulate this example by ensuring that all our decisions, at the state, district, and school levels, are based on data from reliable sources.
2. The team's activities, both the review and the report, were guided by the four principles (four pillars) that constitute the foundation of NCLB: 1) Accountability for results; 2) Local control and flexibility; 3) Expanded parental choice; and 4) Effective and successful programs. As we implement NCLB, these principles should also be our landmarks.
3. The team recommended a greater and a more active role of the distinguished educators in Title I technical assistance activities.

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4. The Title I schoolwide plans that the team reviewed in both districts did not contain all the required components of a Title I schoolwide plan. As more schools begin to implement Title I schoolwide projects, it is imperative that the schoolwide plans include all the required components under Section 1114 of NCLB. The Title I Office, FDOE, will soon issue a memorandum on this matter.
5. The team identified three parental activities that were not being implemented as required under NCLB: 1) Evidence of an annual meeting to inform parents of Title I students of their right to obtain information and to be involved in the implementation of the Title I program; 2) The schools visited did not have evidence that they conducted an annual evaluation of their parental programs; 3) The District parental policy in one district has not been revised five years after its adoption. Please review these requirements and ensure appropriate implementation both at the district and school levels.
6. The team also noticed that in Targeted Assistance schools visited, students were being selected for Title I program using subjective criteria and not objective criteria as required for students in grades 3 and above. One of the team members shared a sample form with us that districts could modify and adopt to meet that requirement. Copy of that form is attached to this memorandum for your information and possible use.
7. The USDE team urged FDOE to develop and implement a process for on-site monitoring of Title I programs in all districts in the state. You will soon receive a communication from FDOE on the 2002-2003 school year's on-site monitoring activities.
8. Regarding services to eligible students in private schools, the team noted in one of the districts visited two areas that needed attention: 1) Multiple educationally related and objective criteria were not being used, as required, to select students for services; only one criterion was used; 2) Private school principals were asked to sign the Parent Compacts. The Parent Compact is between the school district and the parents of eligible private school children. Private school principals are not required to sign.

Please, review the report and use any information therein, in addition to the selected areas in this memorandum, which you believe may inform your activities as you assist your schools in the implementation of the NCLB. If you have any questions or need additional information, please contact Betty Applewhite or Rony Joseph via email at Betty.Applewhite@FLDOE.ORG or Rony.Joseph@FLDOE.ORG or by telephone at 850-487-3530.

RJ/bal

Attachments

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