

2012 Paperwork Reduction Report

I. Background

In 2010, section 1008.31(3), Florida Statutes, was revised to read:

(3) K-20 EDUCATION DATA QUALITY IMPROVEMENTS.

(c) The commissioner shall continuously monitor and review the collection of paperwork, data, and reports by school districts and complete an annual review of such collection no later than June 1 of each year. The annual review must include recommendations for consolidating paperwork, data, and reports, wherever feasible, in order to reduce the burdens on school districts.

(d) By July 1 of each year, the commissioner shall prepare a report assisting the school districts in eliminating or consolidating paperwork, data, and reports by providing suggestions, technical assistance, and guidance.

II. 2012 Survey and Findings

In 2011, the Florida Department of Education (FDOE) convened an internal working group to look at ways to consolidate and streamline district plans and reports.

In February 2012, the FDOE surveyed school district personnel to gather facts and perceptions about the development, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation mechanisms of key district-level plans and reports. The majority of respondents reported that 2-5 staff members in their office work on the development and submission of plans required by the FDOE. The majority of respondents agreed that plans are developed in their districts using a team approach, that current development and submission procedures are user-friendly and meaningful toward improving learning outcomes for students, and that the content is evaluated and revised based upon evidence of student impact. However, half of the participants disagreed that the amount of time spent in these activities is reasonable and manageable given their resources, and a strong majority reported they sometimes feel overwhelmed by their responsibilities to meet required plan deadlines, despite a majority also reporting that the FDOE usually provides adequate technical assistance. When asked whether they find duplication among certain required plans, nearly all who responded find an overlap between the School Improvement Plan (SIP) and other required plans. Further research is needed to determine which plans are duplicative with the SIP, and in what way. Despite mostly positive results in the objective data, the open-ended responses suggest more negative feelings toward the amount and nature of required plans. However, open-ended responses were optional and only 47% completed one or more, so it is likely that those who are satisfied did not choose to comment. The FDOE working group is reviewing the open-ended responses for trends to be explored further. See Appendix A for full survey results.

III. ESEA Flexibility Waiver

Florida's application for and approval of the ESEA flexibility waiver in February 2012 has resulted in substantial consolidation of reports for accountability purposes, for example, eliminating the federal requirement for reporting Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) for Florida schools and removing AYP outcomes from Florida's Differentiated Accountability (DA) program of school improvement.

IV. Other Department of Education Activities

The FDOE has organized its response to paperwork and reporting burdens in the following three categories:

1. Things that have occurred at FDOE over the last year to eliminate or consolidate paperwork, data, and reports;
2. Things that FDOE or districts could do now to eliminate or consolidate paperwork, data, and reports; and
3. Statutory or rule changes that would help eliminate or consolidate paperwork, data, and reports.

Category 1

Division of Finance and Operations

The Bureau of School Business Services no longer manually processes requests for the various school district program expenditure reports, because the reports are available on the FDOE website. In 2012-13, the Department will allow school districts the option to email instead of only fax their preliminary full-time equivalent (FTE) student membership forecasts. Only final district FTE projections will need to be faxed, as they must have the superintendent's signature.

The Office of Educational Facilities has expanded and improved the Project Tracking System that reduces some paper forms for school districts by posting the information (forms) concerning construction projects online.

Division of Accountability, Research and Measurement

The Education Information and Accountability Services Bureau, working with other offices, eliminated the requirement for two submissions of individual student data by the public school districts – entry and exit test scores for students who were enrolled in Department of Juvenile Justice schools. One submission of individual exceptional student education data was consolidated with a second submission to lessen the data submission burden further.

The Bureau of Accountability Reporting continues to use electronic communications (email) rather than hard copy communications for distribution of critical information to school district contacts to update them on timelines and processes used for the accurate and complete reporting of school accountability outcomes. Data used in school grades production includes assessment scores and student-level data reported by districts to the FDOE student database. Core processes for data management have not changed substantially in recent years and are required for the production of school grades. With regard to resources for districts to download, review, and upload data to ensure accurate reporting, the Bureau has introduced some

additional efficiencies over the past year, which include use of an FTP server as well as updated Web applications. All reports publicly posted by the Bureau at <http://schoolgrades.fldoe.org> are required by Florida law as accountability outcomes for Florida schools, charter schools, and school types.

Division of Career and Adult Education

Enhancements were made to the federal local performance accountability/program improvement plan electronic system for use by all recipients of the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act of 2006.

In the fall of 2011, rule 6A-10.0342, F.A.C., *Career and Technical Education Program Performance Reporting*, was amended to consolidate/align state reporting requirements prescribed in s. 1008.43, F.S., with federal reporting requirements (Perkins Act/PL 109-270) through the establishment of common standards for completion and placement rates.

Division of Public Schools

Districts submit their certification of computer-based testing through a web-based system, and no paper submissions are required. Districts can review school data easily through running electronic reports, and FDOE can review all data for lack of readiness in minutes through these same reports.

The number of questions that are required to be submitted in the District Reading Plan has been streamlined and will be further reduced in 2012-13.

Bureau of Exceptional Education and Student Services (BEESS):

- BEESS uses the online application system for processing all grant applications. This reduces the volume of paperwork applicants use to develop and submit their applications to the FDOE. FDOE staff conducts the review process via the online system. Final awards are prepared in electronic format, which has proven to be a more efficient means of transmitting awards and subsequent amendments to projects. Copies of awards are also stored by BEESS staff, a more effective way to manage the volume of awards issued annually.
- For purposes of documenting project performance accountability for BEESS discretionary projects, data from the online applications are exported to the Project Tracking System database, where these data are used as the basis for collecting and reporting project performance activities during the fiscal year, eliminating the need for submission of paper reports.
- BEESS continues to maintain a web-based system to meet legislative requirements for reporting incidents of restraint and seclusion for students with disabilities. The web reporting system eliminated the need for districts to develop forms and procedures for reporting as incident reports are created on the web and submitted to FDOE electronically. Except for the requirement that districts mail a copy of the report to parents to be signed and returned to the school, no additional paperwork needs to be created.
- BEESS continues to use online survey tools to conduct surveys and capture information from school district contacts for short turnaround information negating the need for email/paper responses.

- BEESS continues to make the annual Guidance Report available online for district reporting.
- The Medicaid Tracking System 3.0, developed and maintained by BEESS, is a web-based tool for school district Medicaid reimbursement billing and service documentation that reduces time spent on billing tasks, increases efficiency, and eliminates the paper billing documentation required by a central processing system.
- School district personnel are able to register for the annual BEESS Administrators' Management Meeting via an online web-based application.
- The Bureau Resource and Information Center regularly updates the BEESS website which includes the following topical areas:
 - [BEESS Resource & Information Center](#)
 - [Contact Lists](#)
 - [Data and Program Evaluation](#)
 - [Disability History and Awareness](#)
 - [Discretionary Projects](#)
 - [Dispute Resolution](#)
 - [Exceptional Student Education \(ESE\)](#)
 - [ESE Policies and Procedures \(SP&P\)](#)
 - [FCAT Accommodations](#)
 - [Florida Alternate Assessment](#)
 - [Grants Management](#)
 - [Juvenile Justice Education](#)
 - [Meetings](#)
 - [Military Families](#)
 - [Monitoring](#)
 - [Parent Information](#)
 - [Presentations and Publications](#)
 - [Professional Development](#)
 - [Related Services](#)
 - [Resources](#)
 - [Services](#)
 - [State Advisory Committee](#)
 - [Student Support Services](#)
 - [Teleconferences](#)
- BEESS continues development and implementation of the Portal to Exceptional Education Resources (PEER) which provides districts a web-based application used to implement and document procedures related to exceptional student education (ESE). PEER includes the development of individual educational plans (IEPs) for students with disabilities, educational plans (EPs) for gifted students, and services plans (SPs) for parentally-placed private school students, as well as related activities such as reporting of student progress, development of matrix of services documents, and the provision of prior written notice. PEER provides a secure database to store all plans. District administrators can generate reports from the database.
- BEESS collaborated with the Bureau of School Improvement to design an electronic School Improvement Plan (SIP) specifically for juvenile justice education programs submission.
- A Professional Development Portal for Exceptional Student Educators has been created to help make professional development more accessible to Florida's educators. BEESS discretionary projects that provide training or facilitate training events have posted their state and regional training events on the portal, including a description and contact

information for each state or regional training event, thus eliminating the need to send paper notifications and emails to districts and district staff about individual events.

- BEESS self-assessment/monitoring:
 - Bureau staff review each district's *Exceptional Student Education Policies and Procedures* electronically and post on the BEESS website.
 - Final reports for on-site monitoring visits are posted on the BEESS website.
 - For self-assessment monitoring, districts enter data on the General Supervision Website (GSW); only a small percentage of the student records are required to be provided via printed copy for validation by Bureau staff.
 - All results of the self-assessment monitoring are viewable via the GSW.
 - Electronic notices are provided to districts by the GSW regarding the self-assessment process.
 - Interview questions, focus group protocols, and other information regarding on-site visits for various areas (e.g., matrix of services, State Performance Plan (SPP) 1, SPP 2, SPP 4, problem-solving/response to intervention (PS/Rtl), restraint/seclusion) are filed by topic on a shared network drive.

Office of Independent Education and Parental Choice (IEPC)

Scholarship(s), Private Schools, and Home Education sections have moved to several digital/electronic methods of delivery eliminating paper driven process(es):

- All quarterly, bi-monthly and twice yearly newsletters to constituents are delivered electronically.
- All Application and Renewal instructions for new and existing scholarship recipient private schools are sent electronically.
- All McKay Scholarship payment reconciliation reports (previously sent with each quarterly payment) are provided electronically via schools' secured log-in.
- All McKay Scholarship parent intent letters are delivered electronically.
- The vast majority of CorrFlow correspondence is handled electronically as opposed to print.
- The yearly Home Education School District Technical Assistance Meeting is held via conference calls with ancillary materials distributed electronically.

Charter School Capital Outlay Applications are now completed online, replacing the prior paper and fax method.

Category 2

Division of Finance & Operations

The Bureau of School Business Services could email, instead of hard-copy mail, the following:

- Approvals for extensions on the submission of the Annual Financial Report, Program Cost Report, and District Summary Budget;
- Acknowledgement of receipt of the Annual Financial Report, including the Program Cost Report; and
- Annual Review of Program Cost Report Monitoring of Compliance Requirements.

The Bureau should review the reporting of school bus accidents by districts since most aspects of that function duplicate school bus (and other vehicular) accident reporting to the Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles.

Division of Accountability, Research and Measurement

School districts do not calculate and report school grade outcomes for their own schools – the calculations are performed at the state level by the Bureau of Accountability Reporting at the Florida Department of Education.

Category 3

Division of Finance & Operations

Rule 6A-1.0451, F.A.C., *Florida Education Finance Program Student Membership Surveys*, could be revised to amend the FTE student enrollment membership reporting deadlines to more closely mirror the calculations of the Florida Education Finance Program (FEFP). This would result in the FEFP funding calculations more accurately reflecting the current-year FTE served by school districts and facilitate more accurate FTE projections for use by the legislature.

Division of Accountability, Research and Measurement

Changes to the Missing Children's statute (section 937.023, F.S.) and rule (6A-6.083, F.A.C., *Missing Florida School Children*) are needed to reflect the automated nature of these activities rather than the paper forms that were originally used. FDOE must distribute a list of missing Florida school children to districts on a monthly basis.

The Bureau of Accountability Reporting works to produce information in compliance with several statutes, including sections 1008.34, 1008.36, and 1008.341, F.S. The Bureau's system of online reports is designed to provide the required information as completely and efficiently as possible.