

Evergreen Independent Review Tasks/Recommendations At-A-Glance

SCHOOL BOARD WORKSHOP – MAY 10, 2016

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BCPS Vision Statement: Educating today's students to succeed in tomorrow's world

Exceptional Student Education & Support Services Mission Statement: To create a framework upon which schools and families can build a collaborative structure of support services that promotes academic achievement and encourages personal growth in students with disabilities.

Evergreen Task Areas/Recommendations

At-A-Glance

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Evergreen's Five Priority Areas

Evergreen's independent review focused on all aspects of the ESE program: organizational, operational, and programmatic. Throughout the course of this review, common themes emerged. The following five (5) "priority areas" derived from these themes:

1. Expand the continuum of services and placements available within each school.
 - In the elementary grades, focus on educating students with disabilities in the schools they would attend if nondisabled- including students with more challenging needs.
 - In middle school and high school settings, focus on ensuring that students with disabilities being taught the general Florida Standards receive the specially designed instruction, related services, and supplementary aids and services they need to achieve their annual goals and progress in the general curriculum, and that robust transitions and services are implemented.
2. Improve staffing levels to ensure they are sufficient to meet the needs of students with disabilities across all placements. In all schools, caseloads must be reasonable and manageable to ensure that:
 - IEP teams are empowered to base decisions regarding the amount of ESE services and supports each student will receive on the individual student's needs;
 - ESE teachers and service providers can fully implement the IEPs of the students for whom they are responsible; and
 - ESE Specialists are effectively and consistently trained and provided the resources needed to fulfill their duties as case managers and compliance specialists.
3. Reinforce and support the district's Child Find Teams and school-based collaborative problem solving/response-to-intervention (CPS/RtI) teams to ensure students with disabilities are identified, evaluated, and, as appropriate, found eligible or ineligible for ESE services with no undue delay.
 - Increase the capacity of Child Find Teams by adding staff and/or extending the contract year and on ensuring timely evaluation by promptly seeking parental consent once the district has knowledge that a child may be a child with a disability.
 - Ensure CPS/RtI teams have the knowledge, skills, and resources to effectively and efficiently implement the general education requirements found in Rule 6A-6.0331, F.A.C, and that evaluations and eligibility determinations are based on the BCPS ESE Policies and Procedures and applicable State Board of Education rules.



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4. Establish a framework to promote and support meaningful and appropriate involvement of internal and external stakeholders in educational programs.
 - Delineate the roles, responsibilities, obligations, and spans of authority of each stakeholder group, and then clearly communicate and consistently implement them.
 - Provide structured opportunities for parents, teachers, school leaders, and district staff to provide input and share their insights regarding improving and enhancing ESE services within the district.
5. Closely monitor ESE budgets and expenditures at the campus and department levels, for both Special Revenues and General Fund, to ensure that ESE program dollars are effectively being used to enhance the delivery of services to students. In addition, analytic data are needed to accurately assess the cost and programmatic benefit of providing ESE services by program category and campus/location. In addition, campus administrators should be required to develop plans for the use of the ESE guaranteed allocation and its impact on ESE students.



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Evergreen's Thirteen Specific Task Areas

Evergreen identified the following thirteen (13) "specific task areas" from an analysis of program effectiveness through careful review of available data, benchmarking, interviews, and survey feedback.

4.1. District and School Staffing and Support

Completed/Ongoing:

- 4.1-1:** Expedite filling the position of Director of Exceptional Student Education.
- 4.1-2:** Reclassify the position of Curriculum Specialist to Curriculum Coordinator.
- 4.1-5:** Develop a comprehensive plan for addressing hard-to-fill vacancies and strategies to meet this challenge
- 4.1-7:** Restructure the ESE Specialist staffing allocation to allow incremental support within the weighted FTE formula.
- 4.1-9:** Evaluate the allocation of transition specialists and job coaches, and redistribute personnel to include assignment to students with mild-to-moderate disabilities from 14 to 18 years of age.
- 4.1-11:** Establish a consistent schedule for ESE Curriculum Supervisors to participate in all principal meetings and visits to schools

Partially Completed/Ongoing:

- 4.1-3:** Monitor the Division's goal of shifting its focus to curriculum and instruction.
- 4.1-4:** Restructure the support facilitation staffing model to support greater collaboration and shared caseloads among ESE and dually certified staff, resulting in improved in-class support for students with disabilities and teachers in the general education setting.
- 4.1-6:** Update ESE job descriptions to accurately reflect job duties, necessary education, experience, physical requirements, and accountability measures.
- 4.1-8:** Update the ESE Specialist job responsibilities to accurately reflect the necessary qualifications, extend calendar by at least 10 days, remove non-ESE duties and duties related to gifted education, and ensure school-based accountability
- 4.1-10:** Ensure curriculum and instructional supports to the schools align with and are integrated within the continuous improvement models.



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2. ESE Support and Related Services

Completed/Ongoing:

4.2-4: Continue to examine staffing of speech/language pathologists (SLPs) with respect to caseload/workload issues and fund additional positions according to findings.

4.2-7: Examine and update reporting processes for assistive technology.

4.2-9: Weigh the cost versus benefits of the school psychology internship positions to the district and identify funds.

4.2-10: Develop processes and accountability strategies relating to IEP transportation components, especially the staffing of ESE bus attendants and one-on-one bus attendants.

4.2-12: Create a Technology Plan for students with disabilities for the 2014-15 school year.

Partially Completed/Ongoing:

4.2-1: Develop a prioritized schedule in which key areas of district operations are identified for deeper examination and related action.

4.2-2: Create three Supervisor positions for Assistive Technology, Behavior, and Speech and Language.

4.2-3: Protect the effective use of staff time by setting and adhering consistently to priorities for services.

4.2-5: Expand the ESE Division's focus on data to the impact on students caused by staffing decreases in related service areas and develop strategies, including increasing staffing levels, to address identified needs.

4.2-6: Develop strategies to extend the impact the Assistive Technology Office has on educational opportunities for ESE students in all BCPS schools.

4.2-8: Expand identification of specific related services that are needed as students move from particular types of elementary cluster programs to middle schools and use that analysis to guide additional middle school supports for all ESE students.

4.2-11: Examine BCPS program placement determination in light of the impact of decisions on the length of ESE student bus rides, develop procedures to remedy the issues, and ensure that all transportation-related procedures are uniformly followed in the district.



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3. Use of Funds

Completed/Ongoing:

4.3-1: More closely monitor ESE budgets and expenditures at the campus and department level for both Special Revenues and General Fund, to ensure that program dollars are effectively being used to enhance the delivery of services to students.

4.3-3: Require campus administrators to develop plans for the use of the ESE Guaranteed Allocation and its impact on ESE students.

Partially Completed/Ongoing:

4.3-2: Gather the analytic data needed to accurately assess the cost and programmatic benefit of providing ESE services by program category and campus or location.

4. Communication with Stakeholders

Completed/Ongoing:

4.4-1: Develop a comprehensive ESE Communications Plan.

4.4-2: Set guidelines for what questions should be submitted through BASIS, shorten the 24-hour response window, create an email response notification, and allow ESE Specialists to call District Program Specialists directly for concerns or issues that require more immediate response.

4.4-4: Increase awareness of commendable ESE staff, programs, and practices.

4.4-5: Determine and share the most appropriate translation tools for ESE Specialists to use in daily correspondence with parents.

4.4-6: Use social media platforms to further engage ESE stakeholders.

Partially Completed/Ongoing:

4.4-3: Overhaul the ESE website so that information is organized logically, contains current information, and is visual appealing to BCPS stakeholders.



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5. Professional Development

Completed/Ongoing:

4.5-1: Build on the online training for principals and ESE Specialists and ensure that central office administrators are included.

4.5-3: Assemble a cross-divisional task group to examine key common elements that are effective with special needs learners that should be core elements of all content, instruction, and professional development discussions, planning, and decisions.

4.5-4: Develop a teacher course catalog (much like one for high schools or colleges) that prioritizes professional development options according to critical learning needs.

4.5-5: Develop consistent, efficient, and effective district processes to ensure that all ESE educators are able to benefit from professional learning opportunities related to their field.

4.5-6: Commit to the professional growth of staff working with ESE students and communicate that commitment through word, planning, and action.

4.5-7: Expand the array of training offered to ESE paraprofessionals, and create targeted training for transportation staff in Broward County Public Schools.

4.5-8: Convene a representative group of professional development providers that includes those at the Arthur Ashe Center to meet with decision makers to identify all location specific barriers to professional learning, develop specific strategies to ameliorate them, and set a timetable by which obstacles will be resolved.

Partially Completed/Ongoing:

4.5-2: Move FDLRS to a direct reporting relationship to the Executive Director of the Division of Exceptional Student Education and Support Services, and assemble core groups with common responsibilities to identify strategies for maximizing the use of all available resources to better meet student needs.



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6. Parent Engagement

Completed/Ongoing:

- 4.6-1:** Implement of Robert's Rules of Order during BCPS ESE Advisory Council meetings to foster more productive and efficient outcomes.
- 4.6-2:** Identify and schedule alternate meeting locations of the ESE Advisory Council and live stream Council meetings to ensure parents across Broward County have an opportunity to participate.
- 4.6-3:** Collect information on issues brought forward by parents during ESE Advisory Council meetings and maintain a list of priority issues.
- 4.6-4:** Improve the Needs Assessment Survey by adding "School Name" to the demographics section of the survey tool, offering the survey in an electronic format, and ensuring that the calendar of workshops is distributed in a timely manner before the beginning of each semester.
- 4.6-5:** Prepare multimedia versions of those trainings requested or delivered frequently.
- 4.6-6:** Develop a comprehensive ESE Services Manual for parents that provide information on ESE services specific to BCPS, and supplements information in the FDOE Parent Introduction Guide.
- 4.6-7:** Conduct a review of school-based volunteer programs and opportunities to ensure that all schools are capitalizing on their pool of potential volunteers.
- 4.6-8:** Develop stringent business rules for issue escalation, and implement a tracking system for entering and tracking parent issues through closure.
- 4.6-9:** Establish the role of ESE Parent Liaison within the Division of Exceptional Student Education and Support Services to facilitate and improve parent engagement, and monitor parent issues through resolve.

Partially Completed/Ongoing:

None



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7. Community Engagement/Partnerships

Completed/Ongoing:

4.7-2: Develop basic performance measures for community service providers delivering mental health services to students in Broward County Public Schools.

4.7-3: Create a multimedia version of the "What you need to know before you go into a school?" training.

4.7-4: Communicate to community service providers the BCPS student eligibility requirements that lead to student referrals for their services.

4.7-5: Commence monthly meetings of community service providers.

Partially Completed/Ongoing:

4.7-1: Increase the speed of response for students needing immediate mental health services.



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8. Child Find – Birth through to Age Five

Completed/Ongoing:

4.8-1: Request that parents and/or guardians complete a customer service poll at each point of contact to solicit feedback regarding barriers they may have experienced in accessing the Child Find services.

4.8-2: Revise the policy regarding obtaining consent for evaluation from parents of Pre K children who do not pass the screening to include seeking consent as soon as possible, preferably on the same date as the screening.

4.8-3: Establish an internal workgroup to solicit input from size-alike peer districts and/or regional neighboring districts to identify aspects of the district's Pre K Child Find System that require or would benefit from redesign or restructuring.

4.8-4: Add at least two permanent Pre K Assessment Teams to those currently in place.

Partially Completed/Ongoing:

4.8-5: Make all contracts of staff required for Pre-Kindergarten evaluations 216-day contracts and evaluate the possibility of compressing screening and evaluation sessions.

4.8-6: Implement policies to provide for stronger district control of basic ESE programmatic decisions, including the location of specialized program clusters or classrooms such as PreK ESE classrooms.

4.8-7: Focus efforts to expand the capacity of the PreK ESE program on providing more inclusive placements, including providing services and supports to children in community-based early care/child care programs.



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9. Referral, Evaluation, and Eligibility – Ages Six through 21

Completed/Ongoing:

4.9-1: Develop an infrastructure to create and support a seamless CPS/RtI system within a framework of MTSS across all BCPS schools.

4.9-2: Ensure all stakeholder groups are represented in the committee or workgroup engaged in developing CPS/RtI procedures and resources, and monitor the process to ensure the individuals selected to participate are knowledgeable, committed, and actively involved.

4.9-9: Establish a committee of district and school-based staff involved in referral, evaluation, and eligibility of students with disabilities to evaluate the extent to which current district practices related to specific learning disabilities (SLD) align with written policies of the state and district.

4.9-10: Investigate the potential reason for the increasing trend in SLD in BCPS compared with a decreasing trend in the peer school districts, concurrent with the previous recommendation to evaluate practices related to SLD.

Partially Completed/Ongoing:

4.9-3: Incorporate resources to support social/behavioral development in addition to academic achievement into all MTSS and CPS/RtI reforms.

4.9-4: Expand the existing body of CPS/RtI tools to include explicit guidance and technical assistance on the establishment and consistent implementation of decision rules for assessing intervention effectiveness as well as a uniform understanding of what constitutes reasonable and/or sufficient intervention efforts prior referring a student for evaluation.

4.9-5: Use the significant knowledge base and expertise within Psychological Services to assist in the development of an effective support structure for schools as they develop more effective CPS/RtI processes.

4.9-6: Analyze the referral and eligibility data for all schools, disaggregated by level, to determine the extent to which schools are successfully identifying students with disabilities and to ensure that there are no patterns of either over- or under-referral across schools.

4.9-7: Conduct a review of student referral records to identify the extent to which teams engaged in the problem solving process adhere to the criteria for referring students for evaluation without unnecessary delay.

4.9-8: Provide technical assistance and support to foster team member confidence in the integrity and validity of the data produced through CPS/RtI, in conjunction with actions taken to revise and/or enhance MTSS and the CPS/RtI process.

4.9-11: Implement policies that clearly establish the roles, responsibilities, and authority of members of the multiple teams involved in ESE functions, including CPS/RtI teams, eligibility staffing committees, and IEP teams.



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10. Individual Educational Plans

Completed/Ongoing:

4.10-1: Review the alert system in EasyIEP™ to identify ways it can be used more effectively to notify users of upcoming changes to functionality, revised content, or new compliance requirements.

4.10-2: Solicit input from BCPS Program Specialists, school-based ESE Specialists, and ESE teachers and service providers regarding ways the current IEP system could be enhanced to proactively guide teams in developing high quality IEPs.

4.10-3: Assess the level and type of support currently in place for EasyIEP™ to determine if it is sufficient to meet the needs of all users, including new hires and experienced teachers, with regard to content and technical support.

4.10-4: Review local policies regarding IEP development and content, assess their impact on quality and efficiency of services, and identify potential benefits and pitfalls inherent in requiring procedures or content that goes beyond federal and state requirements.

4.10-6: Enhance the training components related to measurable annual goals and internal methods for monitoring and oversight to ensure IEP team members consistently apply what is learned during training. Continue to reinforce the importance of incorporating multiple data sources, including results of classroom, benchmark, and standardized assessments.

4.10-7: Enhance the training related to measurable postsecondary goals and internal methods for monitoring and oversight to ensure they reflect an observable, measurable action that will occur in the future (after graduation or obtaining the age of 21), and correspond in a meaningful and reasonable way to the students interests, skills, and abilities as described in the present level statement.

4.10-8: Examine current guidance being provided to IEP teams regarding service decisions and ensure that it clearly and accurately describes the team's obligation and authority to include in the IEP the services and supports necessary to provide a free appropriate public education (FAPE) in the least restrictive environment.

4.10-9: Implement policies that clearly establish authority of members of a duly constituted IEP team to fulfill their assigned roles and responsibilities

4.10-10: Conduct an in-depth review of IEP implementation, focusing on services that are not directly tied to ESE course enrollment (e.g., support facilitation, consultation, collaboration) and that are provided on an itinerant basis (e.g., speech and language therapy, counseling, occupational therapy, physical therapy).

Partially Completed/Ongoing:

4.10-5: Include data-based analysis of the potential impact of requiring draft IEP components five days prior for every IEP team meeting in the district's review of local policies recommended above.

4.10-11: Establish a workgroup, comprised of school leaders and district staff, to develop procedures for ensuring IEPs are implemented in their entirety, focusing on both the subject of instruction (i.e., annual goals) and the amount and type of service required (e.g., direct ESE support, consultation, collaboration, and accommodations).



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11. Transition/Matriculation

Completed/Ongoing:

- 4.11-1:** Create a district matriculation procedure for promoting students with disabilities from elementary to middle school.
- 4.11-2:** Assess existing matriculation activities throughout Broward County Public Schools and develop a resource guide of best practices.
- 4.11-3:** Create a district protocol for students with disabilities matriculating from middle school to high school to ensure that appropriate and sufficient supports and services are in place to meet each student's needs.
- 4.11-5:** Utilize the training, technical assistance, and resources provided by the Project 10: Transition Education Network to develop a comprehensive transition program in BCPS secondary schools.
- 4.11-11:** Establish collaborative relationships among transition directors and specialists in the other enrollment group districts.
- 4.11-12:** Review the business requirements completion of the EasyIEP™ summary of performance to ensure that the logic and flow of the final document are not compromised by efforts to streamline the process.

Partially Completed/Ongoing:

- 4.11-4:** Conduct a comprehensive review/evaluation of all transition programming, with a focus on how schools are implementing vocational education for ESE students, and develop a guide based on researched best practices and effective service delivery models.
- 4.11-6:** Increase the monitoring of students with disabilities who are academically successful and consider participation in accelerated academic programs in transition planning, as appropriate.
- 4.11-7:** Offer Modified Occupational Completion Points (MOCs) for vocational education to increase opportunities for vocational education or employability skills training for high school students with disabilities.
- 4.11-8:** Revise the district's pupil progression plan to specify the availability of MOCs.
- 4.11-9:** Expand capacity in meeting the needs of adult students with disabilities who desire or would benefit the most for community-based services that are not housed on a traditional school campus, and ensure that all students who are eligible for and would benefit from a program have the opportunity to participate.
- 4.11-10:** Establish an easily located page on the Division of Exceptional Student Education and Support Services website to provide parents, students, and staff members with informative and action-oriented information and links to the array of specialized transition programs available across the district.
- 4.11-13:** Review the summary of performance form to determine if the information regarding a student's status as an English language learner is necessary. If so, provide training to staff responsible for completing the SOP to ensure a description is provided of ELL services and, if not, delete this section of the form.



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12. Inclusionary Practices

Completed/Ongoing

4.12-1: Identify avenues to increase the level of specialized programmatic support available to all schools (e.g., behavior management, characteristics of ASD, access points and functional performance).

4.12-2: Conduct a review of current policies and practices regarding routine use of counseling as a primary source of support.

4.12-5: Provide training and/or technical assistance encouraging principals to pursue innovative and productive strategies to improve the effectiveness of ESE programs in their schools.

4.12-7: Evaluate current practices related to IEP team decisions regarding placement decisions that require the student to transfer to a traditional school campus other than the zoned school (i.e., cluster site) or to an ESE center school.

Partially Completed/Ongoing:

4.12-3: Enhance technical assistance provided to principals to reinforce the expectation that IEP teams consider the unique and individualized needs of a student first, and then work with school leadership to ensure the necessary supports are available.

4.12-4: Establish stronger district control of basic ESE programmatic procedures, including ensuring that sufficient special education, related services, and supplementary aids and services are available within each school to meet the needs of its students to the extent possible, and implement guidelines for reasonable caseloads and workloads.

4.12-6: Review recent organizational and staffing changes and current positions and develop strategies for increasing schools access to district-level program areas specialists and support services.

4.12-8: Expand efforts to identify high-quality regular early childhood programs within the community, and increase the district's portfolio of inclusive programs for young children with disabilities by increasing the number of contracted placements and implementing a push-in model of support.



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13. Performance and Instruction of Students

Completed/Ongoing

4.13-3: Incorporate high-yield strategies and formative assessment throughout instruction.

4.13-4: Participate in the Strategic Intervention Model and Content Enhancement Routines training offered by FDLRS, and establish pilot sites in BCPS secondary schools for implementation.

Partially Completed/Ongoing:

4.13-1: Evaluate the effectiveness of the action initiatives to determine continuation, modification, and expansion.

4.13-2: Establish opportunities for collaborative planning for special and general education teachers using common lesson planning tools and templates.

4.13-5: Identify instructional materials and curricula being used in special programs and develop a district-approved bank of resources that support the instruction of access points to the general education curriculum.

4.13-6: Adopt a life-centered curriculum for students with disabilities who are not being successful in general education and create opportunities for graduation with special diploma based on employability skills.