

EDUCATIONAL SERVICE DELIVERY

Best Practices and Indicators

Effective and Efficient Instructional Programs

1. District administrators use both academic and nonacademic data to guide them in their decision making about improving K-12 education programs.

- a. District students perform well on a variety of academic and nonacademic indicators, or student performance has substantially improved over the prior three years.
- b. District administrators compare student academic assessments to state accountability standards and peer districts.
- c. District administrators disaggregate student assessment data to evaluate and improve the performance of subgroups of students. ¹
- d. District administrators disaggregate academic assessment data to evaluate and improve the performance of all schools. ²
- e. District administrators use performance measures and benchmarks other than student assessment indicators to improve K-12 basic education programs. ³
- f. The district has identified and implemented initiatives to address district-wide achievement gaps.
- g. Is there other information that demonstrates the district's use of this best practice that should be considered?

2. The district provides effective and efficient Exceptional Student Education (ESE) programs for students with disabilities and students who are gifted. ⁴

- a. The district's procedures for identifying and assessing students, developing individualized education plans (IEPs), providing and coordinating services for ESE students, and transitioning students are consistent with state and federal laws. ⁵
(Critical Indicator)
- b. The district places students with disabilities in the least restrictive learning environment as indicated by appropriate measures and benchmark comparisons with the state and peer districts. ⁶
- c. The district ensures that its procedures do not disproportionately identify students with disabilities or students who are gifted based on their racial, ethnic, or minority status.
- d. The district's assessment and placement of ESE students is timely using appropriate standards, and at a minimum
 - the district generally completes ESE psychological assessments for students with disabilities within 60 days of referral;
 - the district has few pending referrals prior to FTE counts; and
 - the district has a small percentage of students who are not eligible for ESE services (<25%).

¹ Student subgroups include ESE students (gifted and students with disabilities as defined by 228.041(18) F.S.), at-risk students (ESOL, Title I, and other alternative education programs in the district), minority students, and students in advanced placement programs.

² District administrators evaluate the performance of all schools including low performing D and F schools, alternative schools, Title I schools, and charter schools. Districts also hold charter schools accountable based on the terms of their charter agreements.

³ Examples of such measures and benchmarks include student attendance, promotion rates, graduation rates, disciplinary statistics, SAT and ACT scores, and the percentage of 12th grade students taking the SAT or ACT.

⁴ Programs for students with disabilities are required by federal law to serve children aged 3 through 21.

⁵ Check DOE and federal monitoring reports.

⁶ Indicators could include percentage of ESE students placed full time in ESE classrooms compared to students who are included in regular education at least part of the school day and the percentage of ESE students who are fully included in regular education and perform well academically and socially.

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- e. The district maximizes Medicaid reimbursement by billing for all services for which it is cost-effective.
- f. The district has incorporated the state's performance standards for ESE students into the curriculum and ensures that ESE teachers provide appropriate instruction and any necessary accommodations.
- g. The district provides ESE and regular classroom teachers with adequate support and training to assist them in implementing strategies and accommodations to help ESE students become academically and socially successful.⁷
- h. The district maintains a focus on parental involvement for ESE students, including periodic parent training and soliciting formal feedback on parental satisfaction.
- i. District administrators evaluate the success of ESE instruction using student achievement and other appropriate measures and benchmarks and monitor services provided to students in non-public school settings.⁸
- j. ESE students progress well based on an assessment of relevant academic and non-academic indicators.
- k. Is there other information that demonstrates the district's use of this best practice that should be considered?

3. The district provides effective and efficient programs to meet the needs of at-risk students [including English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL), Title I, and alternative education].⁹

- a. The district's procedures for identifying students eligible for at-risk programs are consistent with applicable state and federal laws (ESOL, Title I, alternative education).¹⁰ (*Critical Indicator*)
- b. The district's plan for developing and implementing programs for at-risk students is supported by an analysis of student needs.
- c. The district ensures that teachers of at-risk students provide instruction designed to meet identified needs and periodically assess student progress towards meeting those needs.
- d. The district's process for identifying, placing, and removing students from at-risk programs is timely using appropriate indicators and at a minimum compares favorably to state averages and peer districts.
- e. The district provides teachers of at-risk students with adequate support and training to assist them to meet the needs of their students.
- f. The district ensures that teachers of at-risk students assist regular classroom teachers to develop and/or implement strategies for helping at-risk students become more successful academically and socially.
- g. The district maintains a focus on parental involvement for at-risk students, including periodic conferences, parent training and formal solicitation of satisfaction feedback.
- h. District administrators evaluate the success of at-risk instruction and programs using student achievement and other appropriate performance measures and benchmarks.¹¹
- i. Students enrolled in at-risk programs perform well on relevant academic and non-academic assessments.¹²

⁷ Indicators could include types of training offered, number of teachers participating in training, district policies for providing accommodations, and rates of disciplinary action for ESE students compared to peer districts.

⁸ Indicators of effectiveness could include trend data or peer district comparisons of graduation rates for ESE students with special and regular diplomas; academic assessments for non-exempted ESE students; percentage of ESE students exempted from academic assessments; and the number and outcome of due process hearings.

⁹ These are students who need academic and/or social skills interventions to assist them to perform to their capacity.

¹⁰ The ESOL program must also be consistent with the Multicultural Education Training and Advocacy (META) agreement.

¹¹ Depending on the at-risk program, examples of indicators of effectiveness could include student academic assessments and progress, retention and graduation rates, time spent in program, and success (both academic and social) after completion of program.

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j. Is there other information that demonstrates the district's use of this best practice that should be considered?

4. The district provides an appropriate range of accelerated programs (such as Advanced Placement, International Baccalaureate and Dual Enrollment).

- a. The district regularly assesses the academic needs of its students and provides an appropriate number and type of accelerated programs.¹³
- b. The district makes accelerated programs equally accessible to all students who meet established criteria for participation, regardless of racial, ethnic, or minority status.¹⁴
- c. The district uses state and federal resources in order to maximize the participation, effectiveness, and efficiency of accelerated programs.¹⁵
- d. The district ensures that all students are informed of accelerated program offerings and that schools provide academic advisement that is accurate and appropriate to meet students' individual needs and goals.
- e. District administrators evaluate the success of the instruction provided by its accelerated programs using student performance on relevant assessments (e.g., Advanced Placement examinations, International Baccalaureate examinations, Dual Enrollment course grades, and the Florida College Placement Test) and other appropriate measures and benchmarks.¹⁶
- f. Students enrolled in accelerated programs perform well on relevant assessments identified in "e." above.
- g. Is there other information that demonstrates the district's use of this best practice that should be considered?

5. The district provides effective and efficient workforce development programs (such as vocational-technical, adult basic education, and adult high school programs).

- a. The district ensures that its workforce programs reflect community needs by obtaining input from business and industry, postsecondary education institutions, and labor organizations.
- b. The district coordinates its workforce services and program offerings with the regional Workforce Development Board.
- c. The district coordinates workforce services and program offerings between high schools, vocational-technical centers, and adult education centers to minimize duplication of services and increase access to services.

¹² School districts could use standards such as peer averages, state averages, national data, and increases in performance over time to demonstrate student performance.

¹³ The number and proportion of accelerated course offerings and participation rates can be compared to peer districts. The state already pays for all tenth grade students to participate in the PSAT and PLAN examinations, which are designed to predict student success in college-level courses. The testing companies report individualized results to each school district.

¹⁴ For programs such as International Baccalaureate with limited availability, students are equitably selected from the applicant pool.

¹⁵ For example, Florida provides exam fee subsidies, professional development for teachers, and incentives for schools and teachers.

¹⁶ Evaluations can include comparisons with peer districts and state averages. Comparison data is available from the International Baccalaureate of North America, the College Board, and the Florida Department of Education.

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- d. The district ensures efficient use of resources by eliminating poorly performing programs and programs with low enrollments.
- e. District administrators evaluate the success of its workforce programs using student achievement and other appropriate performance measures and benchmarks such as
 - students attaining technical skill proficiencies;
 - students attaining a high school diploma or GED or a vocational certificate in conjunction with a diploma or GED;
 - student placement in, retention in, and completion of postsecondary education or advanced training, military service, or employment;
 - district's level of state performance funding compared to peers; and,
 - number of occupational and literacy completion points earned per student enrollee by program.¹⁷
- f. Students perform well on relevant academic indicators as identified in "e." above.
- g. Is there other information that demonstrates the district's use of this best practice that should be considered?

6. The district ensures that schools use effective planning and evaluation processes to improve student outcomes, including school improvement plans and other data driven processes such as the Sterling process.

- a. At a minimum, each of the district's schools has a board approved school improvement plan (SIP). (*Critical Indicator*)
- b. The district has an intervention plan to assist schools not making adequate progress.
- c. The district provides assistance and training to school staff, school advisory council members, and other identified stakeholders in developing SIPs and other district-approved school improvement planning and evaluation processes.
- d. The district monitors each school's implementation of its SIP and other district-approved school improvement planning and evaluation processes and provides constructive feedback and technical assistance where necessary.
- e. The district ensures that major school-level improvement planning processes are integrated to avoid duplication of effort and resources and minimizes paperwork requirements for teachers and administrators (examples: Title I plans, assistance plans, budgets, school improvement plans, technology plans, Sterling plans, etc.).
- f. Schools have developed clear, measurable objectives as part of their school improvement planning process.
- g. The district ensures that each school regularly collects and analyzes data for its instructional programs to evaluate progress on measurable objectives clearly stated in the SIP and any other approved school improvement planning process.
- h. District administrators evaluate the success of the district's school-based planning and evaluation efforts by periodically compiling the results obtained by SIPs and other approved processes and incorporates these results the district's decision-making process.
- i. Is there other information that demonstrates the district's use of this best practice that should be considered?

¹⁷ Evaluations should address different subgroups of students including students with disabilities.

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7. The district ensures effective progression of students from kindergarten through grade 12 that maximizes student mastery of the Sunshine State Standards and prepares students for work and continued education.

- a. The district's curricular framework, including curriculum guides and instructional materials, align with Florida's accountability standards and to the Sunshine State Standards.¹⁸
(Critical Indicator)
- b. The district's pupil progression plan is consistent with Florida law.¹⁹ *(Critical Indicator)*
- c. Teachers regularly assess student progress towards meeting district expectations, develop academic improvement plans for students and provide intensive remedial instruction to maximize the student's ability to progress to the next grade or level.
- d. The district encourages and facilitates the sharing of innovative and effective teaching strategies to meet the diverse needs of students.
- e. The district ensures that teachers regularly inform parents of their student's progress toward achieving district expectations in reading, writing, mathematics, and science.²⁰
- f. The district ensures that students who do not meet established expectations for progressing to the next grade or level receive instructional strategies designed to meet students' individual needs to maximize their ability to progress to the next grade or level.²¹
- g. The district has effective strategies to facilitate the smooth transition of students from one school level to the next and encourages feeder-pattern schools to communicate any deficiencies and work together to address them.
- h. The district periodically assesses how well students' progress from grade to grade or from one school level to the next (elementary to middle, middle to high, and high school to postsecondary) and uses this information to make improvements.²²
- i. Is there other information that demonstrates the district's use of this best practice that should be considered?

8. The district's organizational structure and staffing of educational programs minimizes administrative layers and processes.

- a. The district's organizational structure of its educational programs, including the central office, has reasonable lines of authority and spans of control to meet the needs of district teachers and students.
- b. The district's central office staffing for its educational programs is adequate to meet the needs of district teachers and students.²³
- c. To ensure efficient use of resources, the district regularly compares central office staffing levels, including administrators and resource/curriculum specialists, to peer districts and/or state or national standards, and at a minimum the district compares favorably using these standards.²⁴

¹⁸ Curriculum guides should clearly show strands, benchmarks, and specific teaching strategies and should include alignment with standards for ESE and "at risk" programs.

¹⁹ The plan should be consistent with s. 232.245, *F.S.*

²⁰ This does not refer to report cards but to other mechanisms designed to keep parents informed as to how well their children are progressing on state standards and district expectations for their grade levels. Progress should be based on class work, teacher observation, district and state assessments, and other relevant information.

²¹ Such assessments could include learning modality preferences and review and analysis of deficient areas to identify gaps.

²² Examples of indicators of successful progression include academic assessments including success rates of remedial instruction; percentage of students needing remediation at the next school level including at postsecondary institutions; and changes in retention and graduation rates.

²³ Central office staff can include administrators as well as curriculum specialists and support staff.

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- d. The district ensures that the staffing of individual schools within the district is comparable and meets the needs of each school's student population.
- e. The district reviews and compares the staffing of schools to ensure that teacher/student ratios are reasonable and appropriate when compared to peer districts and state averages and considers the needs of students served by the district.
- f. To ensure adequate and efficient use of resources, the district regularly compares school-based staffing levels, including teacher/administrator and student/administrator ratios, to peer districts and state averages.
- g. Is there other information that demonstrates the district's use of this best practice that should be considered?

Effective and Efficient Instructional Support

9. The district ensures that students and teachers have sufficient current textbooks and other instructional materials available to support instruction in core subjects and to meet the needs of teachers and students.

- a. The district purchases instructional materials in accordance with state law.²⁵ (*Critical Indicator*)
- b. All students have access to current state-adopted textbooks and/or other appropriate current instructional materials in core courses.
- c. The district has clearly defined the flexibility that schools have to make decisions regarding instructional materials.
- d. The district's process for reviewing and selecting instructional materials involves input from teachers and other appropriate stakeholders.
- e. The district formally obtains feedback from teachers and principals as to the usefulness of instructional materials in the classroom and uses this information when selecting future materials.
- f. The district maintains and disposes instructional materials in a cost-effective manner, as prescribed by Florida Statutes, and explores all reasonable alternatives before disposing of textbooks.²⁶
- g. The district maximizes the collection of money due to lost or damaged instructional materials and uses the money to offset the costs of new instructional materials.²⁷
- h. Is there other information that demonstrates the district's use of this best practice that should be considered?

10. The district has sufficient school library or media centers to support instruction.

- a. The district ensures that school library/media center resources are sufficient to support instruction as evidenced by
 - up-to-date materials and equipment;
 - sufficient, appropriate materials and equipment for students; and,
 - teacher and principal satisfaction with available resources.
- b. The district has and regularly uses procedures to reduce library and media costs, such as coordinating orders to take advantage of bulk rate discounts.

²⁴ Comparisons would include classroom teachers per central office administrator for discrete programs such as ESE, ESOL, and Title I as well as other district programs designed to meet the academic and social needs of its students.

²⁵ Purchases must meet the requirements of ss. 233.22, 223.34, and 233.43, *F.S.*

²⁶ Refer to applicable sections of Ch. 233, *F.S.*, particularly s. 233.37, *F.S.*

²⁷ Refer to applicable sections of Ch. 233, *F.S.*, particularly ss. 233.37, 233.43, and 233.46, *F.S.* The district's accounting process should segregate the proceeds from these activities to clearly show that these proceeds are used in instructional materials appropriations.

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- c. To the extent possible, the district's library and media services are automated.
- d. School libraries and media centers maintain hours of operation that meet the needs of students.
- e. Is there other information that demonstrates the district's use of this best practice that should be considered?

11. The district utilizes instructional technology in the classroom to enhance curriculum and improve student achievement.

- a. The district provides schools with recommended lists of instructional courseware that align with the Sunshine State Standards and district grade level benchmarks.
- b. The district provides opportunities for students to utilize technologies in order to benefit by graduating with skills needed for post-secondary education and employment in the 21st century.
- c. The district ensures that all students are encouraged to use technology in school and are required to use computers and current, appropriate software in completing assignments as part of the regular curriculum
- d. Students at all schools are regularly given time to work on computers, and students without computer access at home are able to access computers through school.
- e. The district formally obtains feedback from teachers and principals as to the usefulness of instructional technology in the classroom and uses this information when selecting future materials.
- f. Is there other information that demonstrates the district's use of this best practice that should be considered?

12. The district provides necessary support services (guidance counseling, psychological, social work and health) to meet student needs and to ensure students are able to learn.

- a. The district's plan for providing student support services is supported by an analysis of student needs.
- b. The district regularly compares student support staffing levels and expenditures to comparable districts and/or state or national benchmarks to ensure efficient use of resources, and the district compares favorably using these benchmarks.
- c. The district regularly evaluates the effectiveness of its delivery of student support services and uses the results to make improvements.²⁸
- d. Is there other information that demonstrates the district's use of this best practice that should be considered?

²⁸ For example, the district periodically reviews backlogs of student waiting for services; seeks feedback from teachers, parents, and students on the quality and sufficiency of support services; and that support services staff spend the majority of their time on activities directly related to their support area.