



**Continuous Improvement
Focused Monitoring Report
for**

WESTON COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT #7

January 12 – 13, 2009

**Special Programs Unit
320 West Main Street
Riverton, WY 82501
www.k12.wy.us**

**Wyoming Department of Education
Dr. Jim McBride, Superintendent of Public Instruction**

Wyoming Department of Education Continuous Improvement – Focused Monitoring Report

Weston County School District #7
School Year: 2008 – 2009
Date of On-Site Review: January 12 – 13, 2009

Introduction

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004 (IDEA 2004), Part B, Section 300.600(a) of the Federal Regulations states: *The state must monitor the implementation of this part, enforce this part in accordance with §300.604 (a)(1) and (a)(3), (b)(2)(i) and (b)(2)(v), and (c)(2), and annually report on performance under this part. (b) The primary focus of the State's monitoring activities must be on: (1) improving educational results and functional outcomes for all children with disabilities; and (2) ensuring that public agencies meet the program requirements under Part B of the Act, with a particular emphasis on those requirements that are most closely related to improving educational results for children with disabilities.*

Process

A. Performance Indicator Selection

Consistent with the requirements established in Federal Regulations §§300.600 through 300.604, the Wyoming Department of Education (WDE) focuses on those elements of information and data that most directly relate to or influence student performance, educational results and functional outcomes for children with disabilities.

The Focused Monitoring Stakeholder Group¹ worked with the WDE Special Programs Unit to set the priority indicators and weighted scoring system to be used in determining which districts would be selected for on-site monitoring. IDEA 2004 places a strong emphasis on positive educational results and functional outcomes for students with disabilities ages three through 21. This factor greatly influenced the selection of two key indicators of student performance from the State's Performance Plan as priorities for the focused monitoring process. The ultimate goal of focused monitoring is to promote systems change which will positively influence educational results and functional outcomes for students with disabilities.

Districts were selected for on-site monitoring through the application of a weighted formula applied to all 48 districts using two variables. These variables are taken from Indicator 3C of the State Performance Plan (SPP), which can be viewed in its entirety at www.k12.wy.us. With Stakeholder Group input, the focused indicator for the 2008 – 2009 school year was narrowed to include PAWS proficiency rates for secondary school students only in both mathematics and reading.

¹ The Focused Monitoring Stakeholder Group is comprised of principals, special education directors, teachers, parents, advocates and superintendents from across the state.

B. Individual District Selection

Districts were divided into four population groups based on overall enrollment numbers:

- Large Districts – more than 1,950 students
- Medium Districts – 860 to 1,949 students
- Small Districts – 500 to 859 students
- Extra-Small Districts – 499 or fewer students

Weston County School District #7 (WCSD # 7) is considered an extra-small school district and reported a special education population of 34 students on its most recent WDE-427 report. Thus, the district's 2007 – 2008 data was ranked against data from all other extra-small districts for the same time period. The two lowest performers in each population group were selected for an on-site monitoring visit using the comparison to state rates found below. Districts who received on-site monitoring visits during the 2007 – 2008 school year were excluded from consideration for monitoring this year in order to give them adequate time to implement their Corrective Action Plans:

SPP Indicators	WCSD #7 Rate	Overall State Rate excluding WCSD #7
#3C Secondary Reading Proficiency	12.50%	28.21%
#3C Secondary Math Proficiency	0.00%	34.45%

In terms of the variables that are included in the weighted formula, WCSD #7 scored below the state rate on both. In addition, when compared to other extra-small districts, the district's secondary mathematics proficiency rate tied two other districts as the lowest among districts in that population group. For secondary reading, the district's proficiency rate was the fourth lowest of all the extra-small districts. When these proficiency rates were combined and compared to other districts of a similar size, WCSD #7's score was one of the two lowest of eligible districts and it was selected for an on-site monitoring visit.

After a district has been selected for on-site monitoring, the WDE then analyzes district data to determine potential areas of noncompliance that may account for the district's performance. For example, if a school had low performance in math and low rates of regular class placement, the question of whether children had access to the general curriculum might be reviewed.

Focused Monitoring Conditions for Weston County School District #7

In preparation for the on-site monitoring visit, WDE reviewed the district's data from a variety of sources including the WDE-425 (November 1) and WDE-427 (July 1) data collections, assessment data (PAWS and PAWS-ALT), stable and risk-based self-assessment data, and discipline data from the WDE-636. The data led the WDE to create a hypothesis in one area: FAPE – Educational Benefit. This hypothesis was based on the district's relatively low PAWS proficiency rates for students with disabilities. Details regarding the development of this hypothesis and information on how the WDE determined its sample can be found below in the introduction to the finding area.

In addition to the single hypothesis chosen for on-site focused monitoring, the WDE also monitored other areas for IDEA compliance through a procedural compliance review of each file reviewed during testing of the aforementioned hypothesis. Results of the review are included with this report in Appendix A. Appendix B contains the results of a parent survey that was conducted in the district during a four-week window that included the dates of the on-site monitoring visit.

Results of On-Site Monitoring for Weston #7

The FAPE hypothesis was monitored on-site through a focused file review, staff interviews, and classroom observations, as deemed necessary. The area of focus is defined by statute, summarized by evidence gathered on-site, and a finding of noncompliance listed as applicable.

Area 1: FAPE – Educational Benefit

A. Citation

§300.101 Free appropriate public education (FAPE).

(a) General. A free appropriate public education must be available to all children residing in the State between the ages of 3 and 21, inclusive, including children with disabilities who have been suspended or expelled from school, as provided for in §300.530(d).

(c) Children advancing from grade to grade. (1) Each State must ensure that FAPE is available to any individual child with a disability who needs special education and related services, even though the child has not failed or been retained in a course or grade, and is advancing from grade to grade. (2) The determination that a child described in paragraph (a) of this section is eligible under this part, must be made on an individual basis by the group responsible within the child's LEA for making eligibility determinations.

§300.324 Development, review, and revision of IEP.

(b) Review and revision of IEPs—(1) General. Each public agency must ensure that, subject to paragraphs (b)(2) and (b)(3) of this section, the IEP Team—

(i) Reviews the child's IEP periodically, but not less than annually, to determine whether the annual goals for the child are being achieved; and

(ii) Revises the IEP, as appropriate, to address—

(A) Any lack of expected progress toward the annual goals described in §300.320(a)(2), and in the general education curriculum, if appropriate;

(B) The results of any reevaluation conducted under §300.303;

(C) Information about the child provided to, or by, the parents, as described under §300.305(a)(2);

(D) The child's anticipated needs; or

(E) Other matters.

B. Evidence

1. Data

As noted above in the introduction of this report, the WDE noted that PAWS proficiency rates among students with disabilities in Weston #7 were below the overall state rates for both language arts and mathematics. Digging deeper into the data, the WDE discovered that 19 of the district's students with disabilities scored Below Basic on at

least one of the PAWS subtests (reading, writing, mathematics). The WDE hypothesized that some of these students might have IEPs that are not reasonably calculated to result in educational benefit.

2. File Review

Using 17 of these 19 students as its purposeful sample², the WDE reviewed special education files as the first step in its exploration of this hypothesis. Through the file review process, four students were removed from the sample when the WDE team determined that these students' IEPs appeared to be reasonably calculated to result in educational benefit, and each was making adequate/expected progress.

This reduction left 13 students remaining in the sample. Each of the remaining files exhibited one or more of the following characteristics, prompting the WDE to further examine these students' situations:

- 4 of the 13 files exhibited a “disconnect” between needs identified in assessment reports and the needs listed in the IEP. In other words, not all of the student needs identified through the evaluation process were included in these students' IEPs.
- 6 out of 13 files listed needs in the IEP which were not addressed by goals.
- 5 of the 13 files contained one or more goals that were not measurable.
- 1 of the 13 files indicated a lack of adequate or expected progress toward at least one of the student's IEP goals. The file did not contain any evidence that the IEP team had reconvened to address the student's lack of progress.
- In 6 of the 13 files, the student's level of progress was unclear due to inconsistent or non-existent progress reporting.
- 5 of the 13 IEPs were implemented recently and had not yet reached the first progress reporting period.
- 8 of 13 files contained service delivery plans that did not appear to address the goals and objectives adequately. In seven of these eight files, special education services were apparently being delivered by paraeducators³ in regular classroom environments. In one of the eight files, the WDE team could not locate the special education services page of the IEP after searching throughout the student's special education file.

3. Interviews

Following the file review, special education staff, general education teachers, and related service providers were interviewed regarding these 13 specific students. Through the interview process, eight additional students were removed from the sample for the following reasons:

- Regarding 5 of the 8 students, district personnel were able to provide details demonstrating that each of the students were now making progress and receiving educational benefit.

² Prior to the on-site visit, Weston #7 informed the WDE that two of the 19 students were no longer enrolled in the district.

³ Please refer to 34 CFR 300.18 (IDEA regulations) for the definition and requirements of a “Highly Qualified Special Education Teacher.”

- For 3 of the 8 students, those interviewed were able to provide compelling evidence that these students' needs were in fact being adequately addressed through the provision of special education and related services. In most of these cases, the students' needs had changed since the most recent triennial evaluation.
- For 5 of 6 students who appeared to not have a goal in one or more areas of need, staff were able to locate and provide the goals not found during the file review. For 1 of the 6 students, staff explained how a particular IEP goal corresponded directly to the need in question.

These reductions left five students remaining in the subsample. The following comments made by district staff lend further support for a finding in this area:

- Regarding one particular student, a staff member reported, "[Student's] behavior worries me. [Student's name] is one we'll read about later on in life." The district has not conducted a Functional Behavior Assessment (FBA), the student has no Behavior Intervention Plan (BIP), and does not receive any kind of social-emotional services (such as counseling, psychological services, or social work).
- One of the students will receive failing grades in multiple classes for the first semester and has been struggling since the start of the school year. However, the student's lack of progress was not documented in the file and the IEP team did not reconvene or pursue an amendment to address the student's poor performance.
- For one student, a staff member mentioned that "on-task behavior is the most important thing to address." However, the student's program had no goals or services to address this particular need.
- Regarding a student who is nearly failing a particular class, a teacher stated that specialized instruction in this area would be helpful, even though it is not currently being provided. The student demonstrated a severe discrepancy in this core achievement area when evaluated to determine eligibility for special education.
- A teacher reported that one student is "going to fail a couple classes" and is "academically the one kid I'm still worried about." However, the IEP team has not reconvened to address his/her poor progress. The teacher added, "I don't know what we would do. It (reconvening) is possible. We have been discussing it."
- One student has social-emotional issues that are affecting his/her performance at school. When asked about ways to overcome these barriers, a staff member stated, "There's only so much we can do." The student in question has not received an FBA and does not have a current behavior plan. The IEP team has not reconvened.

C. Finding

The WDE finds that special education services in WCSD #7 are not always provided in accordance with the FAPE requirements established in §§300.101 and 300.324. The district will be required to address this finding and correct the noncompliance through the development and implementation of a Corrective Action Plan (CAP). The district must also ensure that all staff members delivering special education services meet the "Highly Qualified" requirements of §300.18.

OTHER AREAS OF POTENTIAL NONCOMPLIANCE

A. Procedural Compliance File Review

Each member of the WDE monitoring team had the responsibility of conducting a procedural compliance check on each file reviewed during the on-site visit. In sum, 17 files were included in this review. In Appendix A of this report, these results may be found. For any file review item in which the district's compliance is below 95%, the WDE requires that the district evidence correction of the noncompliance in a Corrective Action Plan and conduct additional self assessment to assure full compliance in these areas. More detailed guidance is provided on the CAP form.

B. Parent Survey Results

As part of the monitoring process, the WDE developed a Parent Survey in order to provide all parents an opportunity to give input on their children's special education experiences in Weston #7. The Department mailed a hard copy of the Parent Survey and a cover letter to each parent of a student currently receiving special education services in the district. Parents had the option of completing the survey on paper or completing it online. A total of 45 surveys were mailed, and 11 parents returned completed surveys to the WDE (24.4%). In Appendix B of this report, the complete survey results are included for the district's review.

File Review 2307000	Number of files reviewed	Percent of files compliant
B. Most Recent Evaluation / Reevaluation		
B1. The file contains a current evaluation	17	94.12 %
B2. The file contains documentation that a reevaluation was conducted by the public agency at least once in the past three years .(300.303(b)(2))	17	94.12 %
B5. Prior written notice includes a description of the action the public agency is proposing or refusing. (300.503(b)(1))	17	88.24 %
B17. The initial evaluation/reevaluation includes a variety of assessment tools and strategies that provide relevant information that directly assist persons in determining the educational needs of the child and is administered by qualified evaluators. (300.304(b)(1)), (300.304(b)(2), (300.204(c)(7))	17	94.12 %
B19. As part of the initial evaluation/reevaluation, the IEP team reviewed current classroom based, local or state assessments. (300.305(a)(1)(ii))	17	* 88.24 %
B22. The file contains documentation that, as part of the initial evaluation/reevaluation, the child is assessed in all areas related to the suspected disability, including, if appropriate, health, vision, hearing, social and emotional status, general intelligence, academic performance, communicative status and motor abilities. (300.304)(c)(4))	17	94.12 %
C. Eligibility Determination		
C6. In the evaluation/ reevaluation, the file documents whether the child has or continues to have a disability, the present level of academic achievement and related developmental needs of the child, whether the child continues to need special education and related services and whether additions or modifications to the special education and related services are needed. (300.305(a)(2))	17	94.12 %
C9. There is documentation that the public agency provided a copy of the evaluation report and documentation of the eligibility determination to the parent. (300.306(a)(2))	17	76.47 %
E. The IEP Process		
E2. The file contains a current written IEP that was completed prior to the ending date of the previous IEP.(300.323(a))	17	100.00 %
E13. The IEP includes documentation if the student is being removed from general education for any part of the school day, such removal occurs only if the nature or severity of the disability is such that education in regular classes with the use of modifications, supplementary aids and services cannot be achieved satisfactorily. (300.114(a)(2)(ii))	17	76.47 %
E20. The IEP includes a statement of special education and related services and any supplementary aids and services to enable the child to advance toward attaining the annual goals involved in and make progress in the general education curriculum and be educated and participate with other children with and without disabilities.	17	100.00 %
E24. If the child participates in the alternate assessment the IEP contains a statement of why the child cannot participate in the regular assessment. (300.320(a)(6)(ii)(A))	17	100.00 %
E26. The IEP includes the child's present levels of academic and functional performance including how the child's disability affects his/her progress in the general curriculum (or for preschool children, participation in appropriate activities). (300.320(a)(1)(i)), (300.320(a)(1)(ii))	17	88.24 %

File Review --- Trained reviewers' assesment of files Percent of "Yes" responses on each item	Number of files with a yes/no response	Percent of Yes responses
E27. The IEP includes measurable annual academic, developmental and functional goals designed to meet the needs of the child and enable the child to progress in the general curriculum. (300.320(a)(2)(i)(A)), (300.324(a)(iv))	17	64.71 %
E30. The IEP includes documentation when periodic reports regarding progress toward meeting annual goals will be provided. (300.320(a)(3)(ii))	17	88.24 %
E33. The IEP documents that the public agency has informed each regular education teacher, special education teacher, related service provider and other service provider who is responsible for its implementation of his or her specific responsibilities including accommodations, modifications and supports. (300.323(d)(2))	17	100.00 %
E45. If the parent did not attend the IEP meeting there is documentation of more than one attempt to arrange a mutually agreed upon time, place and format. (300.322(c)), (300.322(d)), (300.328), (300.501(b))	17	100.00 %
E46. The file contains documentation that the public agency conducted a meeting to develop the initial IEP within 30 calendar days of a determination that a child with a disability was found eligible for special education and related services. (300.323(c)(1))	17	100.00 %
F. TRANSFERS		
F1. If a child with a disability transferred from a public agency within the same academic year, and had an IEP that was in effect in Wyoming, the file contains documentation that the public agency in consultation with the parents, provided FAPE to the child including services comparable to those described in the previously held IEP. (300.323(e)), (300.501(b))	17	100.00 %
F2. If a child with a disability who transferred from a public agency within the same academic year, and had an IEP that was in effect in another State, the file contains documentation that the public agency in consultation with the parents, provided FAPE to the child including services comparable to those described in the previously held IEP; until such time as the public agency conducts and evaluation, if determined to be necessary and develops a new IEP if appropriate. (300.323(f)), (300.501(b))	17	100.00 %
G. ESY		
G1. The file contains a parent notice that ESY services will be considered	17	0.00 %

**Continuous Improvement Focused Monitoring
Parent Survey Results for
Weston County School District #7**

Total Respondents: 11
Total Parents who were mailed a survey: 45
Response Rate = 24.44%

	<i>Very Strongly Disagree</i>	<i>Strongly Disagree</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Strongly Agree</i>	<i>Very Strongly Agree</i>	<i>Agree, Strongly Agree, Very Strongly Agree</i>
1. At Individualized Education Program (IEP) meetings, we talk about whether my child needs special education services during the summer or other times when school is not in session.	10%	0%	0%	50%	10%	30%	90%
2. My child is included in the general education classroom as much as is appropriate for his/her needs.	0%	0%	0%	11%	33%	56%	100%
3. My child's educational needs are adequately addressed by the school.	0%	0%	0%	0%	44%	56%	100%
4. My child has made adequate progress over the course of the past year.	0%	0%	0%	0%	13%	88%	100%
5. My child's special education program is preparing him/her for life after high school.	0%	0%	0%	0%	67%	33%	100%

6. Could your child's school be doing more to address his/her educational needs and improve your child's progress in school?	Yes	No	Don't Know
6a. If yes, what could the school be doing? See next page for responses	11%	56%	33%

	<i>Very Strongly Disagree</i>	<i>Strongly Disagree</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Strongly Agree</i>	<i>Very Strongly Agree</i>	<i>Agree, Strongly Agree, Very Strongly Agree</i>	State Results % who agreed
7. My child's school provides me with information about organizations that offer support for parents of students with disabilities.	22%	0%	0%	22%	22%	22%	66%	50%
8. Teachers at my child's school are available to speak with me.	0%	0%	0%	11%	11%	78%	100%	90%
9. Teachers and administrators encourage me to participate in the decision-making process.	0%	0%	0%	11%	11%	78%	100%	84%
10. My child's school gives parents the help they may need to play an active role in their child's education.	0%	0%	0%	11%	11%	78%	100%	76%
11. My child's school explains what options parents have if they disagree with a decision of the school.	0%	0%	0%	22%	11%	67%	100%	68%

12. Any other comments you would like to share?
[See next page responses](#)

**Continuous Improvement Focused Monitoring
Parent Survey Open-Ended Comments for
Weston County School District #7**

6. Could your child's school be doing more to address his/her educational needs and improve your child's progress in school?

6a. If yes, what could the school be doing?

- I feel that maybe the teacher and speech therapist could know a little more about stuttering. This is what [REDACTED] is receiving help for.

12. Any other comments that you would like to share?

- I am very pleased with the special education in our school. [REDACTED] has been in special Ed. Along time and they have really been there for her.
- I feel that Upton Elementary is meeting and exceeding my expectations. The teaching staff is great and as well as the administrative staff. They go out of the way for us and the kids.
- Our home school does a awesome job at helping my child and me.
- To question 11 never had a problem so I have never had to talk to them. Can't give a honest answer to that question.

**Parent Survey Demographics for
Weston County School District #7**

Ethnicity	N	%
White	9	82%
Not Specified	2	18%

Primary Disability Code	N	%
Other Health Impairment	1	9%
Specific Learning Disability	4	36%
Speech / Language Impairment	4	36%
Not Specified	2	18%

Grade Distribution	N	%
Kindergarten	1	9%
1	1	9%
4	1	9%
5	1	9%
7	2	18%
8	1	9%
9	1	9%
11	1	9%
Not Specified	2	18%

Environment Code	N	%
Regular Environment	8	73%
Resource Room	1	9%
Not Specified	2	18%