

Rhode Island Department of Education  
Office of Special Populations

School Support System Report and Support Plan for the  
Rhode Island Department of Corrections  
December 18-19, 2006

# SCHOOL SUPPORT SYSTEM

## A Collaborative System of Focused Monitoring

### Introduction

The purpose of the School Support System (SSS) is to provide a means of accountability for delivery of programs and services for students with exceptionalities. The School Support System model is designed to promote the involvement of the whole school district, general educators as well as special educators and parents. It is designed to learn if the district meets the regulations and what effects programs and services have on student outcomes. Finally, the SSS develops a school support plan for training and technical assistance.

To accomplish this the SSS includes these components:

- The Orientation Meeting The Rhode Island Department of Education (RIDE) staff meets with the Local Education Agency (LEA) to plan the site review and identify issues or initiatives that may influence programs or service delivery.
- Data Analysis Meeting The RIDE staff meets to review LEA demographic information on selected reports including: the LEA annual plan, census information, and information collected through record review, staff questionnaires and parent interviews. To ensure that the child is at the center of the study, all analyses begin with the child. Thus, a sample of approximately 30 students with exceptionalities is selected; the records of these students are reviewed; their parents, teachers and related service providers are interviewed, and their classrooms are observed. The result is an in-depth, unified examination of the actual provision of programs and services for students with exceptionalities. The RIDE staff compiles a preliminary summary of their analyses of this data.
- Presentation by the LEA and School Site Review The on-site review begins with a presentation of programs by teachers and staff. The presentation provides the review team with general and specific information on delivery of programs and services to students. Following this presentation, on-site reviews to all schools are made. The team members interview school administrators and teaching staff. Parents and central office staff are also interviewed. The team gathers sufficient information and works with the LEA personnel to generate a report, covering the following:
  - The district's compliance with the state and federal regulations, relative to the education of students with exceptionalities.
  - The quality and effectiveness of programs and services provided by the district.
  - The need for professional development and technical assistance that will enable the LEA to improve programs and services.
- The Support Plan The RIDE team, LEA central office and building administrators meet to review the data and complete a report of results. The group designs a professional development/technical assistance support plan with timelines for implementation. This plan enables the school and district to correct areas of non-compliance and to strengthen promising programs and correct areas of weakness in order to improve services and programs for all students.
- The SSS Report The report summarizes the findings from the various data sources. The format of the report uses four divisions: Indicators, Findings, Documentation, and Support Plan. Indicators describe either performance or compliance. Findings can include a variety of some six categories, from School Improvement to Free Appropriate Public Education in the Least Restrictive Environment. The documentation section of the report distinguishes the source of the finding. The support plan reflects the response to the described findings. The support plan describes the corrective action required by the district as well as resources and time lines to improve programs and services.

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Rhode Island Department of Corrections  
School Support System Review  
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1. SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT / FAMILY ENGAGEMENT					
Indicator		Findings	Documentation	Support Plan	Follow-up Findings
Performance	1	The Rhode Island Department of Corrections (RIDOC) is utilizing data at the Education Unit level to inform instructional programming. The utilization of data to inform instructional practice at the classroom/student level is inconsistent. Some classrooms had individual student folders that contained TABE results, student goals, a tracking sheet, and progress towards attainment of goals. Other classrooms lacked evidence that instruction was planned.	District Presentation Documents Observation Staff Interviews	Special Education Director will share this finding with the faculty. The Director will share examples of where the teachers are utilizing data to inform instruction. The Special Education Director and staff will develop and implement consistent protocols for all classrooms regarding the use of data to inform instruction. Timeline: RIDE will review progress by Feb. 08	Finding shared; Folders established in all securities; School Improvement Team will create universal intake packet commencing 08-09 to include consistent protocols for transfer of information
Performance	2	The RIDOC has a School Improvement Team (SIT) and a School Improvement Plan, which is used to design programming. The SIT was not active last year but activities resumed this year. All staff is aware of the SIT.	District Presentation Documents Staff Interviews		SIT meeting regularly and providing input to management and delivery of instruction to school
Performance	3	Professional Development is provided for staff via targeted areas of intervention or need. Some staff reported needing individualized training based on their personal level of skill or ability.	District Presentation Documents Staff Interviews	Special Education Director will survey staff for feedback to determine the nature of individualized training requested, compile the results and incorporate into RIDE grant applications as appropriate. Timeline: RIDE will review progress by Feb. 08	Staff surveyed; Grant application submitted with literacy training for 07-08. Approved and conducted on site.
Performance	4	All of the Special Education staff has been trained in the LEXIA Reading Program. Classroom implementation of the LEXIA Program was inconsistent. Some classrooms had clear schedules as to which students worked on Lexia and when with appropriate documentation were able to demonstrate when asked. Others did not.	Documents Staff Interviews Observation	Special Education Director will review protocols and classroom practice to insure that students with TABE results at or below the 4 <sup>th</sup> grade level have scheduled times with the Lexia Reading Program. Timeline: RIDE will review progress by Feb. 08	Rosters created with TABE result and readers in need of remediation. Staff requested to schedule inmates.

Performance	5	The RIDOC has a partnership with CCRI offering certificate programs of study. Offerings vary by semester. Current offerings include culinary arts, computer literacy, OSHA Safety, Lead / Asbestos Abatement Supervision, Food Safety, and a variety of three credit academic courses.	District Presentation Staff/Student Interviews		On going
Performance	6	The Rhode Island Special Education Advisory Committee (RISEAC) serves as the Local Advisory Committee (LAC) for the RIDOC. Staff from the RIDOC are actively involved with the SEAC.	Documents Staff Interviews		On going
Performance	7	Parent / family engagement is challenging at the RIDOC. Students rarely request the participation of parents in educational planning. The RIDOC complies with all notice requirements for parent participation in IEP and evaluation meetings.	Documents Staff Interviews	The RIDOC will increase parental / family participation in the educational process. Strategies will be developed and implemented to meet this goal. Timeline: RIDE will review progress by Feb. 08	Families of all inmates 17 and younger are contacted; Others deferred until social worker returns from leave of absence.

2. FREE APPROPRIATE PUBLIC EDUCATION IN THE LEAST RESTRICTIVE ENVIRONMENT (FAPE/LRE)					
Indicator		Findings	Documentation	Support Plan	Follow-up Findings
Performance	1	The RIDOC offers a variety of adult education options in all facilities including Adult Basic Education, GED preparation, English as a Second Language and Special Education. All Special Education Services are delivered through in-class supports, small group instruction and/or one-on-one instruction.	Observations Record Review Staff Interviews		On going
Performance	2	Since the last School Support System Review, there is evidence in many classrooms of intent to improve instruction (ex. Alignment to Standards, whole class instruction, written lesson plans etc.) however; these practices were inconsistent across classrooms. Some classrooms showed no evidence of whole class instruction, written lesson plans, etc.	Observations Staff Interviews Documents	The Special Education Director and the RIDOC Administration will review procedures and implement protocols to insure that instruction is provided consistently in all classrooms. Timeline: RIDE will review progress by Feb. 08	All teachers submit lesson plans on a weekly basis reflective of the curriculum.
Performance	3	RIDOC has developed a list of common core materials for use in all facilities to address multiple student levels. Individualized planning for instruction was evident in some classrooms. Some faculty were unclear about the criteria utilized for the selection of appropriate materials and intervention.	Observations Documents	Special Education Director in conjunction with faculty will review existing material list to align them with instructional standards and the range of instruction suitable for each individual learner. Timeline: RIDE will review progress by Feb. 08.	Material list updated to include National Reporting System instructional range consistent with RIDOC instructional standards.
Performance	4	Some classes were intentionally structured and scheduled to provide whole class instruction for students with similar needs. Some teachers reported encouraging students to attend class when particular content was scheduled to be taught.	Observations	The Special Education Director will review with faculty the structure and schedule to enhance content instruction. Timeline: RIDE will review progress by Feb. 08	Faculty submitted curriculum outlines consistent with school curriculum adapted for facility schedules.

Performance	5	The use of computer based assessment and instruction was inconsistent across classrooms. Some classrooms utilized computers to support instruction. In other classrooms, students were using software that did not seem to tie in to standards and the lesson being taught.	Observations	The Special Education Director will utilize existing examples of computer assisted instruction with the faculty. The Special Education Director and staff will develop and implement consistent protocols in all classrooms for the use of computer assisted instruction. Timeline: RIDE will review progress by Feb. 08	Computer software procured and training provided. RIDOC will include additional hardware and software requests in upcoming RIDE grant applications.
Compliance	6	Faculty vacancies in some classrooms/facilities resulted in inconsistencies in providing FAPE and create the potential for violating IDEA.	Observations Documents	RIDOC will provide assurances to RIDE that students with IEP's are receiving FAPE to fulfill the legal requirements posed by the IDEA. Timeline: Immediately and ongoing	All vacancies filled by the commencement of the 2007-2008 school year.
Performance	7	Students participating in the Spanish version of the GED Report that they do not get results in the same time frame as students taking the English version of the test. RIDE Office of Adult Education is changing vendors to ensure timely receipt of test scores.	Student Interviews		
Performance	8	All facilities appear adequate for assessment and instruction purposes.	Observations		
Performance/ Compliance	9	Substitute teachers are not provided in the RIDOC classrooms, as a result, when teachers are absent or need to attend IEP meetings, classes are cancelled.	Staff Interviews	The Special Education Director and RIDOC administration will investigate and develop an infrastructure that will support the implementation of substitute teachers. Timeline: Immediately and ongoing.	Protocols for use of substitute teachers established; substitute teacher pool established and utilized.

Performance	10	The RIDOC offers evening classes in order to accommodate student schedules. Practices observed in evening classes were consistent with the findings in day classes included throughout this report.	Observations Student Interviews		Evening staff directed to submit data / reports reflecting day time requirements.
Performance	11	Students report not being able to access the Special Education Director during the school day.	Student Interviews Observation	The Special Education Director and the RIDOC Administration will develop protocols and schedules to insure that students have an opportunity for the Special Education Director to answer questions and address educational concerns. Timeline: RIDE will review progress by Feb. 08	Special Education Director visiting facilities and answering questions and addressing inmate concerns on an on going basis.
Performance	12	There was wide variation among teachers utilizing student assessment data to inform instruction. Some students were not clear about their individual progress toward their educational goals. Most students were not aware of the gradations of achievement toward specific goals. Progress monitoring and feedback to students was inconsistent. Some classrooms had good formative assessments with clear documentation of student levels, methods for students to self-monitor historical performance and progress. In some classrooms instruction was focused beyond tutorial GED preparation and toward critical thinking and developmental writing. In these classrooms multi-level materials were utilized effectively for addressing student needs.	Observation Staff/Student Interviews Documents	Completion and implementation of Support Plan items 1 and 4 under "School Improvement / Family Engagement" and items 2,3,4,5, 11 under "FAPE /LRE" collectively will address this item. Timeline: RIDE will review progress by Feb. 08	

Compliance /Performance	13	Staff have been provided with paraprofessional schedules and lists of students with paraprofessional support required in their IEP's. There was evidence of inconsistencies in the oversight and utilization of para-professionals across classrooms. In some classrooms teachers were not knowledgeable of the paraprofessional's schedule and what instruction was being provided. In other classrooms, paraprofessionals were fully integrated with clear schedules and teacher guided goals for instruction.	Observations Staff Interviews Record Review	The Special Education Director and the RIDOC Administration will provide professional development pertaining to the use of paraprofessionals. Assurances will be provided to RIDE that students with paraprofessional support in their IEP are provided with FAPE. Timeline: Immediately and ongoing.	Training provided to staff pertaining to the use of paraprofessionals.
Performance	14	Faculty have been provided with training and protocols for developing Personal Literacy Plans (PLP's). Evidence of the use of PLP's and strategies for closing literacy performance gaps was inconsistent.	Observations Staff Interviews	Special Education Director in conjunction with faculty will review PLP procedures to insure consistent implementation. Timeline: RIDE will review progress by Feb. 08.	Individual goals created for all students as part of folder.
Performance	15	Formal and informal peer tutors are utilized throughout the program.	Observations Staff Interviews		Formal program created to recognize inmate tutors.

3. EVALUATION/ INDIVIDUAL EDUCATION PROGRAM (IEP)					
Indicator		Findings	Documentation	Support Plan	Follow-up Findings
Performance	1	Use of the IEP to guide instruction varied across classrooms.	Observations Staff Interviews	The Special Education Director will provide copies of IEP goal sheets to teachers for placement in student folders. IEP goals are will be integrated into instructional plans. Timeline: RIDE will review progress by Feb. 08.	IEP goal sheets distributed to teachers who have been directed to attach goal sheets to student instructional folder.
Performance	2	Records and Special Education protocols are in place (i.e. consent forms, checklist, procedural safeguards, etc.), and are well documented.	Record Review Staff Interviews		
Compliance/ Performance	3	The RIDOC special education record keeping was in excellent order. The only compliance issues were with IEP meeting attendance by General Education and/or Special Education Teachers and the majority of these issues were attributed to staff vacancies. There were very few performance issues noted in the records and all were related to areas of the IEP that were not completed or did not include clear measurable annual goals. It should be noted that these compliance and performance findings were minimal. The names of the student records that were reviewed have been provided to the Special Education Director.	Record Review	RIDOC will provide assurances to RIDE that students with IEP's are receiving FAPE to fulfill the legal requirements posed by the IDEA. The RIDOC will provide additional training on the development of clear and measurable annual IEP goals and objectives. Timeline: Immediately and ongoing	RIDE contacted spring 07 to provide on site IEP training for new IEP form that will begin July 08.

4. TRANSITION					
Indicator		Findings	Documentation	Support Plan	Follow-up Findings
Performance	1	Inconsistencies exist in vocational programming across the RIDOC facilities. Vocational assessments were found in student records but there was little evidence of vocational instruction based on the assessment results. Staff report that the majority of intervention was individual career counseling. There was no documented evidence this was utilized to inform course of study or classroom instruction.	Documents Staff/Student Interview	The Special Education Director and the RIDOC Administration will develop protocols for the integration of vocational counseling with instructional planning. Timeline: RIDE will review progress by Feb. 08.	Pending return of school social worker from leave of absence.
Performance	2	There are inconsistent protocols for communicating student academic information across facilities for students transferring.	Documents Staff/Interview	The Special Education Director and the RIDOC Administration will develop protocols that teachers will implement for communicating student academic information across facilities for transfer students. Timeline: RIDE will review progress by Feb. 08.	Staff directed to transfer student folders when student moves; protocols and results to be reviewed on an ongoing basis.
Performance	3	For students exiting the RIDOC, there was evidence of coordination with Discharge Planning Teams through formal protocols.	Documents Staff/Interview		On going
Performance	4	The School Social Worker provides coordination of transition services with the Discharge Planning Teams, the Job Readiness Program, the RIEOC and community based adult education service providers. At this time there is no evidence of formal follow up on post release students to ascertain if they completed their education program(s).	Staff/Interview	The Special Education Director and the RIDOC Administration will explore the feasibility of a tracking system to follow inmates after release for continuing their education. Timeline: RIDE will review progress by Feb. 08.	Special Education Director and Transition Associate to attend RIDE training to develop background to create tracking system.