

2006-2007 LEAST RESTRICTIVE ENVIRONMENT MONITORING PROCESS DEFINING A MULTI-TIERED SYSTEM

IDEA 2004 and the Gaskin Settlement Agreement require the Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE) to monitor the implementation of the least restrictive environment (LRE) requirement of IDEA. The U.S. Department of Education's Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) requires that states report the proportion of students educated in a number of educational placement categories in each LEA. PDE used three of these data categories to identify school districts for LRE monitoring as follows:

- Students with IEPs who receive special education outside regular class less than 21% of the day;
- Students with IEPs who receive special education outside regular class more than 60% of the day; and
- Students with IEPs served in settings outside regular schools

An analysis of the data collected for the three placement categories was used to identify school districts most in need of systemic LRE-related improvement. PDE used the most recent verified data (the Revised December 1, 2005 Federal Child Count) to identify about one half of the Commonwealth's districts for some type of LRE monitoring. The 20 school districts currently implementing or developing a corrective action or improvement plan as a result of last year's LRE monitoring were not identified for LRE Monitoring during the 2006-07 school year.

LRE Monitoring Categories

The districts identified for LRE monitoring were placed in one of three categories: Tier 1, Tier 2, or Tier 3.

Tier 1

The 20 school districts where LRE data indicated the highest potential need for systemic LRE-related improvement was identified as Tier 1 districts. Tier 1 districts received on-site LRE monitoring during spring 2006.

Tier 2

Thirty school districts were identified as Tier 2 districts and received a letter of "Warning" IN December, 2006. PDE warned the Tier 2 districts that they were close to the point of being subject to Tier 1 LRE monitoring and identified self-assessment steps to be taken by the districts.

Tier 3

The remaining school districts identified via the data analysis received a letter of "Alert" during December, 2006. PDE alerted the Tier 3 districts that they were in the remaining bottom half of the districts in terms of the LRE data analysis, identified areas that should be considered for improvement, and urged Tier 3 districts to take advantage of the training and technical assistance available to districts via the Department and its partners.

Data Analysis

Initially, PDE excluded data for students who are placed without an IEP team decision, or whose LEA does not control the placement, or one LEA where students all receive their education in another district. For example, data for the following students was excluded:

- Students who are “wards of the state” (the LEA has no control over the placement)
- Students receiving special education services in a hospital or homebound setting (IEP teams do not make such placement decisions)
- Students receiving special education services in correctional facilities (IEP teams do not make the placement decision)
- Students that are residents of the Bryn Athyn School District (all students in this district attend school in other districts)

After excluding the data for students who are placed without an IEP team decision or other circumstance as noted above, each district was placed into one of the three LRE monitoring categories as follows:

Tier 1 - On-Site LRE Monitoring

- Twenty school districts were tentatively identified for Tier 1, using the following criteria:
 - The five districts that had the lowest percentage of students receiving special education services outside the regular education classroom less than 21% of the school day.
 - The 10 districts that had the highest percentage of students receiving special education services outside the regular education classroom more than 60% of the school day.
 - The five school districts that had the highest percentage of students receiving special education services outside regular schools.
- After tentatively identifying the 20 school districts in Tier 1, PDE identified specific circumstances that eliminated certain school districts: e.g., districts currently working under an LRE related Corrective Action Plan; and districts named in more than one category.
- PDE then finalized the identification of the 20 Tier 1 school districts and notified them in December 2006 that they would be monitored.

Tier 2 - Warning

- After identifying the Tier 1 districts, 30 districts were tentatively identified for Tier 2, using the following criteria:
 - The seven districts that had the lowest percentage of students receiving special education services outside the regular education classroom less than 21% of the school day.
 - The 16 districts that had the highest percentage of students receiving special education services outside the regular education classroom more than 60% of the school day.
 - The seven districts that had the highest percentage of students receiving special education services outside regular schools.
- After tentatively identifying the 30 school districts in Tier 2, PDE identified specific circumstances that eliminated certain school districts: e.g., districts currently working under an LRE related Corrective Action Plan; and a school district named in more than one category, etc.
- After eliminating the districts, PDE finalized the identification of the 30 Tier 2 school districts and informed them of their status.

Tier 3 – Alert

- Of the remaining school districts, about 180 were tentatively identified for Tier 3, using the following criteria:
 - The 45 districts that had the lowest percentage of students receiving special education services outside the regular education classroom less than 21% of the school day.
 - The 90 districts that had the highest percentage of students receiving special education services outside the regular education classroom greater than 60% of the school day.
 - The 45 districts that had the highest percentage of students receiving special education services outside regular schools.
- After tentatively identifying the 180 school districts in Tier 3, PDE identified specific circumstances that eliminated certain school districts: e.g., districts currently working under an LRE related Corrective Action Plan; and a school district named in more than one category.
- After eliminating the districts, PDE finalized the identification of the 180 Tier 3 school districts and notified them of their status.

2006-07 Tier 1 School Districts
On-Site LRE Monitoring by PDE
N=20*

Outside regular classroom less than 21% of the school day	Outside regular classroom more than 60% of the school day	Other Settings
Coudersport Area SD	Charleroi SD	Brentwood Borough SD
Greater Johnstown SD	Connellsville Area SD	Clairton City SD
Millcreek Township SD	Lebanon SD	Sto Rox SD
Northern Potter SD	Pittston Area SD	William Penn SD
Union City Area SD	Pottstown SD	Woodland Hills SD
	Pottsville Area SD	
	South Western SD	
	Steelton-Highspire SD	

*Two school districts were identified in error resulting in 18 SD in Tier 1 for this year for 2006-2007.
Additional SD will be added to Tier 1 in 2007-2008.

2006-07 Tier 2 School Districts
Warning Letters
N=30

Outside regular classroom less than 21% of the school day	Outside regular classroom more than 60% of the school day	Other Settings
New Kensington-Arnold SD	Altoona Area SD	Blackhawk SD
Newport SD	Antietam SD	Chichester SD
Pocono Mountain SD	Berwick Area SD	Kennett Consolidated SD
Sullivan County SD	Chambersburg Area SD	Marple Newtown SD
Susquehanna Township SD	Columbia Borough SD	South Park SD
Williams Valley SD	Forest City Regional SD	Southeastern Greene SD
Wyoming Area SD	Hanover Area SD	West Jefferson Hills SD
	Harrisburg City SD	
	Mount Carmel Area SD	
	Mount Union Area SD	
	Northwest Area SD	
	Southeast Delco SD	
	Upper Darby SD	
	Wilson Area SD	
	Wyoming Valley West SD	
	York City SD	

2006-07 Tier 3 Districts
Alert Letters
N=180

Outside regular classroom less than 21% of the school day	Outside regular classroom more than 60% of the school day	Other Settings
Annville-Cleona SD	Albert Gallatin Area SD	Ambridge Area SD
Austin Area SD	Allegheny Valley SD	Beaver Area SD
Bangor Area SD	Allegheny-Clarion Valley SD	California Area SD
Belle Vernon Area SD	Allentown City SD	Chartiers Valley SD
Bradford Area SD	Athens Area SD	Cornell SD
Carmichaels Area SD	Bentworth SD	Downingtown Area SD
Central Fulton SD	Bermudian Springs SD	Great Valley SD
Commodore Perry SD	Bethlehem Area SD	Greensburg Salem SD
Conrad Weiser Area SD	Big Spring SD	Interboro SD
Corey Area SD	Butler Area SD	Jeannette City SD
Dover Area SD	Carlynton SD	Mahanoy Area SD
Eastern Lebanon County SD	Centennial SD	Mars Area SD
Eastern York SD	Central Dauphin SD	Minersville Area SD
Elk Lake SD	Central Greene SD	Montour SD
Fannett-Metal SD	Cheltenham Township SD	Moon Area SD
Farrell Area SD	Chestnut Ridge SD	New Brighton Area SD
Fort Cherry SD	Colonial SD	North Schuylkill SD
Gettysburg Area SD	Conestoga Valley SD	Northgate SD
Governor Mifflin SD	Cornwall Lebanon SD	Octorara Area SD
Hamburg Area SD	Council Rock SD	Owen J Roberts SD
Hatboro-Horsham SD	Crawford Central SD	Oxford Area SD
Hempfield Area SD	Cumberland Valley SD	Penn Hills SD
Jersey Shore Area SD	Dallas SD	Penn-Delco SD
Johnsonburg Area SD	Danville Area SD	Penn-Trafford SD
Lackawanna Trail SD	Donegal SD	Perkiomen Valley SD
McGuffey SD	East Stroudsburg Area SD	Phoenixville Area SD
Methacton SD	Eastern Lancaster County SD	Pine Grove Area SD
Monessen City SD	Easton Area SD	Pittsburgh SD
Northampton Area SD	Ellwood City Area SD	Plum Borough SD
Northwestern SD	Ephrata Area SD	Pottsgrove SD
Otto-Eldred SD	Fairview SD	Riverview SD
Penns Manor Area SD	Fort Leboeuf SD	Rose Tree Media SD
Port Allegany SD	Frazier SD	Scranton SD
Red Lion Area SD	Hanover Public SD	Shenandoah Valley SD
Ridgway Area SD	Harbor Creek SD	South Allegheny SD
Rochester Area SD	Harmony Area SD	Springfield SD
Sharpsville Area SD	Hazleton Area SD	Steel Valley SD
Smethport Area SD	Hollidaysburg Area SD	Tamaqua Area SD

2006-07 Tier 3 Districts (Cont'd)
Alert Letters
N=180

Outside regular classroom less than 21% of the school day	Outside regular classroom more than 60% of the school day	Other Settings
Souderton Area SD	Homer-Center SD	Tredyffrin-Easttown SD
Spring-Ford Area SD	Hopewell Area SD	Twin Valley SD
Valley Grove SD	Jenkintown SD	Upper Perkiomen SD
Wallenpaupack Area SD	Jim Thorpe Area SD	Waynesboro SD
Weatherly Area SD	Keystone Central SD	West Chester Area SD
West York Area SD	Kiski Area SD	West Mifflin Area SD
Yough SD	Lake-Lehman SD	York Suburban SD
	Lehigh Area SD	
	Lewisburg Area SD	
	Littlestown Area SD	
	Loyalsock Township SD	
	Manheim Central SD	
	Manheim Township SD	
	Mifflin county SD	
	Millville Area SD	
	Milton Area SD	
	Morrisville Borough SD	
	Mount Pleasant Area SD	
	Muhlenberg SD	
	Neshaminy SD	
	North East SD	
	North Penn SD	
	Northern Tioga SD	
	Northern York County SD	
	Northwestern Lehigh SD	
	Palmyra Area SD	
	Panther Valley SD	
	Pen Argyl Area SD	
	Pennsbury SD	
	Purchase Line SD	
	Redbank Valley SD	
	Saint Marys Area SD	
	Salisbury Township SD	
	Sayre Area SD	
	Shamokin Area SD	
	Sharon City SD	
	Shikellamy SD	
	South Williamsport Area SD	

2006-07 Tier 3 Districts (Cont'd)
 Alert Letters
 N=180

Outside regular classroom less than 21% of the school day	Outside regular classroom more than 60% of the school day	Other Settings
	Southern Fulton SD	
	Southmoreland SD	
	Spring Grove Area SD	
	Stroudsburg Area SD	
	Towanda Area SD	
	Trinity Area SD	
	Tuscarora SD	
	Union SD	
	Uniontown Area SD	
	Upper Dauphin Area SD	
	Upper Moreland Township SD	
	Western Wayne SD	
	Wilkes-Barre Area SD	
	Wyalusing Area SD	