

4

Educational Service Delivery

Summary

The Bradford County School District is using 4 of the 12 educational service delivery best practices. The district provides an appropriate range of accelerated programs (such as Advanced Placement and Dual Enrollment) and effective and efficient workforce development programs. It also ensures effective progression of students from kindergarten through grade 12 and has an organizational structure and staffing of educational programs that minimizes administrative layers and processes. To use the remaining best practice standards and ensure the performance, efficiency, and effectiveness of its educational programs, the district needs to

- improve its system of data analysis and program evaluation;
- ensure the timely evaluation and placement of students in Exceptional Student Education (ESE) and English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL);
- enhance training opportunities in a variety of curricular areas;
- provide better guidance and feedback on the development of school improvement plans;
- ensure that all students have textbooks in core academic subjects;
- improve library and media services through better coordination;
- facilitate the integration of technology into the curriculum; and
- implement performance accountability standards for student support services.



As seen in Exhibit 4-1, the district could potentially increase revenue in this best practice area. Determining whether to take advantage of this opportunity is a district decision and should depend on many factors including district needs, public input, and school board priorities. If the district implements this action plan, it would be able to redirect the funds to other priorities, such as putting more money into the classroom or addressing deficiencies identified in this report.

Exhibit 4-1

Our Review Identified One Way That the District Could Reduce Costs and Increase Revenues in the Area of Educational Service Delivery

Best Practice Number		Fiscal Impact: Savings					Total
		Year 2002-03	Year 2003-04	Year 2004-05	Year 2005-06	Year 2006-07	
9	Textbook cost recovery	\$1,050	\$2,120	\$3,191	\$4,261	\$5,439	\$16,061

Background

The Bradford County School District served 4,029 students during the 2002-03 school year with an ethnic breakdown of 73% white, non-Hispanic, 25% black, non-Hispanic, 1% Hispanic, and less than 1% each multiracial, Asian/Pacific Islander, and American Indian/Alaskan native. The district has 10 schools, including four elementary schools, one combination elementary and middle school (K-8), one middle school, one high school, one vocational school, one adult school, and one alternative education school. For Fiscal Year 2001-02, the operating costs in the district were \$4,977 per pupil, less than the state’s average operating cost of \$5,180.

As Exhibit 4-2 shows, the Bradford County School District has experienced a student decline over the past five years. The district has a very low percentage of students served in the English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) program and the percentage of students who are eligible for the free or reduced priced lunch program is similar to its peer districts and higher than the state average. In addition, the district has a high level of students served in the Exceptional Student Education (ESE) program.

Exhibit 4-2

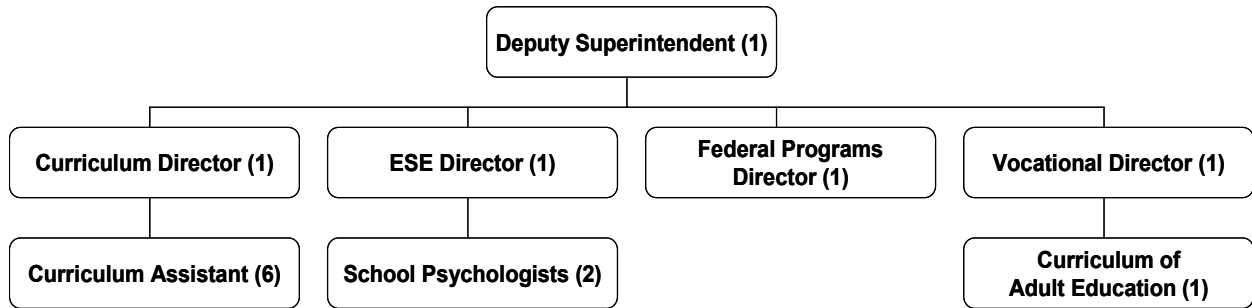
Bradford County’s Student Population Declined Between 1997-98 and 2001-02

District	Total Students 2001	Percentage Change in Total Students, 1997-2001	English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL)	Percentage Eligible for Free or Reduced Price Lunch	Exceptional Student Education (ESE)
Bradford	4,097	-1%	<1%	52%	25%
Columbia	9,578	2%	<1%	52%	19%
Jackson	7,324	-9%	<1%	53%	22%
Lafayette	1,030	-4%	3%	51%	14%
Suwannee	5,800	-2%	2%	49%	14%
Walton	5,968	4%	1%	52%	19%
State	2,499,781	9%	8%	44%	19%

Source: DOE Profiles of Florida School Districts 1997-98, 2001-02.

The Bradford County School District’s deputy superintendent supervises the four departments that provide instructional and support services to the district’s schools. These services include curriculum development, Exceptional Student Education, federal programs, and vocational education. As shown in Exhibit 4-3, four district directors report directly to the deputy superintendent.

**Exhibit 4-3
Four District Departments Perform the
District Level Educational Service Delivery Functions**



Source: Bradford County School District.

The Bradford County School District serves students through several types of programs. These include the K-12 basic education program, the Exceptional Student Education program (ESE), at-risk programs, accelerated programs, and vocational and adult education programs.

K-12 Basic Education. Basic education refers to a wide array of curriculum and instruction offered to students in pre-kindergarten through 12th grade. In 1996, the State Board of Education approved the Sunshine State Standards (SSS) for student achievement in basic education. These standards apply to seven subject areas and are divided among four separate grade clusters (PreK-2, 3-5, 6-8, and 9-12). The grade division provides flexibility to school districts in designing curricula that are based on local needs. In language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies, the Sunshine State Standards are further defined to include grade-level expectations that are the basis for the Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test (FCAT).

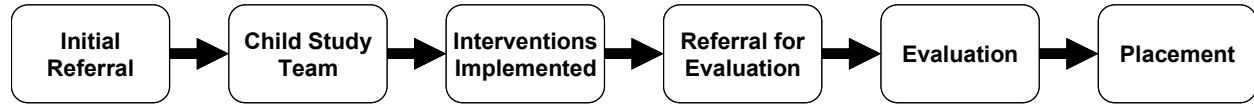
The purpose of the FCAT is to assess achievement of the Sunshine State Standards (SSS) in reading, mathematics, and writing. The FCAT also includes a norm-referenced test (NRT), which reports the performance of Florida students compared to students nationwide. Currently, students in grades 3 to 10 take the FCAT (SSS) and FCAT (NRT) reading and mathematics tests. Students in grades 4, 8, and 10 take the FCAT writing test and students in grades 5, 8, and 10 take the science test.

Exceptional Student Education (ESE). Exceptional Student Education is designed for students who meet specific federal and state criteria. In Florida, an “exceptional student” is a student with disabilities or a student who is gifted and is enrolled in (or eligible for enrollment in) a district public school. School districts must provide students with disabilities and students who are gifted the opportunity to receive a free appropriate public education that will maximize their learning. Schools use a variety of strategies, such as modifying schedules, changing teachers, or varying instructional techniques to help ESE students meet their potential and succeed in the classroom. Districts identify students who are eligible for ESE programs and provide special education programs and related services to meet the individual needs of those students.

The percentage of Bradford County School District students identified and served in the district’s ESE program in 2002, 25%, is higher than all of its peers as well as the state average of 20%. Two percent of the students in the district are gifted. Teachers, parents, or guidance counselors begin the ESE process by referring students for assessment. Child Study Teams (comprising the assistant principal, teachers, and staffing specialist) initially screen students at the school level by reviewing the case, assessing the student, and determining appropriate interventions to assist the student to succeed. School personnel then implement these interventions over the course of six to nine weeks. If the child study team finds that these attempts prove unsuccessful, the team refers the student to a school psychologist for evaluation. The results of this evaluation determine the student’s ESE status. If the student requires ESE services, the

child study team meets to decide the most appropriate placement for the student. Exhibit 4-4 illustrates this process.

**Exhibit 4-4
The Child Study Team Referral Process**



Source: Developed by OPPAGA.

At-Risk Programs. The Bradford County School District provides several programs for students who need academic or social skills interventions to assist them to be successful including Title I, English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL), and alternative education programs. Title I programs offer ancillary support services to students who need assistance by providing instruction that reinforces the curriculum and helps students with deficient skills. Title I teachers and teacher assistants help regular classroom teachers by working with students to increase their proficiency in identified skill areas. Title I is funded by both federal and state sources and provides services to schools with high concentrations of poverty as determined by the number of students who receive free or reduced lunch. For a school to qualify for school-wide Title I services, 40% or more of its students must meet the criteria for free or reduced lunch. All five of the district's elementary schools (including the K-8 combination school) offer school-wide Title I programs. The district does not currently offer any targeted assistance to eligible students in middle and high school.

As noted earlier, the percentage of students in the district's ESOL program is very low. The ESOL program served 23 students or less than 1% of the student population in 2001-02. The district uses the inclusion approach to educate ESOL students, placing students in the regular classroom. School administrators identify ESOL students based on the results of the home language survey administered through the ESOL district office. Guidance counselors are responsible for ensuring that students progress and that their needs are met. To exit the program, students must meet certain reading and writing criteria.

The district also offers an alternative education program through the Renaissance Center, which places students with discipline problems in an alternative setting. Students in this program, with the assistance of teachers, establish specific behavioral and academic goals in their behavioral contract, and teachers periodically evaluate students' progress toward meeting these goals. Students who violate their behavioral contract must serve an additional number of days depending on the infraction.

Accelerated Programs. The Bradford County School District provides students several accelerated opportunities, including Dual Enrollment, Advanced Placement (AP), early admission to postsecondary education, and access to the Florida Virtual School. The district does not have an International Baccalaureate (IB) program, a course of study that provides an advanced level of high school coursework based on a specific curriculum designed to allow students to meet various international university entrance standards.

Dual Enrollment Programs allow high school students to enroll in courses for which they can receive both high school and college credit. These courses can be academic courses that count toward an associate or baccalaureate degree or vocational courses that count toward meeting vocational certificate requirements. Santa Fe Community College instructors teach dual enrollment classes for Bradford High School students. During the 2002-03 school year, 80 students were enrolled in dual enrollment courses and 78 passed and received college credit.

The Advanced Placement program allows high-achieving and self-motivated students in grades 10-12 to enroll in advanced courses of study and earn college credit and/or advanced placement credit while still

enrolled in high school. The district offered AP calculus and AP chemistry during 2002-03, with 23 students participating.

Bradford County students also may take advanced courses through the Florida Virtual School. Students who enroll in this on-line school take classes for graduation credit over the Internet, allowing them to learn at their own pace. Students do not physically meet as a group but access coursework over the Internet, using email, fax, and telephone to communicate with teachers and other students. School-based teachers or district administrators proctor required exams. In 2002-03, 20 students participated in the Florida Virtual School.

Vocational and Adult Education. The district's secondary vocational and technical education program served approximately 601 students during the 2002-03 school year. The program offers several "tech prep" courses of study that include accounting operations, computer electronics, nursery operations, patient care assisting, and cosmetology. These courses of study prepare students for postsecondary work as well as assist them in developing job-ready skills.

The district also provides vocational and technical education for postsecondary students. During 2002-03, the district served 241 students in programs such as commercial vehicle driving, school bus driver training, administrative assistant, cosmetology, and accounting operations. Through the adult general education program, the district offers instruction to individuals who do not have a high school diploma (or who test below the ninth grade level), whether or not they are enrolled in a regular day school. The district enrolled 451 adult education students in 2002-03.

Districts that provide postsecondary vocational instruction can receive additional funding through the Workforce Development Education Program. The state funds postsecondary vocational programs using a formula based on both need and performance. Each district receives 85% of its previous year's appropriation as a base allocation. The remaining amount, up to 15%, is based on how well a district performs on established measures such as the level of student skills, program completion, and student placement in the workforce. Districts use these funds to maintain or enhance their postsecondary vocational and technical programs.

Student Support Services. In the Bradford County School District, the Student Services Department provides psychological services and guidance services. The district collaborates with the Bradford County Health Department to provide students with school health services. However, the district does not currently have any social workers. The objective of these student support services is to provide support outside of the classroom, which helps students to overcome problems that could interfere with their academic success and to broaden their education experience. Further description of student support services in Bradford County appears in the discussion of Best Practice 12.

Activities of particular interest

Some school districts have developed programs that are especially noteworthy and can serve as a model for other school districts to follow. In the Bradford County School District, these include serving as a Medicaid billing agent for another county and providing a strong and comprehensive health services program.

Medicaid Billing Agent. The Bradford County School District is currently the only school district that provides Medicaid billing services for another school district. Using part of a grant received from the Shared Services Network, a collaborative project of the Florida Department of Education and the University of South Florida, the Bradford County School District entered into an agreement with the Baker County School District to perform Medicaid billing services. The Bradford County School District receives a monthly flat rate fee from the Baker County School District to perform billing related tasks and is planning to provide billing services for additional school districts in the future.

Health Services Program. The Bradford County School District has a comprehensive and efficient school health services program. Working in cooperation with the Bradford County Health Department, the district has health services in nine schools provided by four registered nurses and five nurse's aides. The district's school health program uses standard forms and documentation procedures in all school health rooms. In addition, the program trains all school health staff to work in every health room in the district. The Bradford County School District health services program has established a policy to maintain a student treatment record for all students enrolled in a district school. According to a Department of Health representative, this is notable. These records include information on a student's visit to the health rooms, as well as other data such as immunization and medication administration records. Program staff have also worked to improve immunization rates and implemented a summer school sports physical initiative to provide free physicals for students from financially disadvantaged families, allowing them to participate in organized school sports.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Summary of Conclusions for Educational Service Delivery Best Practices

Practice Area	Best Practice	Using the Best Practice?	Page No.
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.	No	4-8
	2. The district provides effective and efficient Exceptional Student Education (ESE) programs for students with disabilities and students who are gifted.	No	4-10
	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).	No	4-13
	4. The district provides an appropriate range of accelerated programs (such as Advanced Placement, International Baccalaureate and Dual Enrollment).	Yes	4-16
	5. The district provides effective and efficient workforce development programs (such as vocational-technical, adult basic education, and adult high school programs).	Yes	4-17
	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.	No	4-18
	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.	Yes	4-20
	8. The district's organizational structure and staffing of educational programs minimizes administrative layers and processes.	Yes	4-20
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.	No	4-21
	10. The district has sufficient school library or media centers to support instruction.	No	4-23
	11. The district utilizes instructional technology in the classroom to enhance curriculum and improve student achievement.	No	4-24
	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.	No	4-25

EFFECTIVE AND EFFICIENT INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAMS

Best Practice 1: Not Using

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

Effective school districts use academic and nonacademic data to drive decisions related to their instructional programs and to improve the performance of all students. To meet this best practice, districts should collect, analyze, and use data regularly to monitor the performance of its schools and subgroups of students, identify areas requiring intervention strategies, and evaluate the effectiveness of intervention strategies. In addition to performing well or showing steady improvement, an effective district uses academic and nonacademic data to establish district goals and priorities, target interventions, and allocate resources.

The Bradford County School District collects and analyzes FCAT scores by subtest, grade level, and school. Through this analysis, the district identified that reading test scores needed improvement and, as a result, the district decided to participate in the Florida Reading Initiative (FRI). The FRI is a learning model that expands the use of reading skills within an existing school curricula with a focus on achieving 100% literacy for all children. The district also has used reports produced by the Department of Education (DOE) to identify peer districts with higher performing schools and has contacted those districts in order to identify strategies for improvement. The district provides technical assistance to schools on a number of curricular issues; for example, the district has initiated a Strategy of the Month program in order to educate principals and teachers on effective teaching strategies.

Student performance on academic assessments has been mixed in recent years. While FCAT Reading performance has improved over the past four years for grade 8, performance declined from 2000 to 2002 for grade 4 and remained fairly stable in grade 10, as shown in Exhibit 4-5. In addition, a comparison of student performance with peer districts shows that Bradford students mean reading and math scores are below the state average, as illustrated in Exhibit 4-6. The district's scores on the FCAT writing test, however, are comparable with peer districts, although they are also below the state average, as shown in Exhibit 4-7.

Exhibit 4-5
The Percentage of Students Scoring 3 or Above on FCAT Reading Varies by Grade Level

Year	Grade 4	Grade 8	Grade 10
2000	54%	27%	23%
2001	46%	35%	25%
2002	44%	39%	25%
2003	53%	48%	25%

Source: Florida Department of Education, 2000-03 FCAT Scores.

**Exhibit 4-6
Bradford County Student Mean FCAT Reading and Math Scores
Are Lower Than the State Average**

School District	Reading			Mathematics		
	Grade 4	Grade 8	Grade 10	Grade 5	Grade 8	Grade 10
Bradford	293/Level 2	299/Level 2	289/Level 2	301/Level 2	302/Level 2	303/Level 2
Columbia	303/Level 3	297/Level 2	302/Level 2	308/Level 2	302/Level 2	318/Level 3
Jackson	310/Level 3	300/Level 2	300/Level 2	320/Level 2	310/Level 3	314/Level 2
Lafayette	303/Level 3	315/Level 3	309/Level 2	304/Level 2	323/Level 3	324/Level 3
Suwannee	294/Level 2	293/Level 2	298/Level 2	302/Level 2	301/Level 2	313/Level 2
Walton	312/Level 3	305/Level 2	304/Level 2	320/Level 2	309/Level 2	319/Level 3
State	305/Level 3	301/Level 2	302/Level 2	320/Level 2	310/Level 3	320/Level 3

Source: Florida Department of Education, 2003 FCAT Scores.

**Exhibit 4-7
Bradford County’s Mean FCAT Writing Scores
Are Comparable to Peers, But Lower Than the State Scores**

School District	Grade 4	Grade 8	Grade 10
Bradford	3.4	3.4	3.4
Columbia	3.4	3.4	3.3
Jackson	3.5	3.6	3.5
Lafayette	3.6	3.6	3.5
Suwannee	3.5	3.5	3.5
Walton	3.7	3.8	3.7
State	3.6	3.9	3.8

Source: Florida Department of Education, 2003 FCAT Scores.

However, the district could improve its use of academic and nonacademic data and meet best practice standards. First, while there is an informal process by which principals and directors may raise concerns at biweekly district meetings, this process does not ensure that the district will identify potential problems in a timely fashion. The district needs to routinely analyze many types of academic and nonacademic data beyond FCAT score data. Types of data that should be routinely analyzed in order to develop intervention strategies include data on attendance, retention and graduation, disciplinary data, SAT and ACT scores and participation rates, and free/reduced lunch status, as well as other relevant indicators of student success. Analysis of these types of data would reveal to district staff whether there was a persistent problem with truancy or whether SAT and ACT scores were improving over time. Second, in order to ensure that the needs of student subgroups are being met, the district should disaggregate data by student subgroups including ethnic groups, ESE students, ESOL students, free/reduced lunch students, alternative education students, migrant students, and any other relevant categories.

Action Plan 4-1

We recommend that the district adopt a more formal, systematic approach to data analysis that addresses a variety of academic and nonacademic indicators and that addresses the needs of student subgroups by disaggregating data.

Action Needed	<p>Step 1. The director of Curriculum gathers input from other district-level and school-level staff and develops a plan for routinely analyzing a variety of academic and nonacademic indicators of student success.</p> <p>Step 2. The director of Curriculum formally identifies the persons responsible for collecting and analyzing each type of data and establishes timeframes for reporting data.</p> <p>Step 3. The district provides additional training in data analysis to all persons responsible and consults with Department of Education staff for technical assistance, if needed.</p> <p>Step 4. Designated persons conduct data analysis according to the established timeframes, using techniques such as disaggregation by student subgroup and comparison with peer districts.</p> <p>Step 5. The director of Curriculum reviews data and works with directors and principals to develop strategies for addressing any problems revealed through the data analysis, consulting with Department of Education staff for technical assistance, if needed.</p> <p>Step 6. Results of data analyses are reported annually to the school board.</p>
Who Is Responsible	Director of Curriculum
Time Frame	Develop a plan and establish timeframes by September 2003.

Best Practice 2: Not Using

The district needs to provide more effective and efficient Exceptional Student Education (ESE) programs for students with disabilities and students who are gifted.

Under federal and state law, school districts must provide appropriate services designed to meet the learning needs of students with disabilities and students who are gifted. To meet this best practice, school districts should identify and place students who require Exceptional Student Education (ESE) services in a timely manner and ensure access of minority students to the gifted program. To increase student success, districts should promote parent involvement and ensure that teachers receive adequate support and training. Districts should also periodically assess the needs and progress of ESE students and make adjustments as needed to ensure that students perform to their capacity.

Currently, ESE students comprise 25% of the Bradford County student population, as shown in Exhibit 4-8. The Bradford County School District works to ensure the quality of Exceptional Student Education programs by providing numerous training opportunities for ESE teachers. The district also maximizes reimbursement through Medicaid by billing for services such as physical therapy, occupational therapy, and transportation, and Bradford is the only district in the state that currently serves as a billing agent for another school district. The ESE director conducts frequent meetings with ESE teachers in order to discuss issues and concerns, and the director also sends memos to teachers on a regular basis with technical assistance and reminders. The rate of FCAT participation is very high as compared with other districts in the state, and overall, the district does a good job of serving students in the least restrictive educational environment.

**Exhibit 4-8
In Fall 2002, Bradford County Had the Highest
Percentage of ESE Students Among Their Peers**

School District	Number	Percentage
Bradford	1,016	25%
Columbia	1,843	19%
Jackson	1,596	22%
Lafayette	135	13%
Suwannee	829	14%
Walton	1,228	20%
State	499,214	20%

Source: Florida Department of Education, Membership in Programs for Exceptional Students, Fall 2002

However, to meet best practice standards the district needs to improve ESE programs and services in several ways. First, the district does not have a system to ensure that ESE students are evaluated and placed in a timely manner. Currently, the district is not able to provide data on the length of time between referral and evaluation of ESE students, and principals and teachers frequently stated in interviews that there are significant delays in the evaluation process. If there are significant delays in the evaluation process, there may also be delays in service. The district is currently developing a log to track ESE student referrals. This log should include, at a minimum, the length of time between referral and evaluation and whether a student has qualified for services. These data will allow the district to determine the timeliness of evaluations, percentage of inappropriate referrals, and the number of pending referrals between FTE counts.

Action Plan 4-2

We recommend that the district develop a system to ensure the timely evaluation and placement of ESE students.		
Action Needed	Step 1.	The director of Exceptional Student Education builds a system to track the date of referral, the date of parent consent, the date of evaluation, the date of placement, and the number of days of student attendance during each of these timeframes.
	Step 2.	The director of Exceptional Student Education periodically uses this system to determine the percentage of students who are evaluated within 60 days of student attendance from the date of parent consent.
	Step 3.	The director of Exceptional Student Education examines and addresses any systemic problems contributing to delays in the evaluation process and reports progress on this issue to the school board at least annually.
Who Is Responsible	Director of Exceptional Student Education	
Time Frame	Establish tracking system by October 2003.	

Second, while the district does coordinate a variety of training opportunities for ESE teachers, there is a need for training for regular education teachers in the district. Specific training needs include identification of children with disabilities and accommodations for ESE students, especially for ESE students taking the FCAT. These training needs were noted by the state Department of Education in a 2002 program audit as well as by teachers and principals during the course of this review. We suggest that the district develop a training plan that will address these training needs as well as any others identified by DOE or by teachers and principals, and that the district begin tracking the participation of regular teachers in these training sessions and evaluating the effectiveness of the training that is offered (refer to Action Plans 4-3 and 4-4).

Third, the Department of Education identified Bradford County as needing improvements in its ESE program in order to meet certain state and federal guidelines. According to a DOE report, Bradford County has a disproportionately high percentage of students classified as Educable Mentally Handicapped and a disproportionately low percentage of minority students who are gifted. The district also has a disproportional percentage of black, non-Hispanic students who are Educable Mentally Handicapped. We recommend that the district address this observed disproportionality.

Action Plan 4-3

We recommend that the district develop strategies to ensure that the procedures used to identify students for ESE programs do not contribute to the observed disproportionality.

Action Needed	Step 1. The director of Exceptional Student Education consults with Department of Education staff to identify possible causes for disproportionality.
	Step 2. The director of Exceptional Student Education develops strategies for addressing the causes of disproportionality as well as a timeframe for implementation of those strategies.
	Step 3. The district provides and/or coordinates training for regular teachers in identifying students with disabilities.
	Step 4. The district continues to implement Plan B for identifying students who are gifted and periodically evaluates the plan's effectiveness.
	Step 5. The director of Exceptional Student Education reports progress on this goal to the school board once per year.
Who Is Responsible	Director of Exceptional Student Education and director of Curriculum
Time Frame	Develop strategies and timeframe by beginning of 2003-04 school year.

Although the district serves 52% of ESE students in a regular class setting, which is higher than the state average and all of its peer districts, as shown in Exhibit 4-9, there are some indications that the district is not serving all of its students in the least restrictive environment, as required by state and federal law. In interviews with teachers and principals, there were some indications of teachers' unwillingness to serve certain ESE students in their classrooms. In addition, a DOE monitoring report found that ESE students at the Renaissance Center were not receiving additional services that would justify their placement in a separate school rather than serving them in a regular public school setting. The report recommended that the district review all Renaissance Center students to determine if they need a special school setting and establish criteria for new placements to ensure that students placed there receive additional services beyond what they would receive in the regular public school. We recommend that the district ensure that students are being served in the least restrictive environment based on student need.

**Exhibit 4-9
Bradford County Serves More Than Half
of Its ESE Students in the Regular Classroom**

School District	Percentage
Bradford	52%
Columbia	46%
Jackson	40%
Lafayette	21%
Suwannee	43%
Walton	50%
State	48%

Source: Florida Department of Education, 2003 LEA Profiles.

Action Plan 4-4

We recommend that the district ensure that all students are being served in the least restrictive environment and that all district staff understand the significance of this requirement.

Action Needed	<p>Step 1. The director of Exceptional Student Education and director of Curriculum ensure that all teachers (regular and ESE) and principals have received training on ESE accommodations by tracking teacher attendance and sending reminders to teachers. Training can be provided by the district or coordinated through NEFEC and ISRD.</p> <p>Step 2. The director of Exceptional Student Education and director of Curriculum review the services provided at the Renaissance Center to determine whether students should continue to be served there or in a regular public school setting.</p> <p>Step 3. The director of Exceptional Student Education and director of Curriculum review data reported by school principals twice annually to ensure that all students are being served in the least restrictive environment.</p>
Who Is Responsible	Director of Exceptional Student Education, director of Curriculum, and principals
Time Frame	Conduct initial review of data by September 2003; continue reviewing data at least annually; aim for 90% of teachers to receive training by May 2004.

Best Practice 3: Not Using

While the district offers a strong Title I program, the district needs to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of programs for other at-risk students (including English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) and alternative education).¹

Students at risk for failing or falling behind grade level often have significant barriers to learning, and therefore, need various specialized services and programs to address these barriers and to be academically successful. School districts should have programs in place to meet the diverse needs of these students, especially those students who need academic and/or social skills interventions to assist them to perform well. To meet this best practice, school districts should periodically assess the academic and social needs of their students and use this information to identify or develop programs to meet those needs. To increase student success, districts should promote parent involvement and provide teachers adequate training and support. Districts also should periodically assess the progress of at-risk students, making adjustments to programs as needed to ensure that students perform to their capacity.

The Bradford County School District provides very comprehensive Title I services in each of the district’s elementary schools, all of which offer schoolwide Title I programs. All elementary school students utilize Title I computer labs, where their individual progress is tracked using instructional software programs. The district serves ESOL students using the inclusion model, and the director of Curriculum reviews each of the ESOL students’ test scores each year. The district provides alternative education through the Renaissance Center, which established a school advisory council during the 2002-03 school year in order to improve the program’s effectiveness.

However, the district could improve the efficiency and effectiveness of at-risk programs and meet best practice standards in several ways. First, the district does not currently ensure the timely identification, evaluation, placement, and removal of students into and out of the ESOL program. Although the district evaluated two students during 1999-2000, according to data published by the state Department of Education, the length of time to placement was more than double the state standard of 20 days in the 1999-2000 school year. Factors contributing to this problem may include a lack of adequate training and oversight from the district. There was also some concern among teachers, principals, and district staff that some students were remaining in the program longer than necessary. The district should ensure that

¹ At-risk students are students who need academic and/or social skills interventions to assist them to perform to their capacity.

staff are trained to evaluate students for ESOL and that the district regularly monitors the entry and exit of students in the ESOL program.

Action Plan 4-5

We recommend that the district develop procedures to ensure the timely identification, evaluation, placement, and removal of students into and out of the ESOL program and to assess the needs of the ESOL population.

Action Needed	<p>Step 1. The director of federal programs works with ESOL teachers and school principals to determine the causes of delays in the identification, evaluation, placement, and removal of students into and out of the ESOL program.</p> <p>Step 2. The director of federal programs works with Department of Education staff to identify strategies for improving timeliness and establishes timeframes for implementation of those strategies.</p> <p>Step 3. The director of federal programs reports to the school board annually on the timeliness of identification, evaluation, placement, and removal of students.</p> <p>Step 4. The director of federal programs works with Department of Education staff to determine whether the current ESOL program meets the needs of the district's ESOL population as a whole, with a goal of determining how the program could be improved.</p>
Who Is Responsible	Director of federal programs
Time Frame	Report to school board at the beginning of the 2003-04 school year; determine causes of delays by October 2003; develop strategies by December 2003.

Second, the district should improve its efforts to ensure that teachers who serve ESOL students have received the training that is required by law. In an audit conducted in 2000, DOE noted that 24 out of 110 ESOL teachers in Bradford County did not have the required training. Furthermore, the district has not provided any ESOL training in the last two years. Although the district has allowed teachers to count Florida Reading Initiative (FRI) training towards their ESOL requirements, this training does not specifically address the unique needs of ESOL students. By allowing FRI training to count, the district is also providing teachers with a disincentive to participate in ESOL-specific training opportunities, which are available online and through the Northeast Florida Educational Consortium (NEFEC). In addition, according to DOE staff, Florida Reading Initiative training cannot count towards the ESOL training requirements for any language arts teachers, which includes all elementary school teachers.

Action Plan 4-6

We recommend that the district ensure that all teachers of ESOL students have completed the legally required training as specified by the Department of Education.

Action Needed	<p>Step 1. The director of federal programs identifies all teachers with ESOL students in their classes at the beginning of the 2003-04 school year.</p> <p>Step 2. The director of federal programs reviews the personnel files of identified teachers to determine their training needs.</p> <p>Step 3. The director of federal programs works with NEFEC, Department of Education staff, University of Florida, and other relevant parties to ensure that teachers have adequate opportunities to receive ESOL training.</p> <p>Step 4. At the mid-point of the school year, the director of federal programs sends reminder notices to teachers who have not yet received the required training.</p> <p>Step 5. At the end of the school year, the director of federal programs reports progress on this action plan to the school board.</p>
Who Is Responsible	Director of federal programs
Time Frame	Identify teachers by September 2003; send reminder notices in January 2004; report to school board in May 2004; continue this cycle in each subsequent school year.

Third, the district should conduct an annual needs assessment for all at-risk students in order to guide decision making about the implementation of at-risk programs. Although the computer software used by the Title I program enables teachers to evaluate the needs of individual students, the district should be making more of an effort to analyze the needs of students across the district. The district should then use this information to improve services provided through Title I to better meet students' needs. Similarly, the district should gather input from students, parents, and teachers of ESOL students and alternative education students in order to ensure that the at-risk programs are fulfilling the needs of those students. Refer to Action Plan 4-1 for recommendations on using data to improve educational programs.

The district also needs to improve its alternative education services in several areas. First, the district's program, the Renaissance Center, does not have a written description of its purpose, mission, or function. A 2002 DOE monitoring report found that the purpose of the center was unclear, and the DOE could not determine if the ESE portion of the school was a short-term placement for disruptive students or a special day school. The district needs to clarify the purpose in order to ensure that students receive appropriate services. Second, the DOE report found that the district needs to clarify entry and exit criteria. The entry procedures do not address whether a student needs special services that are not available in a regular public school setting, and the exit criteria do not specify what students have to do to exit the program. Third, our interviews with district staff suggest that more training is needed for Renaissance Center teachers on subjects such as ESE and behavior management. There is currently only one ESE certified teacher on the center staff, but over 70% of the students are classified as ESE. Regardless of what role the district decides the Renaissance Center will serve, the district needs to ensure that it provides students with appropriate curriculum and instruction and behavior management skills.

Action Plan 4-7

We recommend that the district clarify the purpose and mission of the Renaissance Center.		
Action Needed	Step 1.	The director of Curriculum works with the School Advisory Council of the Renaissance Center in order to develop a formal mission statement, a policy and procedures manual, and to complete a school improvement plan with measurable goals and objectives. The director of Curriculum will also work with school-based administrators and teachers to ensure that they understand the purpose of the Renaissance Center.
	Step 2.	Submit school improvement plan for school board approval.
	Step 3.	The ESE director and lead teacher of the Renaissance Center work together to design clearly defined criteria for entry to ensure that students are being served in the most appropriate environment. They will also work together to design clear exit strategies.
	Step 4.	The ESE director and lead teacher of the Renaissance Center work together to provide center teachers with training and support in needed areas such as ESE, behavior management, and social skills. They will also provide training and guidance to teachers to help provide curriculum that corresponds with student needs.
Who Is Responsible	Director of Curriculum, Renaissance Center lead teacher, ESE director, school advisory council	
Time Frame	Clarify purpose and develop criteria by December 2003; training by February 2004 and ongoing thereafter.	

Best Practice 4: Using

Although the district provides an appropriate range of accelerated programs such as Advanced Placement and Dual Enrollment, the district should conduct a more formal analysis of student needs and should ensure that students are adequately informed about all types of accelerated programs.

Highly motivated and academically talented high school students need educational challenges and opportunities to accelerate their learning and meet their academic potential. To meet the needs of these students, districts should provide an appropriate number and type of accelerated programs, such as Advanced Placement, International Baccalaureate, and Dual Enrollment. Districts should periodically assess the needs of their highly motivated and academically talented high school students and use this information to identify and develop accelerated programs to meet those needs. Districts should ensure that accelerated programs are made accessible to all eligible students and that teachers, parents, and students are aware of such opportunities. To increase student success, districts should ensure that teachers receive adequate support and training. Districts should also take advantage of incentives and technical assistance offered through the Florida Department of Education and the College Board.

The Bradford County School District offers a variety of dual enrollment courses in conjunction with Santa Fe Community College. In 2002-03, students were able to enroll in 15 different courses, and in the prior school year, 99% of students passed their dual enrollment courses and thus earned college credit for their work. The district ensures that students are informed about dual enrollment opportunities through the high school curriculum guide. Of the students who are eligible to participate in dual enrollment, 27% were enrolled in at least one dual enrollment course in the 2002-03 school year. The district's high school offered two Advanced Placement courses in the 2002-03 school year, and 23 students participated in those courses. No students took Advanced Placement courses online through the Florida Virtual School.

Although the district is using this best practice it could improve accelerated program offerings in several ways. During interviews, some principals and teachers expressed that the high school should offer more Advanced Placement (AP) courses, particularly AP English. To further improve the district's ability to increase the number of accelerated program offerings, the district could provide incentives for teachers to participate in the AP Summer Institute, which is paid for by the state. Because the district does not offer an International Baccalaureate program, the district could also explore the possibility of an arrangement with a neighboring school district so that interested students could attend an International Baccalaureate program at another school.

To further improve the district's accelerated programs, we recommend that the district obtain stakeholder input to ensure it is meeting the needs of teachers and students.

In addition, neither the district nor the high school regularly analyze student data to determine student need or performance. To determine potential candidates for accelerated programs, the district should routinely examine students' grade point averages, PSAT or PLAN test scores, and SAT or ACT test scores. The district also should regularly analyze student performance in dual enrollment and Advanced Placement courses in order to evaluate the success of those programs and to modify those programs accordingly.

We recommend that the district regularly use student data to identify candidates for accelerated programs and modify programs to increase student success.

Best Practice 5: Using

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

Students who do not plan to attend college immediately after high school need to enhance their ability to be economically self-sufficient. Many of these students benefit greatly from workforce development programs, such as career and technical education, which help them to attain the skills that they will need to become or remain employed. These programs are designed to provide training to meet local and state workforce needs and to help Florida compete in a global economy by building a broadly based, highly skilled, more productive workforce. The programs also provide a broad variety of services including literacy training, English language skills, and/or attainment of a high school diploma for adults who need these skills to enter the labor market. Districts should have workforce development programs in place that meet the needs of business and industry in their areas, including high skills/high wages occupations as well as occupations that are in critical demand by the community. Districts should periodically assess workforce development program offerings to ensure that needed programs and newly emerging occupations are addressed. Districts also should provide adult basic education programs that reach all sectors of the population and meet the needs of students at all literacy levels. To assess student success and improve programs, districts should monitor changes in performance funding, student completion, and job placement.

The Bradford County School District has worked closely with the Workforce Development Board, particularly the First Jobs First Wages and High Skill/High Wage committees, as well as Santa Fe Community College in order to ensure that program offerings reflect community needs. The district conducts satisfaction surveys of employers and parents in addition to surveying students to assess the demand for specific programs. Each workforce development program in the district has a craft advisory committee, and the director of workforce development meets at least twice per year with each of these committees. The district regularly evaluates the success of programs by examining enrollment, completions, placements, and customer satisfaction, and the district has eliminated several programs with low enrollment or poor performance. As shown in Exhibit 4-10, in 2000-01 100.0% completed postsecondary programs.

**Exhibit 4-10
Bradford County’s Percentage of Secondary Students Completing Programs and Being Placed Is Higher Than the State Average and That of Many of Their Peers**

School District	Completion Rate	Placement Rate
Bradford	100.0%	82.6%
Columbia	83.9%	78.4%
Jackson	94.0%	79.6%
Lafayette	100.0%	55.6%
Suwannee	90.1%	74.8%
Walton	81.1%	56.3%
State	87.8%	80.7%

Source: Perkins Performance Report 2000-01.

The adult education program in Bradford County works closely with the high school and Santa Fe Community College in addition to having agreements with agencies, such as the local chamber of commerce, the state attorney’s office, the county jail, and numerous others. The district routinely analyzes the performance of students in Adult Basic Education as well as Adult General Education, particularly by looking at Tests of Adult Basic Education (TABE) and General Educational Development (GED).

In 2003, the Department of Education recognized one of the district's students as a statewide winner in the All American Success Stories program. This program recognizes students who have participated in adult and/or technical education programs and overcome obstacles to achieve success in their career fields. The Department of Education selected a student from 160 total nominations and 27 regional winners in various program categories. Because of her success, the district will receive a reward of \$10,000 from the state.

Best Practice 6: Not Using

The district needs to improve its efforts to ensure that schools use effective planning and evaluation processes, such as school improvement plans, to improve student outcomes.

High-performing districts and schools use effective processes to assess and improve student outcomes. Florida law requires that each district school have a school improvement plan (SIP) that establishes the school's specific goals, objectives, and strategies to meet the educational needs of their students. Districts should ensure that all schools effectively plan and evaluate programs and strategies to improve student outcomes. Districts should ensure that each school's improvement plan addresses the needs of major subgroups of students (regular, ESE, ESOL, Title I, etc.) and incorporates and integrates to the extent possible other school-level improvement planning processes (Title I, technology, school improvement, Sterling, etc.). To increase effectiveness of the school improvement process, districts should provide training for school improvement teams that includes using academic and non-academic data to identify areas needing improvement, developing measurable objectives, and evaluating progress in meeting objectives. Districts also should oversee the school improvement planning process and provide additional assistance to schools that do not make adequate progress.

The Bradford County School District works to ensure that effective planning and evaluation processes are used by schools by requiring each school to have a school improvement plan (SIP). The school board approves each plan. In addition, the director of Curriculum provides school principals with guidelines on plan requirements and reviews the plans for completeness. In an effort to avoid duplication of effort and resources, school budgets and technology plans are integrated within the SIP.

However, the district could improve its planning and evaluation processes and better meet best practice standards in several ways. First, the district does not provide training to schools on developing SIPs. Training information and materials are available from the Department of Education, but the district does not ensure that training activities are taking place in the schools. Second, the district provides limited guidance and feedback on SIPs. The director of Curriculum provides principals with guidelines on what should be included in the plan and reviews the plans for these components. However, this review is compliance oriented and does not assess the quality of the SIP. Third, the district does not monitor the schools' implementation of the plans and the progress they are making on achieving listed goals and objectives.

We reviewed nine school improvement plans (SIPs) and found them to be of variable quality. For example, the plans do not address the needs of subgroups of students such as ESOL and ESE and the strategies to achieve goals and objectives are somewhat vague, in many instances. Most important, in some plans, the objectives themselves could be more measurable and include clear criteria for evaluation, as shown in Exhibit 4-11. This makes judgment as to whether or not the objectives have been attained difficult. The fact that SIPs are of variable quality is evidence that the district needs to improve its planning and evaluation processes.

**Exhibit 4-11
Some Bradford County School Improvement Plans Lack Measurable Objectives**

Current Objectives from SIPs	An Example of a More Measurable Objective
All students will be able to communicate successfully through writing.	Objective needs to state clearly defined criteria that can be measured. For example, "Average combined score on the grade 4 FCAT writing will improve from 3.7 in 2002 to 3.9 in 2003."
80% of students will show gains on the FCAT and SAT 9.	These should be two separate measures: one for the FCAT, one for the SAT 9. In addition, gains need to be clearly defined. For example, "80% of students will improve their FCAT scores by at least one level."
75% of targeted students (Level 1 on FCAT Math) will demonstrate positive growth from the 2002 FCAT to the 2003 FCAT.	Positive growth needs to be defined. For example, "75% of students scoring Level 1 on the 2002 FCAT math will improve their scores to 2 or higher on the 2003 FCAT math."
The 2002 FCAT reading scores for 8 th graders showed that 61% of 230 students fell in the bottom 2 levels of achievement. Because of this high percentage, (we) will implement procedures to help increase reading performance.	This objective needs to include a specific target for improvement. For example, "Reduce the percentage of 8 th grade students scoring Level 2 and below on the FCAT reading test from 61% to 50%."

Source: Bradford County School Improvement Plans.

Action Plan 4-8

We recommend that the district develop a system to improve the quality of School Improvement Plans (SIPs) by providing training, feedback, and monitoring to schools.		
Action Needed	Step 1.	The director of Curriculum arranges district-level training with the Department of Education Office of School Improvement. The district offers this training at the beginning of the school year at a time and place convenient to most SAC members and ensures that all SAC members receive notification of the training well in advance.
	Step 2.	The director of Curriculum provides ongoing support and technical assistance to SACs as they develop their SIPs.
	Step 3.	The director of Curriculum, with guidance from the Office of School Improvement, establishes a method for systematically reviewing each school's SIP for completeness and the quality of objectives, data analysis, strategies for improvement, and proposed methods of evaluation. The director of Curriculum will provide formal written feedback to each school.
	Step 4.	After the director of Curriculum provides this feedback and revisions are made, each school advisory council (SAC) will briefly present the SIP goals and objectives to the school board for approval.
	Step 5.	The SACs will return to the school board to report on progress made on their SIP objectives. The SAC will compare their goals and objectives to their actual results to determine whether the school made adequate progress.
Who Is Responsible	Director of Curriculum, school advisory councils	
Time Frame	Establish training, feedback, and monitoring system by beginning of 2003-04 school year.	

Best Practice 7: Using

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.

In 1996, the State Board of Education adopted the Sunshine State Standards as content expectations for K-12 students in Florida. Since that time, the standards have been refined and expanded to include grade-level expectations and represent the academic expectations for Florida students by grade level and subject. Florida districts and schools should have modified their instructional programs and aligned curriculum to include the standards to ensure that students master necessary skills and will be able to perform at the next grade level. Thus, districts must have a clear, comprehensive, easy-to-follow student progression plan that meets state requirements and incorporates the Sunshine State Standards. The plan should be specific, informing teachers and school administrators of factors to consider in deciding whether to promote or retain a student. The plan also should specify the steps schools should take to ensure that retained students either receive intensive remedial assistance or are placed in a program different from what the student received the previous year. To ensure that students progress as expected from kindergarten through grade 12 and are prepared for work and continued education, districts should have and use strategies that facilitate smooth transitions from one school level to the next. Districts also should periodically assess how well their students progress and use this information to make adjustments as needed.

The Bradford County School District has three separate student progression plans for elementary, middle, and high school students and also provides teachers with grade level expectations that identify learning benchmarks for students in each grade. The district also requires teachers to log when they have covered each of the Sunshine State Standards; in fact, the district has developed a computer program that allows teachers to do this electronically. Both the high school and the middle school offer new student orientations in order to facilitate the transition between schools, and the district examines retention data by grade level in order to identify any inconsistencies across grade levels. In addition to the state's new policy on third grade retention, the district has voluntarily implemented a similar retention policy for eighth grade students.

Although the district is using this best practice, it could further improve in two specific areas. First, the district could provide teachers with teaching strategies that are aligned with the grade level expectations. The district could do this by adopting strategies used by another school district or by developing their own. This would facilitate student progression by ensuring that teachers know how to address individual learning objectives in the classroom. Second, the district could work with school principals to address the problem of academic intervention plans not being completed in a timely manner, as required by law.

To further improve the effective progression of students, we recommend that the district provide teachers strategies aligned with grade level expectations and work with principals to ensure academic intervention plans are completed in a timely manner.

Best Practice 8: Using

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

School districts that operate efficiently meet the needs of their teachers and students with minimal administrative layers and staff. To meet this best practice, school districts should have a central office organizational structure that ensures adequate administrative oversight of education programs, adequate curriculum and instructional support for teachers, and adequate support to enable schools to identify their

needs and evaluate their effectiveness. In addition, districts should ensure that individual school staffing levels are sufficient to meet the needs of students and are comparable across schools in the district.

The Bradford County School District’s organizational structure and staffing levels for its education program minimizes administrative layers. The district regularly reviews the staffing of schools to ensure that the teacher/pupil ratios stated in state statute or district policy are maintained and are comparable with appropriate benchmarks. As shown in Exhibit 4-12, the district’s staffing levels are comparable to state and peer district levels.

**Exhibit 4-12
Bradford County’s Staffing Levels Are Comparable to Peer Districts and the State**

School District	Total Number of Staff	Percentage of Administrative Staff	Percentage of Instructional Staff	Percentage of Support Staff
Bradford	523	5%	52%	44%
Columbia	1,232	3%	50%	47%
Jackson	1,055	4%	53%	44%
Lafayette	146	4%	51%	45%
Suwannee	655	4%	54%	42%
Walton	812	4%	48%	48%
State	280,658	3%	55%	42%

Source: Florida Department of Education, Profile of Florida School Districts 2001-02.

EFFECTIVE AND EFFICIENT INSTRUCTIONAL SUPPORT

Best Practice 9: Not Using

The district has not yet provided all students and teachers with a sufficient number of current textbooks and other instructional materials to support instruction in core subjects and to meet the needs of teachers and students.

To meet the needs of teachers and students, school districts should ensure that all schools have sufficient numbers of current, state-adopted textbooks and other instructional materials available to support instruction in core subjects. Districts should solicit input from teachers when selecting textbooks and other instructional materials. To increase availability of textbooks, districts should seek to purchase, maintain, and dispose of textbooks in a cost-effective manner. Districts should collect monies from students who have damaged or lost textbooks and use these monies to offset materials costs or to purchase additional materials.

In 2001, the Bradford County School District changed the process by which instructional materials are purchased in order to ensure that all students have current, state-adopted textbooks in core academic subjects. Previously, the district distributed funds for purchasing instructional materials to the schools on a per-student basis and permitted all purchases to be made at the school level. However, this policy change was partially in response to an Auditor General report that found that over 40% of the textbooks in Bradford County were more than eight years old.² Although the district has implemented the policy change for purchasing current, state-adopted textbooks in core academic subjects for all students, many

² Auditor General, November 2001, *Operational Audit of Instructional Materials Funding for District School Boards, July 1, 1999 to March 31, 2001*, Report No. 02-078

students still are lacking appropriate instructional materials because the district missed the adoption cycle. Particular areas of weaknesses include science for all grade levels and math and social studies at the high school level.

Currently, the Bradford County School District does not have any written policies or procedures regarding instructional materials. In addition, the district could improve its efforts to inform principals and teachers of changes in policy. The district presently relies upon communicating such policy changes through meetings; however, the district should consider sending memos or electronic notices to ensure that all school district personnel are aware of changes in policy. The district also should develop written policies and procedures that provide guidance on the purchasing of instructional materials, the flexibility that schools have to make decisions regarding instructional materials, the process for reviewing and selecting instructional materials, the maintenance and disposal of instructional materials, and the collection of fees assessed to students for lost and damaged textbooks.

While the district does seek teacher input when reviewing and selecting instructional materials, the district does not broadly survey teacher feedback on the usefulness of instructional materials that have been purchased. This information would be useful to the district in making future decisions about which instructional materials to purchase. Furthermore, the district could improve its efforts to recover the costs of lost and damaged textbooks by collecting a greater percentage of the fees assessed to students. As shown in Exhibit 4-13, the district could save as much as \$16,061 by raising the percentage of fees collected from 24% to 75% over the next five years.

**Exhibit 4-13
Bradford Could Save \$16,061 by Increasing Cost Recovery
for Lost and Damaged Textbooks**

Year	Actual 2002 Fees Assessed	Actual 2002 Fees Collected	Actual Collection Rate	Projected Collection Rate	Estimated Adjusted Fees Assessed ¹	Projected Collections	Potential Savings With Improved Rates ²
2002	\$10,705	\$2,590	24%				
2003				34%	\$10,705	\$ 3,640	\$ 1,050
2004				44%	10,705	4,710	2,120
2005				54%	10,705	5,781	3,191
2006				64%	10,705	6,851	4,261
2007				75%	10,705	8,029	5,439
TOTAL						\$29,011	\$16,061

¹ Bradford has experienced a decline in the student population during the last two years. Thus, the amount of fees assessed does not need to be adjusted for growth in the student population.

² Potential savings represent the difference between the projected collections over the next five years at the current rate of collection and the estimated collections over the next five years if the district were to gradually increase the rate of collection to 75% of the total fees assessed for lost and damaged textbooks.

Source: OPPAGA analysis and Bradford County School District.

Action Plan 4-9

We recommend that the district develop written policies and procedures for the purchasing, selection, maintenance, and disposal of instructional materials.

Action Needed	Step 1. The director of Curriculum forms a committee of district directors, school principals, and teachers to develop policies and procedures regarding instructional materials.
	Step 2. The director of Curriculum presents policies and procedures to the school board for approval, if necessary.
	Step 3. The director of Curriculum issues the policies and procedures and distributes memos to all district and school staff to notify them of any subsequent changes in the policies and procedures.
	Step 4. School principals review the policies and procedures at faculty meetings to ensure that all teachers are aware of the new policies.
Who Is Responsible	Director of Curriculum
Time Frame	Begin meeting with committee in August 2003; develop written policies by January 2004.

Action Plan 4-10

We recommend that the district improve efforts to collect fees assessed for lost and damaged textbooks by raising the collection rate to 75% over the next five years.

Action Needed	Step 1. The director of Curriculum works with the director of Finance to develop guidelines regarding the collection of fees for lost and damaged textbooks.
	Step 2. Each school keeps accurate records of the number of textbooks lost by each student, the fees assessed for each textbook, and the amount collected.
	Step 3. Schools report their fees assessed and fees collected twice annually to the director of Finance.
Who Is Responsible	Director of Curriculum and director of Finance
Time Frame	Schools issue reports to the school district in January 2004 and June 2004.

Best Practice 10: Not Using

The district needs to improve its school library or media centers to better support instruction.

To meet this best practice, school districts should have sufficient school library/media center resources to support instruction. Library materials and equipment should be up-to-date and centers should operate during hours that meet the needs of students. To maximize the availability of library materials, the district should have and regularly use procedures to reduce library and media costs, such as coordinating orders across schools to take advantage of bulk rate discounts.

The Bradford County School District has purchased software for cataloging library materials for every school, and two of the district’s schools have been accepted to the Sunlink program. However, the district could improve its library and media services in several ways. First, evidence suggests that the schools do not have up-to-date materials and equipment. Second, the district does not solicit feedback on teacher and principal satisfaction with available resources. Third, two of the schools do not have media specialists and thus do not have fully operational media centers. Interviews with district staff suggest that district-wide meetings of media specialists would help to address some of these problems. In addition, two of the district’s other schools could share their media specialist with the two schools that do not have a media specialist. In addition, the district and schools could work with parent-teacher associations to raise funds for library materials and solicit grants from charitable organizations. Other strategies that could strengthen the district’s library and media services include expanding library hours to better accommodate students’ needs, increasing parent awareness and involvement, and building a network of support from volunteers and community members.

Action Plan 4-11

We recommend that the district improve library and media services through better coordination, formal solicitation of feedback, and resource development.	
Action Needed	<p>Step 1. The director of Curriculum appoints a committee composed of all school media specialists, and the committee designates one member as the chair.</p> <p>Step 2. The committee meets once per month to share information, discuss strategies to address priority issues, and identify issues affecting library/ media services in the district.</p> <p>Step 3. The district considers ensuring that each school has a library that remains open during school hours.</p> <p>Step 4. The district ensures that all schools have a media specialist for at least one day per week by assigning certain media specialists to more than one school. The district could staff additional hours at the library with volunteers, PTA and SAC members.</p> <p>Step 5. The committee develops and annually administers a survey instrument for obtaining feedback from teachers, students, and parents.</p> <p>Step 6. The committee develops and annually administers a survey instrument for obtaining feedback from teachers, students, and parents.</p> <p>Step 7. The committee analyzes the survey results annually, presents them to the school board, and uses the information to improve library/ media services.</p> <p>Step 8. The committee works together to identify and pursue funding opportunities.</p>
Who Is Responsible	Director of Curriculum and committee chair
Time Frame	Committee begins meeting in September 2003; survey administered by December 2003; report to school board in February 2004 and annually thereafter.

Best Practice 11: Not Using

The district does not adequately utilize instructional technology in the classroom to enhance curriculum and to improve student achievement.

Technology has the potential to enhance curriculum and instruction, help improve student achievement, and assist students in attaining basic computer skills needed for the 21st century. Whenever possible, districts should use technology to support classroom learning. For instance, districts should offer a variety of courseware focused on helping students achieve grade level academic benchmarks as well as common basic software packages. To increase student success, districts should ensure that all students have opportunities to use computer software while in school. Districts should also periodically obtain feedback from teachers and principals related to the usefulness and adequacy of instructional technology and use this information when selecting future materials.

The Bradford County School District could improve its instructional technology services and could meet this best practice standard by adopting several key strategies. First, the district does not currently provide schools with recommended lists of instructional courseware that align with the Sunshine State Standards. While the district has a Technology Committee that meets occasionally and identifies such instructional courseware, this information is not shared regularly or systematically with teachers in the district, nor is it compiled by anyone in the district for future reference. Furthermore, the district does not currently provide guidelines to teachers on how to integrate instructional technology into the curriculum. Although elementary school students in the district are using computers regularly for assessment and diagnostic purposes through the schoolwide Title I programs, interviews with district staff, principals, and teachers indicated that students at the middle and high school level are not getting sufficient exposure to instructional technology. The district has attempted to solicit feedback from teachers and principals on the usefulness of instructional technology, but responses have been difficult to obtain.

Action Plan 4-12

We recommend that the district provide greater support for instructional technology through training, technical assistance, and facilitating an exchange of information among schools.

Action Needed	<p>Step 1. The director of Curriculum works with the Technology Committee to develop a list of instructional courseware to be shared with teachers and updated at least twice per year.</p> <p>Step 2. The director of Curriculum facilitates training in the use of instructional technology in the classroom with an emphasis on integrating technology into the curriculum and ensures that teachers are informed of training opportunities (see also Action Plan 5-2).</p> <p>Step 3. The Technology Committee formally solicits feedback from principals, teachers, parents, and students at least once per year on student and teacher usage of technology in the schools (see also Action Plan 5-3).</p> <p>Step 4. The Technology Committee chair reports at least twice annually to the school board on whether teacher and student usage of technology is increasing over time.</p>
Who Is Responsible	Director of Curriculum and Technology Committee chair
Time Frame	Report to the school board on the above initiatives in June 2004, and twice annually in December and June thereafter.

Best Practice 12: Not Using

Although the district has a strong health services program, the district needs to improve student support services in the areas of guidance counseling, school psychology, and social work to better meet student needs.

To be successful learners, students often need a variety of non-academic services to meet their health, social, and emotional needs, which if left unattended may present significant barriers to their ability to learn. Districts should ensure that schools offer sufficient support services, such as counseling and social work to help maintain the overall well being of students. An effective district periodically reviews and assesses its support services plan and uses this information to make adjustments as needed to help resolve barriers to student learning.

The Bradford County School District, working in cooperation with the Bradford County Health Department, provides health services in nine schools through four registered nurses and five nurse’s aides. The district receives a grant from the Department of Health and submits a comprehensive health services plan to them each year. Through this program, the district has launched initiatives to address problems such as obesity, teenage pregnancy, and lack of immunization.

However, the district could meet best practice standards and improve its services in the areas of guidance counseling, school psychology, and social work. Although some of the district’s social work needs are addressed through the health services program, primarily through home visits and educational programs, the district does not currently have a strategy for providing other social work services. In addition, as mentioned in Best Practice 2 of this chapter, there appear to be significant delays in the evaluation of ESE students, which is the primary responsibility of the districts’ two school psychologists. Finally, teachers and principals mentioned consistently in interviews that guidance counseling was a major area of concern. Two of the district’s schools do not have a guidance counselor, and the counselors in many of the other schools are overwhelmed with testing responsibilities and consequently do not have sufficient time to counsel students. District staff as well as school staff also expressed concerns that guidance counselors are not being held accountable for their job performance and require more training and oversight from the district and their respective school principals. The district should improve student support services by developing a comprehensive student support services plan and by ensuring greater accountability for support service staff. In addition, the district should work with DOE staff to provide training for support service personnel. With regard to social work services, district staff suggested two potential strategies for

addressing the district's truancy problems (see discussion of absenteeism among ESE students in Best Practice 2 of this chapter): assigning a district staff person to serve as a truancy officer and/or establishing a truancy court to address students who are habitually truant from school.

Action Plan 4-13

We recommend that the district improve the efficiency and effectiveness of student support services by developing a comprehensive student support services plan and by holding staff more accountable for their job performance.

Action Needed	Step 1.	The district seeks technical assistance from Department of Education staff, Student Support Services staff, and/or other districts on developing a needs assessment and comprehensive student support services plan.
	Step 2.	The deputy superintendent works with the director of Curriculum and the director of Exceptional Student Education to conduct an assessment of student needs to be administered annually in the school district.
	Step 3.	In conjunction with Department of Education staff, the district develops a comprehensive student support services plan based on the results of the needs assessment. The plan will detail the responsibilities of all relevant district and school staff, list performance standards for each of the support service areas, and establish a system for holding staff accountable.
	Step 4.	Persons responsible for each student support service area report to the deputy superintendent monthly on progress made towards the goals established in the comprehensive plan.
Who Is Responsible	Deputy superintendent	
Time Frame	Develop comprehensive plan by October 2003; begin monthly reports in November 2003.	