



Opportunity Through Education

Jillian Balow – Superintendent of Public Instruction

Wyoming Department of Education  
122 W. 25th St., Ste. E200  
Cheyenne, WY 82002  
307-777-7675

**TO:** [REDACTED], Special Education Director  
Fremont County School District #1

**FROM:** Sheila Thomalla, Monitoring Team Supervisor,

**SUBJECT:** Special Education Results Driven Accountability Monitoring

**REVIEW DATE:** February 8- 18, 2021

**REPORT DATE:** May 13, 2021

## Introduction

The Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA) Part B Regulations include the following provision:

*The State must monitor the implementation of this part, enforce this part in accordance with §300.604(a)(JJ and (a)(3), (b)(2)(1) and (b)(2)(v), and (c)(2), and annually report on performance under this part. The primary focus of the State's monitoring activities must be on: (1) improving educational results and functional outcomes for all children with disabilities; and (2) ensuring that public agencies meet the program requirements under Part B of the Act, with a particular emphasis on those requirements that are most closely related to improving educational results for children with disabilities [C.F.R. §300.600].*

In accordance with these regulations, the ultimate goal of the Wyoming Department of Education's (WDE) monitoring process is to promote systems change which will positively influence educational results and functional outcomes for students with disabilities.

## District Selection

During the 2019-20 school year, Fremont County School District #1 was selected for Results Driven Accountability (RDA) Monitoring, using the seven-criterion selection formula.

- (1) *Indicator 3C: WY-TOPP Reading proficiency rates for students with disabilities who took the regular assessment.*
- (2) *Indicator 3C: WY-TOPP Math proficiency rates for students with disabilities who took the regular assessment.*
- (3) *WY-TOPP Student Growth Percentiles (SGP): The average Reading SGP for students with disabilities who took the regular assessment.*

*(4) WY-TOPP Student Growth Percentiles (SGP): The average Math SGP for students with disabilities who took the regular assessment.*

*(5) Indicator 5: the percent of students in the regular environment at least 80 percent of the time.*

*(6) Reading Gap Analysis: The difference in WY-TOPP Reading proficiency rates between students with disabilities and students without disabilities*

*(7) Math Gap Analysis: The difference in WY-TOPP Math proficiency rates between students with disabilities and students without disabilities.*

The district was found to fall into the Needs Assistance determination level for the 2018-19 year. The Data-Drill down completed on January 16, 2020 as part of the RDA monitoring process was used to determine hypotheses and a sample for review.

The WDE and the Fremont #1 teams elected to monitor a sample of special education records in Fremont #1 in compliance with Part B regulations governing the following areas:

- a. Provision of Free and Appropriate Public Education (FAPE)
- b. Identification and provision of services for students with social, emotional and behavioral needs

The original monitoring sample consisted of 86 students. Included were 63 students, in grades K-12, who had been identified for special education under the categories of specific learning disability, other health impairment, emotional disability, or speech/language impaired and classified with the Least Restrictive Environment of regular education setting or resource room. An additional 23 students who were identified under the disability category of emotional disability and also reported as having counseling as a related service. Of the original sample identified, WDE reviewed 60 files.

Listed below are the results of the file reviews and staff interviews. They are provided in four categories: commendations, individual findings of noncompliance, systemic findings of noncompliance, and program recommendations. Individual and systemic findings of noncompliance will require some form of corrective action.

**Commendations** – The WDE would like to commend you on the level of preparedness, engagement, and participation of your staff during this process. The level of leadership and commitment to serve students was evident in our interactions. In addition, it was evident that Fremont County School District #1 is embracing the opportunity for improvement. Specifically, the PLC process appears to be leading to positive outcomes for students. Similarly, the case management role has led to more effective processes and procedures within the district. Communication appears to be effective and the prioritization of problem-solving for children is evident.

### **Findings of Noncompliance**

**Individual Findings of Noncompliance**

- [REDACTED] File review revealed a student with a documented hearing impairment was not receiving sufficient services or supports. There were no audiological services nor Teacher of the Deaf consult to track the impact of the hearing impairment on his progress within the general education setting, ensure appropriate access, or to provide insight, given his hearing status. The student's IEP team should reconvene to add the appropriate services necessary to ensure the student has his audiological needs met.
- [REDACTED] File review revealed the team had determined a Functional Behavior Assessment was necessary for the student but no evidence that one had been conducted was found. The IEP should conduct the needed FBA and determine if the results collected indicate additional needs, services or IEP changes.
- [REDACTED] File review revealed concerns with the student failing to make progress due to attendance concerns. Upon interview regarding the team's response to the lack of progress, the case manager indicated that transportation could not be offered to the student as an option to support attendance. The IEP team should reconvene and determine if Special Transportation, a special education service, would be appropriate to support attendance and progress for this student.

**Teams have 30 days from the receipt of this report to correct or develop a plan to bring these findings into correction.**

<b>Systemic Findings:</b>	<b>None</b>
---------------------------	-------------

**Recommendations –**

- The WDE recommends that the district develop a process and procedure for determining when Functional Behavioral Assessment will be conducted, minimum expectations for a comprehensive FBA, and roles and responsibilities for completion of the FBA processes. In addition, processes should be developed to outline the use of FBA in addressing social, emotional, and behavioral needs for all students.
- The WDE recommends that the district revise the current processes used to conduct observations for comprehensive, initial, and reevaluations. Reviews revealed much of the data reported was taken from standardized test administrations. An improved practice would be to ensure observations are conducted in classroom settings as part of the evaluation process to gather data relevant to needs planning. A common process for updating and attaching such documents to active IEPs is recommended.
- The WDE recommends the district consider incorporating direct service provision for executive functioning and other “soft skills” necessary for students with disabilities to succeed within the general education classroom and curriculum such as planning, problem solving, and organizational skills.
- The WDE recommends the district to continue to improve processes and procedures for transition planning, specifically, as it pertains to students with attendance concerns. The district may consider developing alternatives for participation.

If you have any questions concerning this report, please contact Sheila Thomalla at [sheila.thomalla2@wyo.gov](mailto:sheila.thomalla2@wyo.gov) .

cc: [REDACTED], Superintendent, Fremont #1  
Margee Robertson, Special Education Director, WDE  
Susan Shipley, Special Education Systems Administrator, WDE