



Stephen L. Pruitt, Ph.D.
Commissioner of Education

KENTUCKY DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

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April 9, 2018

Nicholas Brake, Superintendent
Owensboro Independent Schools
450 Griffith Ave.
Owensboro, KY 42301

Dear Superintendent Brake:

As you know, one goal of Kentucky Statewide Consolidated Monitoring (KSCM) is to help create opportunities for the programs in our schools and districts to look at new ways to collaborate and collectively meet our ultimate goal: increasing student achievement while closing gaps and positioning our students to be college- and career-ready. The team members from your visit have engaged in this collaborative process in order to produce the attached Consolidated Monitoring Report.

During the 2017-18 school year, the Kentucky Department of Education (KDE) conducted monitoring in the Owensboro Independent School District. During this process, KDE program staff, utilizing program-specific monitoring tools, conducted on-site visits for the following programs:

- Title I, Part A
- Title II, Part A
- Title III, Part A
- Gifted and Talented
- Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)
- Career and Technical Education (CTE)
- Alternative Programs

Each program involved in the KSCM has an impact on our goal. For example, Title II, Part A focuses on improving teacher and principal quality to ensure that all students have equal access to highly qualified and effective teachers and leaders. Title I programs provide not only funding, but also guidance on working with disadvantaged students. These programs and the others engaged in consolidated monitoring can work together to achieve more collaboratively than any of them could alone simply by reducing duplication of effort.

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This report is the result of what can be best described as a “snapshot” of the district taken during our visit. It begins with identifying “effective practices.” These are individual program practices that the team felt were effective, and in some cases innovative. We strongly suggest that the practices identified be submitted to the KDE Best Practices [website](#).

In addition, the monitoring team collectively discussed the findings and concerns of each program to identify Opportunities for Improvement. This represents a consolidation of findings reported by individual programs that were similar in nature and therefore present a potential opportunity for collaboration between identified programs. Each of these concerns has been identified by at least two program areas. Each district program has already been provided an individual report as required by federal or state law. All findings will need to be addressed by district program areas as specified in the individual reports.

In the meantime, if you have questions regarding specific program monitoring requirements, please contact the individual program contacts listed in this report. If you have questions concerning the consolidated monitoring process, please contact Sharma Aitken at (502) 564-3791, extension 4018, or via email at sharma.aitken2@education.ky.gov. Information regarding education programs within the state of Kentucky may also be found at www.education.ky.gov.

Thank you for your work in improving Kentucky’s education programs to better serve our children.

Sincerely,



Kelly Foster, Ed.D.
Associate Commissioner
Office of Continuous Improvement and Support

KF/TR/NN/vb

Attachment: Consolidated Monitoring Report for Owensboro Independent

2017-18 Statewide Consolidated Monitoring Report

District:	Owensboro Independent
Date(s) of Visit:	Feb. 27-Mar. 2, 2018
Team Leads: <i>(List primary person on this visit for each program.)</i>	
<i>Title I – Erin Sudduth</i>	<i>Preschool – N/A</i>
<i>Title II – Kathy Collins</i>	<i>Career and Technical Education – Claude Christian</i>
<i>Alternative Programs – Donna Deal</i>	<i>Gifted And Talented – Kathie Anderson</i>
<i>English Learners (EL) – Gary Martin</i>	<i>IDEA –Erma White</i>

Highlight of Effective Practice No. 1

Programs Addressed <i>(Check all that apply.)</i>	Title I	X	Career and Technical Education	
	Title II		Alternative Programs	
	EL		Gifted and Talented	X
	IDEA		Preschool	
<i>Clearly describe actions and/or practices that the team deems as effective. (Include impact on student achievement.)</i>				
<p>Several programs observed a strong sense of community within the Owensboro Independent school district. Title I evaluators documented an effective means of outreach to the parents of English learners (ELs). The district appointed liaison to ELs and their families maintains rapport by visiting homes daily, gathering feedback from families to determine needs, and translates documents to ensure families understand their child’s performance in school. Gifted and talented evaluators identified a heavy involvement in the performing arts. Within a few weeks of the monitoring visit, students from all grades will be performing in all art forms for the community. Students are also involved in many projects to help the community. For example, students saw a need to assist some of the new students from other countries in understanding the concept of prom. Dresses and other items were donated or purchased to assist the new students.</p>				

2017-18 Statewide Consolidated Monitoring Report

Highlight of Effective Practice No. 2

Programs Addressed <i>(Check all that apply.)</i>	Title I		Career and Technical Education	
	Title II		Alternative Programs	
	EL		Gifted and Talented	
	IDEA	X	Preschool	
<i>Clearly describe actions and/or practices that the team deems as effective. (Include impact on student achievement.)</i>				
<p>IDEA evaluators documented parent and family engagement as a strength. As evidenced by the student’s IEP, the district encourages parent participation in the ARC meeting. The district makes all attempts to ensure that the parent has input in the meeting whether it is in person or via a phone call.</p>				

Highlight of Effective Practice No. 3

Programs Addressed <i>(Check all that apply.)</i>	Title I	X	Career and Technical Education	
	Title II	X	Alternative Programs	
	EL		Gifted and Talented	X
	IDEA		Preschool	
<i>Clearly describe actions and/or practices that the team deems as effective. (Include impact on student achievement.)</i>				
<p>Multiple programs noted a variety of effective student services in the Owensboro Independent school district. The district is dedicated to providing effective student services and improving student achievement. Title I evaluators were pleased to learn that the district devotes two days annually to the review and analysis of data, which is used to drive instruction and make programmatic changes where necessary. The analysis of data allows the district to make informed decisions and provides an opportunity to monitor the effectiveness of teaching practices. Title II evaluators noted an impressive program to help prepare students for kindergarten at Foust Elementary. The district funds this early learning academy for students identified as needing an extra year before entering kindergarten. The program is viewed as a success by the school and the teachers. The district should be commended on believing in the program and providing the funding. During walk-throughs and interviews, the gifted and talented evaluators observed many opportunities for students, including dance and drama opportunities for elementary students. Middle school students were observed in a pullout class that stretched critical thinking and creativity skills. High school students interviewed talked about the many leadership and academic opportunities that are offered. Seniors alternate going to Washington, D.C., and Chicago each year, where they are able to explore historical sites and museums.</p>				

2017-18 Statewide Consolidated Monitoring Report

Highlight of Effective Practice No. 4

Programs Addressed <i>(Check all that apply.)</i>	Title I		Career and Technical Education	
	Title II		Alternative Programs	
	EL		Gifted and Talented	
	IDEA	X	Preschool	
<i>Clearly describe actions and/or practices that the team deems as effective. (Include impact on student achievement.)</i>				
IDEA evaluators identified policies and procedures as a strength for the district. The district has Child Find policies that they distribute to the community through the newspaper and student handbooks. Special education policies are also made available on the district's website.				

Highlight of Effective Practice No. 5

Programs Addressed <i>(Check all that apply.)</i>	Title I	X	Career and Technical Education	
	Title II		Alternative Programs	
	EL		Gifted and Talented	
	IDEA		Preschool	
<i>Clearly describe actions and/or practices that the team deems as effective. (Include impact on student achievement.)</i>				
Title I evaluators were impressed that professional development is incorporated into school plans and often tailored for teacher needs based on trends and observations made during walk-throughs. The implementation of strategies learned through professional development is regularly monitored and plans are updated based on the effectiveness of the PD. Teachers are also encouraged to lead PD sessions and professional learning communities based on their areas of expertise and personal passions.				

2017-18 Statewide Consolidated Monitoring Report

Highlight of Effective Practice No. 6

Programs Addressed <i>(Check all that apply.)</i>	Title I	X	Career and Technical Education	
	Title II		Alternative Programs	X
	EL		Gifted and Talented	
	IDEA		Preschool	
<i>Clearly describe actions and/or practices that the team deems as effective. (Include impact on student achievement.)</i>				
<p>The culture and climate of the district was identified as a strength by several programs. Title I evaluators found all schools to be very welcoming and inviting to students and their families. A variety of classroom layouts and seating styles are used to create environments conducive to student learning. Alternative education evaluators noted that Gateway Academy demonstrated the inclusion of all students regardless of academic, behavioral or cultural backgrounds and includes high expectations for all students. The overall tone of the program was respectful and orderly. Students and adults treated each other respectfully. Students reported feeling safe and cared for and said they were treated fairly. One student said that he would not want to change anything about Gateway because “teachers really care about us and we have help when we need it.” The staff commitment to the program is exceptionally strong. Staff interviews indicated that the last three years have been challenging, but an experienced principal has been transferred from within the district to lead the program. Staff members feel that they are now on the right track to be able to develop a strong program and that a climate of trust and respect exists among the staff.</p>				

2017-18 Statewide Consolidated Monitoring Report

Opportunity for Improvement No. 1

Programs Addressed <i>(Check all that apply.)</i>	Title I	X	Career and Technical Education	
	Title II		Alternative Programs	
	EL		Gifted and Talented	X
	IDEA		Preschool	
Common Issue <i>(Clearly describe issue as it relates to each program.)</i>				
<p>Two programs documented parent and family engagement as an opportunity for improvement. Title I evaluators noted that the district did not sufficiently document that an annual Title I meeting was held with parents to explain program requirements and the rights of parents to be involved in planning, review and improvement of parent programs at both the district and school levels, and to describe and explain the curriculum and assessments used within the schools. Further, parents were not given the opportunity to evaluate the parent and family engagement opportunities and policy through an annual evaluation. It was not apparent that parents and families are effectively involved in the planning, design, and implementation of Title I parent and family engagement activities. When interviewing parents, the gifted and talented evaluators found that parents were unaware of who the district contact is. Parents were also confused about the difference between the GSSP and the progress report. Some were not sure what the “exceeds and meets” meant or if they had received the progress report.</p>				
Common Solution(s)/Recommendation(s)				
<p>Owensboro Independent should ensure that processes are in place to properly inform parents of opportunities within each program. The necessary actions have been identified in the individual program reports pertaining to informing and involving parents in each program.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Title I evaluators recommend the district implement and document the annual Title I meeting with parents to explain program requirements and parent rights. It was also recommended that the district provide parents with the opportunity to evaluate the parent and family engagement program each year. • Gifted and talented evaluators noted that the district might encourage teachers to discuss GT progress or have a report at parent-teacher conferences. The district could have a parent night to explain the forms and expectations of the GT program to enhance communication between parents and staff members. The district could consider using a survey to gather feedback from parents on the program. 				

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Opportunity for Improvement No. 2

Programs Addressed <i>(Check all that apply.)</i>	Title I	X	Career and Technical Education	X
	Title II		Alternative Programs	
	EL		Gifted and Talented	
	IDEA		Preschool	
Common Issue <i>(Clearly describe issue as it relates to each program.)</i>				
<p>Two programs noted finance as an opportunity for improvement. Title I evaluators' interviews and thorough review of documentation revealed that district and school personnel paid partially from Title I, Part A funds were not completing personal activity reports but were only completing semi-annual certifications. The career and technical education evaluators discovered that over half the Perkins funds were unspent.</p>				
Common Solution(s)/Recommendation(s)				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The district must ensure that the proper time and effort logs are completed by staff members paid partially with Title I funds. Title I evaluators recommended that all staff members paid partially with Title I funds, at both the district and school levels, complete personnel activity reports for the 2017-18 school year. • Career and technical education evaluators noted that Perkins funds need to be spent in a timely manner to ensure that the grant funds benefit the current year students. 				

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Opportunity for Improvement No. 3

Programs Addressed <i>(Check all that apply.)</i>	Title I	X	Career and Technical Education	
	Title II		Alternative Programs	X
	EL	X	Gifted and Talented	
	IDEA		Preschool	
Common Issue <i>(Clearly describe issue as it relates to each program.)</i>				
<p>The lack of proper policies and procedures was noted as an issue across several areas. The Title I parent and family engagement policy and school-family compact were not developed in consultation with or annually reviewed by parents/family members. Title I evaluators noted that parents do not receive notification of their right to request teacher qualifications. The district does not have the required supplement-not-supplant methodology on file. The district does not have the Office of the Inspector general fraud hotline posters on display. The district has not adopted a written procedure for the receipt and resolution of complaints alleging a violation of Title I, Part A. The Title III evaluators observed that the district Lau plan needs to be revised and updated. Data pulled by the alternative education evaluators on Feb. 2, 2018 indicated that no students enrolled at Gateway Academy at that time had an active ILPA in Infinite Campus. Further, the report indicated that user rights need to be granted to the program.</p>				
Common Solution(s)/Recommendation(s)				
<p>Owensboro Independent must ensure that all required policies and procedures are in place and regularly updated. The necessary actions have been identified in the individual program reports pertaining to policy and procedure requirements.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Title I evaluators noted that the district must involve parents in the development of parent and family engagement policies and compacts. The Title I Handbook contains details on the various policies and checklists to assist the district in meeting all requirements. The district must also notify parents of their right to request teacher qualifications on an annual basis. Guidance on the supplement-not-supplant methodology requirement can be found in Title I newsletters and webinars. The Office of the Inspector general fraud hotline posters must be displayed at the district and all schools receiving Title I funds. • Title III evaluators recommended revising and updating the Lau plan. • Alternative education evaluators recommend that once ILPA user rights are established, the district must ensure that each student entering and exiting the program has a completed ILPA and that students are included as part of the ILPA process. Additional training and guidance surrounding ILPA requirements is forthcoming from the Division of Student Success. 				

2017-18 Statewide Consolidated Monitoring Report

Opportunity for Improvement No. 4

Programs Addressed <i>(Check all that apply.)</i>	Title I		Career and Technical Education	
	Title II		Alternative Programs	X
	EL		Gifted and Talented	X
	IDEA		Preschool	
Common Issue <i>(Clearly describe issue as it relates to each program.)</i>				
<p>The district did not upload any documentation to provide evidence of professional development activities for staff regarding gifted and talented need, nature and abilities. Alternative education evaluators noted the need of ongoing professional development geared toward the specific needs of teachers and support staff as related to their role in an alternative program and working with students with a variety of adverse life experiences (e.g., ongoing trauma informed care, bullying prevention training, suicide prevention training, Youth Mental Health First Aid, et cetera). Some of the district professional development that is offered may not be tailored to staff working in alternative programs.</p>				
Common Solution(s)/Recommendation(s)				
<p>The district must ensure that staff members are provided with program specific professional development that is relevant to their job duties. The necessary actions have been identified in the individual program reports pertaining to professional development and specific training suggestions.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alternative education evaluators noted that when feasible, the district should consider having staff members attend conferences/trainings, view webinars and/or implement book studies that have an alternative education focus to support relevant professional development for all staff members. It was also recommended that the district refer to KDE’s Alternative Programs of Distinction webpage and consider setting up a visit with one or more of these programs to gather professional development ideas. • Gifted and talented evaluators recommended providing professional development on the nature and needs of GT students. Several webinars are available on the KDE website. The district could request that the points of contact in the buildings present information and trainings as well. It was also recommended that the district train teachers on how to write stronger observations and anecdotal evidence statements for GT students. Teachers could also be trained on student proportionality and the characteristics of underrepresented populations. 				

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Opportunity for Improvement No. 5

Programs Addressed <i>(Check all that apply.)</i>	Title I	X	Career and Technical Education	
	Title II	X	Alternative Programs	
	EL		Gifted and Talented	X
	IDEA		Preschool	
Common Issue <i>(Clearly describe issue as it relates to each program.)</i>				
<p>Communication issues were documented as an opportunity for improvement by several programs. Title I evaluators noted that collaborative work with the local child welfare agency (LCWA) has not be documented. While homeless education posters are in place at central office and at the schools visited, the local liaison’s name and the state homeless coordinator’s name is not on the posters. Title II evaluators noted that the Title II money is used for a class size reduction teacher in each school; however, there is no evaluation of this program as a successful use of funds. Title II evaluators also documented that the district decides how funds will be spent rather than creating an open dialogue with the schools, teachers, and community regarding the expenditure of funds. Gifted and talented evaluators noted that parents, staff members and students were unsure about a survey to gather feedback about the program.</p>				
Common Solution(s)/Recommendation(s)				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The foster care point-of-contact should maintain documentation of collaboration with the LCWA signifying an ongoing relationship and an open line of communication ensuring that the needs of foster children and youth are met. • A concerted effort should be made to ensure that the community at large knows who the local homeless liaison is and how the liaison can be contacted in the event a homeless family requires more information and/or services. The local liaison’s name and the state homeless coordinator’s name must be added to the posters. • The district should ensure that shareholders are provided ample opportunity to give feedback about their programs as well as input on how funds are spent. 				

2017-18 Statewide Consolidated Monitoring Report

Opportunity for Improvement No. 6

Programs Addressed <i>(Check all that apply.)</i>	Title I		Career and Technical Education	X
	Title II		Alternative Programs	
	EL		Gifted and Talented	X
	IDEA	X	Preschool	
Common Issue <i>(Clearly describe issue as it relates to each program.)</i>				
<p>Both the quality and implementation of student plans was identified as an issue across several areas that focus heavily on student plans. Career and technical education evaluators found a lack of career counseling relative to course progression toward pathway completion. It also appears that many students do not begin pathway courses until their junior year, making it difficult to complete a four-course sequence. During interviews with parents, gifted and talented evaluators were asked for an explanation of the service options and what activities or projects their child would be involved in that would be part of the service. Through review of the student’s due process folder, IDEA evaluators noted that the present level section of the IEP, the student’s progress data, strengths, concerns and evaluative information data were missing. Also, the least restrictive environment statement is not consistent with information given in the special education services of the IEP.</p>				
Common Solution(s)/Recommendation(s)				
<p>The district should ensure that student plans are being maintained, reviewed for effectiveness, and communicated with shareholders. The necessary actions have been identified in the individual program reports pertaining to student plans.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Career and technical education evaluators recommend working with counselors and others who advise students to ensure career counseling relative to course progression toward pathway completion is provided. The district should ensure that student assessments are loaded into TEDS when they are earned and that school-level TEDS coordinators update student data in TEDS when changes (e.g., earn industry certificate, transfer to new school, et cetera) occur. The district should also ensure that credits are properly entered for all students in order to determine correct termination status. • IDEA evaluators recommend the district ensure that all components of IEPs are completed and up-to-date. The least restrictive environment statement should be consistent with the information given in the special education services of the IEP. • Gifted and talented evaluators noted that the parent inventory form is not always returned to help create GSSP services. It is suggested that the district implement an online form and evaluate whether this process is more effective in capturing student interests, needs and abilities. It is also recommended that evidence documenting the eligibility of students would be stronger if it included more descriptive observations and anecdotal evidence rather than check boxes for observed behaviors. 				

2017-18 Statewide Consolidated Monitoring Report

Final Overview

Clearly describe the following for the identified program(s):

- *How programs are effectively working collaboratively to better serve students;*
- *Suggestions for adjustments that could help programs begin or improve their collaborative efforts; and*
- *Suggestions for how each program can further help with student success and closing gaps.*

Owensboro Independent is a large independent district dedicated to the students of the community. The commitment to continuous improvement was made apparent in several programs. The district and school staffs have a desire to develop positive relationships with students, families and the community.

The Kentucky Department of Education Consolidated Monitoring Team visiting Owensboro Independent agrees that the focus in the district is the students. The district has been very receptive in accepting assistance in regard to improving any programs in order to benefit students.