



ATTACHMENT B

2/1/2012

Puerto Rico: Part B Indicator 14 Results Improvement

On October 3-7, 2011 the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) conducted a Continuous Improvement Results monitoring visit to the IDEA Part B State Education Agency in Puerto Rico, the Office of the Associate Secretary of Special Education (SAEE, for its acronym in Spanish) of the Puerto Rico Department of Education (PRDE). The visit included an October 6-7 meeting with more than 20 special education stakeholders representing parents and families of students with disabilities, the public vocational rehabilitation agency, universities, business and community development enterprises, and education service agencies. This distinguished group labored for 1.5 days to conceptualize a draft strategic plan designed to develop partnerships and collaborations that improve post-secondary options (using OSEP's definition of higher education, competitive employment, postsecondary training and other employment) for youth with disabilities. In order to simplify accountability for results improvement, the scope of the plan was further focused to improve results specifically for Indicator B14.a and B14.b (enrollment in higher education or competitive employment, respectively).

The stakeholder group determined that the plan must: (a) include all students, including those with severe and profound disabilities; (b) be sustainable over time; and, (c) be measurable. The group organized its proposed strategies and activities into three broad areas: (1) Families and Parents, (2) Agencies and Collaborators, and (3) the Education System. Further, it was determined that the goals would be developed and implemented in the Ponce region of the island, specifically in the Ponce district. In FY2009 just under 30% of all leavers in this district were reported to be enrolled in higher education or engaged in competitive employment (Part B indicator 14.a and 14.b as per OSEP's definition), as compared to 56% for the same indicators island-wide. Data for FY 2010 reported on the February 1, 2012 Annual Performance Report (APR) to OSEP indicates that the gap is slowly growing. Island-wide, the percent of those enrolled in higher education or engaged in competitive employment has risen to 59.4% (Indicator B14.a) and 65.4% (Indicator 14.b), respectively. Data in the Ponce district remains steady. Stakeholders determined to "bridge the gap" in the Ponce district and proposed specific activities to PRDE over the next 60 months suggesting that the results would serve as a model or pilot for other districts and regions in Puerto Rico.

The proposed strategies in each area are:

- Area One: Families and Parents. Educate and empower parents, students and community to develop their own networks.
- Area Two: Agencies and Collaborators. Use effectively current and future resources in behalf of our students.
- Area Three: Education System. Understand and address the needs, interests and talents of students in special education.

The stakeholder group reconvened on November 29, 2011 to build on, improve and clarify the draft plan from the October meeting so that it could be submitted to OSEP. During the November meeting it was determined that prior to developing and implementing a strategic plan based on the three areas listed above (Phase Two), a preliminary set of data collection improvement objectives needed to be accomplished (Phase One). This is based on the fact that the number of anticipated "leavers" from the Ponce District in May 2012 is 875 and that 343 of this number is already considered "dropouts." This number is likely to rise between November 2011 and May 2012 and represents nearly half of all anticipated 2012 leavers on the entire island of Puerto Rico. Of the 343, 256 are classified as having a specific learning disability (SLD—42% of all SLD leavers in the district) and 7 are classified as having an

emotional disturbance (ED—44% of all ED leavers in the district). The stakeholders recognized that the Ponce District data represents an exceptionally high level of dropouts and that it needs to be carefully analyzed. It was further determined that specific strategies to improve Indicator 14 survey response rates should be targeted to dropout students. Until this issue is resolved it was felt that implementing targeted school and community-based improvement efforts, as described in the October meeting, would be an ineffective use of time and financial resources. Therefore, the following objectives and activities were developed (Phase One). Responsible parties include Caribbean Integrated Development (CID), a consultant to SAEE/PRDE and the SAEE/PRDE staff.

Once the Phase One objectives and activities are achieved in May 2013, the Stakeholders will reconvene in the third quarter of 2013 to consider the results of the activities and develop a specific plan that addresses the three priority areas suggested in October 2011 (Phase Two). The outcome of this entire effort is to improve the higher education and competitive employment results for Ponce district “leavers” who are served under an active IEP when they leave school. It is anticipated that in 60 months (5 years), the results (i.e., percent of leavers with successful outcomes) will be at least equal to the island-wide results. This will be a challenge as the island-wide results continue to increase, but it is a challenge that the Stakeholders and PRDE are willing to accept.

Measurable Outcomes (for both phases)

By September 30, 2016, Indicator B14.a and B14.b results for the Ponce district will be at least equal to the island-wide results.

Phase one objective to be achieved by May 2013:

Objective	Activities	Timeline	Responsible
Objective One: Find and survey the dropout students in the Ponce District.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Develop a demographic and key characteristic profile of each dropout student. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To better define potential dropouts Develop strategies for finding/locating each dropout student <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Interview each student What is their current situation (employed? school?) Likelihood of reentering the special education system Survey (Indicator 14) the dropout students. Add dropout student responses to the FY2012 APR (submitted Feb. 2014). 	Activity 1 (A1): 2/24/12 A2: 2/24/12 A3: 5/31/13 A4: 2/1/14	A1, A2: Caribbean Integrated Development (CID) A3,A4: PRDE
Objective Two: Retain non-dropout students (retained) in their final year (potential leavers) in the Ponce District.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Establish and enforce a time-sensitive protocol for follow up with “no-show” students. Audience: School social workers and school counselors. Identify student characteristics that lead to a higher probability of positive student outcomes (see Indicator 14). Develop a demographic and key characteristic profile of each retained student. Develop strategies for finding/locating 	A1: 2/24/12 A2: 8/31/12 A3: 8/31/12 A4: 2/1/13	A1, A2, A3, A4: CID A5: PRDE

Objective	Activities	Timeline	Responsible
	each retained student (improve on the current survey process. 5. Survey (Indicator 14) the retained students.	A5: 5/31/13	
Objective Three: Document and validate the model	1. Document activities, outputs and implementation issues related to 1.1 (objective 1, activity 1), 2.2 and 2.3 so that the profile data can be used for predictive purposes. 2. Document activities, outputs and implementation issues related to 1.2 and 2.4 to define strategies to enhance replication to other regions of Puerto Rico.	On going	A1, A2: CID
Objective Four: Accountability for results	1. Stakeholder group will meet on a regular basis to ensure progress toward achievement of project objectives and to determine the appropriate time to begin refining and implementing the strategies identified in October 2011.	On going (monthly to quarterly as needed)	PRDE

The stakeholders recognize the substantial federal resources available to Puerto Rico. In addition to using the facilitation and technical assistance expertise of the Regional Resource Center Program (RRCP), specifically the SERRC and MPRRC, stakeholders are using the Frequently Asked Question (FAQ) document (rev. May 2011) prepared by the National Post School Outcome Center and the current OSEP Part B Measurement Table to ensure that the Part B Indicator 14 definitions and procedures used by SAEE/PRDE are consistent with federal guidance. In addition, resources available through the National Dropout Prevention Center for Students with Disabilities are being accessed to assist in accomplishing activities 1.1, 1.2, 2.2, and 2.3. It is anticipated that once the preceding objectives and activities are achieved, work will continue on refining and implementing the strategies originally outlined in October 2011. This second phase will begin in the third quarter of 2013 giving PRDE approximately 3.5 years to achieve the measurable outcome described above.