

## **2005-2006 LEAST RESTRICTIVE ENVIRONMENT MONITORING PROCESS DEFINING A MULTI-TIERED SYSTEM**

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

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

An analysis of the data collected for the three placement categories was used to identify school districts most in need of systemic LRE-related improvement. PDE used the most recent verified data (the December 1, 2004 Federal Child Count) to identify about one half of the Commonwealth's districts for some type of LRE monitoring.

### ***LRE Monitoring Categories***

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

#### Tier 1

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

#### Tier 2

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

### Tier 3

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

### ***Data Analysis***

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

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

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

### Tier 1 – On-Site LRE Monitoring

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

- PDE then finalized the identification of the 20 Tier 1 school districts and notified them in January 2006 that they would be monitored.

#### Tier 2 – Warning

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

#### Tier 3 – Alert

- Of the remaining school districts, about 200 were tentatively identified for Tier 3, using the following criteria:
  - The 50 districts that had the lowest percentage of students receiving special education services outside the regular education classroom less than 21% of the school day.
  - The 100 districts that had the highest percentage of students receiving special education services outside the regular education classroom greater than 60% of the school day.
  - The 50 districts that had the highest percentage of students receiving special education services outside regular schools.
- After tentatively identifying the 200 school districts in Tier 3, PDE identified specific circumstances that eliminated certain school districts: e.g., districts currently working under an LRE related Corrective Action Plan; and a school district named in more than one category.
- After eliminating the districts, PDE finalized the identification of the 200 Tier 3 school districts and notified them of their status.

**2005-06 Tier 1 School Districts<sup>1</sup>**  
**On-Site LRE Monitoring by PDE**  
**N=20**

<b>Outside regular classroom less than 21% of the school day</b>	<b>Outside regular classroom more than 60% of the school day</b>	<b>Other settings</b>
Avonworth (IU 3)	Bensalem (IU 22)	Chester Upland (IU 25)
Bethlehem-Center (IU 1)	Bristol Borough (IU 22)	Coatesville (IU 24)
Norristown (IU 23)	Bristol Township (IU 22)	Duquesne (IU 3)
Reading (IU 14)	Carbondale (IU 19)	East Allegheny (IU 3)
Washington (IU 1)	Erie City (IU 5)	Wilkesburg (IU 3)
	Greater Nanticoke (IU 18)	
	Greenville (IU 4)	
	Oswayo Valley (IU 9)	
	Philadelphia (IU 26)	
	Williamsport (IU 17)	

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<sup>1</sup> Within groups, school districts are listed alphabetically; NOT in rank order

**2005-06 Tier 2 School Districts  
Warning Letters  
N=30**

<b>Outside regular classroom less than 21% of the school day<sup>2</sup></b>	<b>Outside regular classroom more than 60% of the school day</b>	<b>Other settings</b>
Bethlehem Area (IU 20)	Abington (IU 23)	Brentwood Borough (IU 3)
Coudersport Area (IU 9)	Altoona Area (IU 8)	Clairton City (IU 3)
Neshaminy (IU 22)	Antietam (IU 14)	Kennett Consolidated (IU 24)
Northern Potter (IU 9)	Bentworth (IU 1)	Mahanoy Area (IU 29)
Phoenixville Area (IU 24)	Berwick Area (IU 16)	South Park (IU 3)
South Allegheny (IU 3)	Charleroi (IU 1)	William Penn (IU 25)
Susquehanna Township (IU 15)	Connellsville Area (IU 1)	Woodland Hills (IU 3)
	Farrell Area (IU 4)	
	Greater Johnstown (IU 8)	
	Mount Pleasant Area (IU 7)	
	Pittston Area (IU 18)	
	Pottstown (IU 23)	
	Smethport Area (IU 9)	
	South Western (IU 12)	
	Steelton-Highspire (IU 15)	
	York City (IU 12)	

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**2005-06 Tier 3 Districts  
Alert Letters  
N=200**

<b>Outside regular classroom less than 21% of the school day<sup>3</sup></b>	<b>Outside regular classroom more than 60% of the school day</b>	<b>Other settings</b>
Aliquippa (IU 27)	Albert Gallatin Area (IU 1)	Avon Grove (IU 24)
Allentown (IU 21)	Allegheny-Clarion Valley (IU 6)	Chartiers Valley (IU 3)
Annville-Cleona (IU 13)	Ambridge Area (IU 27)	Cheltenham Township (IU 23)
Bradford Area (IU 9)	Athens Area (IU 17)	Columbia Borough (IU 13)
Central Greene (IU 1)	Austin Area (IU 9)	Downington Area (IU 24)
Chambersburg Area (IU 12)	Belle Vernon Area (IU 7)	Great Valley (IU 24)
Chichester (IU 25)	Big Beaver Falls Area (IU 27)	Greencastle-Antrim (IU 12)
Commodore Perry (IU 4)	Big Spring (IU 15)	Greensburg Salem (IU 7)
Conewago Valley (IU 12)	Carlynton (IU 3)	Hampton Township (IU 3)
Corry Area (IU 5)	Carmichaels Area (IU 1)	Interboro (IU 25)
Eastern York (IU 12)	Centennial SD (IU 22)	Jenkintown (IU 23)
Gateway (IU 3)	Central Bucks (IU 22)	Marple Newtown (IU 25)
Governor Mifflin (IU 14)	Central Dauphin (IU 15)	Minersville Area (IU 29)
Hamburg Area (IU 14)	Chestnut Ridge (IU 8)	Monaca (IU 27)
Hanover (IU 18)	Colonial (IU 23)	Montour (IU 3)
Hanover Public (IU 12)	Conemaugh Township Area (IU 8)	Moon Area (IU 3)
Hatboro-Horsham (IU 23)	Conemaugh Valley (IU 8)	New Brighton Area (IU 27)
Hempfield Area (IU 7)	Conestoga Valley (IU 13)	North Pocono (IU 19)
Jamestown Area (IU 4)	Cornwall-Lebanon (IU 13)	Northgate (IU 3)
Jeannette City (IU 7)	Council Rock (IU 22)	Norwin (IU 7)
Lackawanna Trail (IU 19)	Crawford Central (IU 5)	Octorara Area (IU 24)
Lehigh Area (IU 21)	Cumberland Valley (IU 15)	Owen J. Roberts (IU 24)
Methacton (IU 23)	Dallas (IU 18)	Oxford Area (IU 24)
Middletown Area (IU 15)	Danville Area (IU 16)	Penn Hills (IU 3)
Millcreek Township (IU 5)	Delaware Valley (IU 20)	Penn Delco (IU 25)

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<b>Outside regular classroom less than 21% of the school day<sup>4</sup> - cont.</b>	<b>Outside regular classroom more than 60% of the school day– cont.</b>	<b>Other settings – cont.</b>
Millersburg Area (IU 15)	Donegal (IU 13)	Penn-Trafford ( IU 7)
New Kensington-Arnold (IU 7)	Dunmore (IU 19)	Perkiomen Valley (IU 23)
Northampton Area (IU 20)	East Pennsboro Area (IU 15)	Peters Township (IU 1)
Northwest Area (IU 18)	East Stroudsburg Area (IU 20)	Pine Grove Area (IU 29)
Northwestern Lehigh (IU 21)	Easton Area (IU 20)	Pottsgrove (IU 23)
Otto-Eldred (IU 9)	Ephrata Area (IU 13)	Pottsville Area (IU 29)
Panther Valley (IU 21)	Fairfield Area (IU 12)	Rose Tree Media (IU 25)
Port Allegany (IU 9)	Fairview (IU 5)	Saint Clair Area (IU 29)
Purchase Line (IU 28)	Forest City Regional (IU 19)	Scranton (IU 19)
Reynolds (IU 4)	Fort Leboeuf (IU 5)	Shenandoah Valley (IU 29)
Richland (IU 8)	Frazier (IU 1)	South Fayette Township (IU 3)
Shanksville-Stonycreek (IU 8)	Freedom Area (IU 27)	Springfield (IU 25)
Souderton Area (IU 23)	Galeton Area (IU 9)	Springfield Township (IU 23)
Southeast Delco (IU 25)	Girard (IU 5)	Steel Valley (IU 3)
Sullivan County (IU 17)	Glendale (IU 10)	Sto-rox (IU 3)
Trinity Area (IU 1)	Harbor Creek (IU 5)	Tamaqua Area (IU 29)
Union Area (IU 4)	Harrisburg City (IU 15)	Tredyffrin-Easttown (IU 24)
Union City Area (IU 5)	Hollidaysburg Area (IU 8)	Tuscarora (IU 12)
Upper Darby (IU 25)	Homer Center (IU 28)	Twin Valley (IU 14)
Upper Moreland Twp.(IU 23)	Hopewell Area (IU 27)	Waynesboro Area (IU 12)
Weatherly Area (IU 21)	Jim Thorpe Area (IU 21)	West Chester Area (IU 24)
West York Area (IU 12)	Keystone Central (IU 10)	West Mifflin Area (IU 3)
Western Beaver County (IU 27)	Kiski Area (IU 7)	Williams Valley (IU 29)
Wilson Area (IU 14)	Lakeland (IU 19)	Wissahickon (IU 23)
Wyoming Area (IU 18)	Lake-Lehman (IU 18)	
	Laurel Highlands (IU 1)	

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<b>Outside regular classroom less than 21% of the school day<sup>5</sup> – cont.</b>	<b>Outside regular classroom more than 60% of the school day – cont.</b>	<b>Other settings– cont.</b>
	Lebanon (IU 13)	
	Littlestown Area (IU 12)	
	Loyalsock Township (IU 17)	
	Manheim Central (IU 13)	
	Manheim Township (IU 13)	
	Mechanicsburg Area (IU 15)	
	Mid Valley (IU 19)	
	Mifflin County (IU 11)	
	Mifflinburg Area (IU 16)	
	Milton Area (IU 16)	
	Moniteau (IU 4)	
	Morrisville Borough (IU 22)	
	Mount Carmel Area (IU 16)	
	Mount Union Area (IU 11)	
	Muhlenberg (IU 14)	
	New Castle (IU 4)	
	Northern York County (IU 12)	
	Northwestern (IU 5)	
	Pennsbury (IU 22)	
	Quakertown Community (IU 22)	
	Redbank Valley (IU 6)	
	Rockwood Area (IU 8)	
	Saint Mary's Area (IU 9)	
	Salisbury Township (IU 21)	
	Sayre Area (IU 17)	
	Shamokin Area (IU 16)	
	Sharon City (IU 4)	

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<b>Outside regular classroom less than 21% of the school day<sup>6</sup> – <i>cont.</i></b>	<b>Outside regular classroom more than 60% of the school day – <i>cont.</i></b>	<b>Other settings – <i>cont.</i></b>
	Shikellamy (IU 16)	
	Slippery Rock Area (IU 4)	
	Solanco (IU 13)	
	Somerset Area (IU 8)	
	Southern Fulton (IU 11)	
	Southmoreland (IU 7)	
	Spring Grove Area (IU 12)	
	Stroudsburg Area (IU 20)	
	Tunkhannock Area (IU 18)	
	Union (IU 6)	
	Uniontown (IU 1)	
	Upper Dauphin Area (IU 15)	
	Valley View (IU 19)	
	Warren County (IU 5)	
	Warrior Run (IU 16)	
	West Greene (IU 1)	
	West Jefferson Hills (IU 3)	
	West Middlesex Area (IU 4)	
	Western Wayne (IU 19)	
	Whitehall-Coplay (IU 21)	
	Wilkes-Barre Area (IU 18)	
	Wyoming Valley West (IU 18)	

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