



**Improving
Special
Education
Compliance and
Results: Four
Phases of
Alabama's
Continuous
Improvement
Process**

A Multi-Year Improvement
System and Schedule

CONSOLIDATED COMPLIANCE MONITORING and SES CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT PROCESS

The Alabama State Department of Education, Special Education Services (SES) must have in effect policies or procedures to ensure that it complies with the monitoring and enforcement requirements in IDEA regulations CFR §300.600-602 and CFR §300.606-608. The general supervision system should demonstrate effective accountability efforts towards enforcing the requirements and ensuring continuous improvement. As stated in section 616 of the 2004 Amendments to the IDEA, “The primary focus of Federal and State monitoring activities described in paragraph (1) shall be on: (A) improving educational results and functional outcomes for all children with disabilities; and (B) ensuring that States meet the program requirements under this part, with particular emphasis on those requirements that are most closely related to improving educational results for children with disabilities.

SES Continuous Improvement Process provides an effective system of general supervision to (1) support practices that improve educational results and functional outcomes; (2) uses multiple methods to identify and correct noncompliance within one year; and (3) uses mechanisms to encourage and support improvement and to enforce compliance. The implementation of this model also supports the Alabama PLAN 2020, to improve student growth and achievement, close the achievement gap, increase the graduation rate, and increase the number of students graduating from high school that are college and career ready to compete in our global society.

- Supports the implementation of Alabama PLAN 2020.
- Provides a linkage between the State Systemic Improvement Plan (SSIP) and the monitoring requirements set forth by IDEA.
- Provides an opportunity for differentiated support for LEAs whose data trigger compliance and/or performance needs.
- Identifies LEAs that might be “high risk” due to fiscal or systemic noncompliance.
- Provides a multi-faceted approach to resolving issues of noncompliance and/or low performance.
- Requires LEAs to frequently review data and make adjustments for improved results.
- Identifies areas of need in timely manner.
- Requires an action/visit from SES on an annual basis. Some visits would last a day while another visit may be a four day period (Phase III).
- Requires LEAs to frequently review data and make adjustments for improved results.
- Requires LEAs to recognize the connection between the SSIP and compliance

Pre-Staffing:

The SES will conduct a guided conversation using the data and other relevant information (e.g., LEA Profiles, Dispute Resolution, Accounting information, Child Count and previous monitoring reports) to determine areas of focus/need. As a result of the discussion, a preliminary list of issues that may lead to a potential hypothesis(es) will be developed. During the on-site visit for Phase I, the Team Leader and the Special Education Coordinator will co-develop and determine hypothesis(es) regarding the contributing factors. A plan of action to determine “next steps” and follow-up will be developed.

PHASE I: Desk Audit

Phase I consists of reviewing student records utilizing the STISSETS web-based program. The desk audit will be conducted 2-3 weeks prior to the date of the on-site visit. The results of the desk audit will be incorporated into the LEA Compliance Monitoring document. During the on-site visit, staff members from SES will review the areas of non-compliance with the Special Education Coordinator and participate in the exit conference. A Corrective Action Plan (CAP) will be developed and implemented. After the CAP has been completed, SES will pull "New Data" to ensure the LEA is implementing the regulatory requirements.

PHASE II: System Profile/Fiscal Review

The System Profile review consists of an on-site review of those requirements that are related to improving educational results for children with disabilities. Some of the areas to be reviewed include: Child Find activities, documentation for students placed in private schools by their parents, students placed in private schools by the LEA, access to surrogate parents, certification, in-service training, personnel certification/licensure, and information on least restrictive environment.

The review will also consist of fiscal information that is required by the EDGAR regulations. SES will review time and effort documentation, equipment purchases and inventory lists. The review will require a one day visit to the LEA.

The results of the System Profile/Fiscal review will be incorporated into the LEA Compliance Monitoring document. During the review, staff members from SES will review the areas of noncompliance with the Special Education Coordinator. A CAP will be developed and implemented.

PHASE III: Student Service Reviews (SSR)/Review of Transition Practices

The SSR Reviews consist of a case-based review method for (1) appraising the current status of selected students with disabilities who are receiving special education and related services (2) determining the adequacy of performance of key service functions for those who support them. The process examines short-term results for students with disabilities and the contribution made by school-arranged supports and services in producing those outcomes. The review will require a 3 day visit. The results of the review will be used for understanding and improving front-line practices by those who service the students. Only areas of noncompliance will be included in the LEA Compliance Monitoring document. During the review, staff members from SES will review any areas of noncompliance with the Special Education Coordinator. A CAP will be developed and implemented.

If the scores for the student/LEA indicate unacceptable services, SES will make recommendations and conduct a follow-up SSR review within 1 year.

In addition to conducting SSRs during this phase of the monitoring, the SES will also conduct an intensive review of transition services being provided to students with disabilities. The review will consist of two assessment instruments: the Transition Practices Survey and the Transition Program Rating Scale. In addition, a Parent Survey will be distributed to parents who have a transition-age youth.

PHASE IV: State Systemic Improvement Plan/Annual Performance Report Data and Indicator Review

Phase IV consists of a customized approach for examining LEA data submitted through the district-approved process. This approach provides the SDE and the LEAs an opportunity to analyze both compliance and results data through a series of interactive guided questions designed to identify root causes of non-compliance and to identify effective improvement strategies. This review process requires a one day visit. .

Pursuant to the IDEA's regulations regarding the State Performance Plan process at CFR §300.603, LEA Determinations are made based upon the LEA's submitted compliance, fiscal, and timely data submissions. Determination status includes the following designations: Meets Requirements, Needs Assistance, Needs Intervention, or Needs Substantial Intervention. Active engagement strategies will be conducted with LEAs who have been in Needs Assistance for more than two consecutive years. Additional corrective actions will be utilized for LEAs who are determined to need intervention or to need substantial intervention.

Phase IV Strategies will include:

- Conducting verification of compliance indicator data submissions for Indicators 11 (Child Find), 12 (Early Childhood Transition), and 13 (Secondary Transition).
- Examining selected indicator data through focused reviews (Graduation, Drop-Out, Suspension/Expulsion, Disproportionality, LRE, results of State Assessments, Secondary Transition (College and Career-Ready), Dispute Resolution.
- Implementing Active Engagement based upon LEA Determination Status. LEAs who are determined to Need Assistance for more than two consecutive years will be provided targeted and focused technical assistance.

Summary:

At the end of the cycle, each LEA would have been reviewed in a continuous, rather than episodic manner. The review will be clearly linked to systemic change with integrated, continuous feedback and support. The use of multiple procedures will provide qualitative as well as quantitative measurement to provide for continuous improvement planning. The technical assistance that will be generated as a result of the review would support change within the LEA.

Multi-Year Continuous Improvement Schedule

	LEA	DATE	2013-2014	2014-2015	2015-2016	2016-2017
COHORT I	Attalla City	Aug. 26-30, 2013	Phase I	Phase II	Phase III	Phase IV
	Clay County	Sept. 3-6, 2013	Phase I	Phase II	Phase III	Phase IV
	Bessemer City	Sept. 9-13, 2013	Phase I	Phase II	Phase III	Phase IV
	Chambers County	Sept. 23-27, 2013	Phase I	Phase II	Phase III	Phase IV
	Oxford City	Sept. 30-Oct. 4, 2013	Phase I	Phase II	Phase III	Phase IV
	Walker County	Oct. 7-11, 2013	Phase I	Phase II	Phase III	Phase IV
	Coosa County	Oct. 15-18, 2013	Phase I	Phase II	Phase III	Phase IV
	Leeds City	Oct. 21-25, 2013	Phase I	Phase II	Phase III	Phase IV
	Blount County	Oct. 28-Nov. 1, 2013	Phase I	Phase II	Phase III	Phase IV
	Midfield City	Nov. 4-8, 2013	Phase I	Phase II	Phase III	Phase IV
	Bullock County	Nov. 12- 15, 2013	Phase I	Phase II	Phase III	Phase IV
	Calhoun County	Nov. 18-21, 2013	Phase I	Phase II	Phase III	Phase IV
	Muscle Shoals City	Dec. 9-12, 2013	Phase I	Phase II	Phase III	Phase IV
	Homewood City	Dec. 16-19, 2013	Phase I	Phase II	Phase III	Phase IV
	Macon County	Jan. 6-9, 2014	Phase I	Phase II	Phase III	Phase IV
	Conecuh County	Jan. 13-16, 2014	Phase I	Phase II	Phase III	Phase IV
	Fayette County	Jan. 21-24, 2014	Phase I	Phase II	Phase III	Phase IV
	Bibb County	Jan. 27-30, 2014	Phase I	Phase II	Phase III	Phase IV
	Pickens County	Feb. 3-6, 2014	Phase I	Phase II	Phase III	Phase IV
	Barbour County	Feb. 10-13, 2014	Phase I	Phase II	Phase III	Phase IV
	Eufaula City	Feb. 10-13, 2014	Phase I	Phase II	Phase III	Phase IV
	Florence City	Feb. 18 -21, 2014	Phase I	Phase II	Phase III	Phase IV
	Randolph County	May 5-8, 2014	Phase I	Phase II	Phase III	Phase IV
	Madison City	March 3-6, 2014	Phase I	Phase II	Phase III	Phase IV
	Talladega County	March 10-13, 2014	Phase I	Phase II	Phase III	Phase IV
	Chickasaw City	March 24-27, 2014	Phase I	Phase II	Phase III	Phase IV

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	LEA	DATE	2013-2014	2014-2015	2015-2016	2016-2017
	Satsuma City	March 24-27, 2014	Phase I	Phase II	Phase III	Phase IV
	Morgan County	April 1-4, 2014	Phase I	Phase II	Phase III	Phase IV
	Greene County	April 7-10, 2014	Phase I	Phase II	Phase III	Phase IV
	Choctaw County	April 14-17, 2014	Phase I	Phase II	Phase III	Phase IV
	Demopolis City	April 22-25, 2014	Phase I	Phase II	Phase III	Phase IV
	Guntersville City	April 28- May 1, 2014	Phase I	Phase II	Phase III	Phase IV
	Gadsden City	April 28-May 1, 2014	Phase I	Phase II	Phase III	Phase IV
	Dale County	May 12-15, 2014	Phase I	Phase II	Phase III	Phase IV
COHORT II	Anniston City			Phase I/IV	Phase II	Phase III
	Autauga County			Phase I/IV	Phase II	Phase III
	Dallas County			Phase I/IV	Phase II	Phase III
	Decatur City			Phase I/IV	Phase II	Phase III
	Dothan City			Phase I/IV	Phase II	Phase III
	Enterprise City			Phase I/IV	Phase II	Phase III
	Escambia County			Phase I/IV	Phase II	Phase III
	Fairfield City			Phase I/IV	Phase II	Phase III
	Geneva County			Phase I/IV	Phase II	Phase III
	Geneva City			Phase I/IV	Phase II	Phase III
	Haleyville City			Phase I/IV	Phase II	Phase III
	Hoover City			Phase I/IV	Phase II	Phase III
	Houston County			Phase I/IV	Phase II	Phase III
	Huntsville City			Phase I/IV	Phase II	Phase III
	Jasper City			Phase I/IV	Phase II	Phase III
	Lanett City			Phase I/IV	Phase II	Phase III
Lawrence County			Phase I/IV	Phase II	Phase III	
Limestone County			Phase I/IV	Phase II	Phase III	

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	LEA	DATE	2013-2014	2014-2015	2015-2016	2016-2017
	Marshall County			Phase I/IV	Phase II	Phase III
	Montgomery County			Phase I/IV	Phase II	Phase III
	Pell City			Phase I/IV	Phase II	Phase III
	Perry County			Phase I/IV	Phase II	Phase III
	Phenix City			Phase I/IV	Phase II	Phase III
	Piedmont City			Phase I/IV	Phase II	Phase III
	Roanoke City			Phase I/IV	Phase II	Phase III
	Scottsboro City			Phase I/IV	Phase II	Phase III
	Sheffield City			Phase I/IV	Phase II	Phase III
	Shelby County			Phase I/IV	Phase II	Phase III
	Sumter County			Phase I/IV	Phase II	Phase III
	Talladega City			Phase I/IV	Phase II	Phase III
	Tarrant City			Phase I/IV	Phase II	Phase III
	Tuscaloosa County			Phase I/IV	Phase II	Phase III
	Tuscumbia City			Phase I/IV	Phase II	Phase III
Wilcox County			Phase I/IV	Phase II	Phase III	
COHORT III	Alabaster City				Phase I/IV	Phase II/III
	Albertville City			Phase IV	Phase I	Phase II/III
	Alexander City			Phase IV	Phase I	Phase II/III
	Andalusia City			Phase IV	Phase I	Phase II/III
	Athens City			Phase IV	Phase I	Phase II/III
	Birmingham City			Phase IV	Phase I	Phase II/III
	Brewton City			Phase IV	Phase I	Phase II/III
	Cherokee County			Phase IV	Phase I	Phase II/III
	Chilton County			Phase IV	Phase I	Phase II/III
	Clarke County			Phase IV	Phase I	Phase II/III

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LEA	DATE	2013-2014	2014-2015	2015-2016	2016-2017
Cleburne County			Phase IV	Phase I	Phase II/III
Crenshaw County			Phase IV	Phase I	Phase II/III
Cullman City			Phase IV	Phase I	Phase II/III
DeKalb County			Phase IV	Phase I	Phase II/III
Elmore County			Phase IV	Phase I	Phase II/III
Etowah County			Phase IV	Phase I	Phase II/III
Hartselle City			Phase IV	Phase I	Phase II/III
Henry County			Phase IV	Phase I	Phase II/III
Lamar County			Phase IV	Phase I	Phase II/III
Lowndes County			Phase IV	Phase I	Phase II/III
Marengo County			Phase IV	Phase I	Phase II/III
Monroe County			Phase IV	Phase I	Phase II/III
Mtn. Brook City			Phase IV	Phase I	Phase II/III
Opelika City			Phase IV	Phase I	Phase II/III
Jackson County			Phase IV	Phase I	Phase II/III
Russellville City			Phase IV	Phase I	Phase II/III
St. Clair County			Phase IV	Phase I	Phase II/III
Sylacauga City			Phase IV	Phase I	Phase II/III
Tallassee City			Phase IV	Phase I	Phase II/III
Troy City			Phase IV	Phase I	Phase II/III
Troy City			Phase IV	Phase I	Phase II/III
Trussville City			Phase IV	Phase I	Phase II/III
Tuscaloosa City			Phase IV	Phase I	Phase II/III
Vestavia Hills City			Phase IV	Phase I	Phase II/III
Washington County			Phase IV	Phase I	Phase II/III

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	LEA	DATE	2013-2014	2014-2015	2015-2016	2016-2017
COHORT IV	Arab City			Phase III	Phase IV	Phase I/II
	Auburn City			Phase III	Phase IV	Phase I/II
	Baldwin County			Phase III	Phase IV	Phase I/II
	Boaz City			Phase III	Phase IV	Phase I/II
	Butler County			Phase III	Phase IV	Phase I/II
	Coffee County			Phase III	Phase IV	Phase I/II
	Colbert County			Phase III	Phase IV	Phase I/II
	Covington County			Phase III	Phase IV	Phase I/II
	Cullman County			Phase III	Phase IV	Phase I/II
	Daleville City			Phase III	Phase IV	Phase I/II
	Elba City			Phase III	Phase IV	Phase I/II
	Franklin County			Phase III	Phase IV	Phase I/II
	Ft. Payne City			Phase III	Phase IV	Phase I/II
	Hale County			Phase III	Phase IV	Phase I/II
	Jacksonville City			Phase III	Phase IV	Phase I/II
	Jefferson County			Phase III	Phase IV	Phase I/II
	Lauderdale County			Phase III	Phase IV	Phase I/II
	Lee County			Phase III	Phase IV	Phase I/II
	Linden City			Phase III	Phase IV	Phase I/II
	Madison County			Phase III	Phase IV	Phase I/II
	Marion County			Phase III	Phase IV	Phase I/II
	Mobile County			Phase III	Phase IV	Phase I/II
	Oneonta City			Phase III	Phase IV	Phase I/II
Opp City			Phase III	Phase IV	Phase I/II	
Ozark City			Phase III	Phase IV	Phase I/II	
Pike County			Phase III	Phase IV	Phase I/II	

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	LEA	DATE	2013-2014	2014-2015	2015-2016	2016-2017	
	Pike Road City						Phase I/II
	Russell County					Phase III	Phase IV Phase I/II
	Saraland City					Phase III	Phase IV Phase I/II
	Selma City					Phase III	Phase IV Phase I/II
	Tallapoosa County					Phase III	Phase IV Phase I/II
	Thomasville City					Phase III	Phase IV Phase I/II
	Winfield City					Phase III	Phase IV Phase I/II
	Winston City					Phase III	Phase IV Phase I/II

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