

**LRE INDEX SCORES  
and  
IDENTIFICATION OF SCHOOL DISTRICTS FOR LRE MONITORING**

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 analyzes and reports the data collected on LRE categories for the requirements of the Gaskin Settlement Agreement in the following placement categories:

1. Students with IEPs who receive special education outside regular class less than 21% of the day; (higher numbers of students are desirable)
2. Students with IEPs who receive special education outside regular class more than 60% of the day; and (lower numbers of students are desirable)
3. Students with IEPs served in settings outside regular schools. (lower numbers of students are desirable)

A separate LRE index score is assigned for each of (\*these three data categories based upon each district's relative percentage of students receiving special education services as compared to other districts). A high LRE index score indicates a higher potential need for systemic LRE-related improvement within a particular data category. Conversely, a low LRE index score indicates a lower potential need for systemic LRE-related improvement within a particular data category. The three LRE index scores are used to identify half of the districts for LRE monitoring, as follows:

**Tier 1 – On-Site LRE Monitoring**

The twenty districts where LRE data indicate the highest potential need for systemic LRE related improvement are identified as Tier I districts and receive on-site LRE Monitoring. Districts are identified within the three data categories as follows:

The following placement data is excluded:

- Data for students who are placed without an IEP team decision (students receiving services in a hospital/homebound setting, correctional facility, or out of state facility),
- Data for students whose LEA does not control the placement (wards of state), and
- Data for one LEA where students all receive their education in another district (Bryn Athyn School District)
- The 5 districts with the highest score in the first data category (lowest percentage of students receiving special education services outside the regular education classroom less than 21% of the school day).
- The 10 districts with the highest score in the second data category (highest percentage of students receiving special education services outside the regular education classroom more than 60% of the school day).

- The 5 districts with the highest score in the third data category (highest percentage of students receiving special education services outside regular schools).

### **Tier 2 - Warning**

The thirty districts where LRE data indicate that the districts are close to the point of being subject to Tier 1 on-site LRE monitoring receive a letter of warning.<sup>3</sup> The letter identifies the data that indicate a need for LRE improvement and the steps to be taken by the district. Districts are identified within the three data categories as follows:

- The 7 districts with the highest score in the first data category (lowest percentage of students receiving special education services outside the regular education classroom less than 21% of the school day).
- The 16 districts with the highest score in the second data category (highest percentage of students receiving special education services outside the regular education classroom more than 60% of the school day).
- The 7 districts with the highest score in the third data category (highest percentage of students receiving special education services outside regular schools).

### **Tier 3 - Alert**

The districts remaining within the bottom half of the data receive a letter of alert. The letter identifies the data that indicate a need for LRE improvement and describes resources available to the district to assist in improvement.

- Districts that are in the process of implementing a Tier 1 LRE corrective action and improvement plan are excluded from Tier identification. During the 2007-08 school year, 23 school districts were identified for Tier 1 on-site LRE Monitoring.

Districts that are identified for Tier 1 LRE monitoring or are in the process of implementing a Tier 1 or Tier 2 LRE corrective action and improvement plan are excluded from Tier identification.