

**2013-14 Exceptional Student Education  
Monitoring and Assistance  
On-Site Visit Report**

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**Pinellas County School District  
May 13-16, 2014**



**Florida Department of Education  
Bureau of Exceptional Education and Student Services**

This publication is produced through the Bureau of Exceptional Education and Student Services (BEESS), Division of Public Schools, Florida Department of Education, and is available online at <http://www.fldoe.org/ease/mon-home.asp>. For information on available resources, contact the BEESS Resource and Information Center (BRIC).

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March 9, 2015

Dr. Michael A. Grego, Superintendent  
Pinellas County School District  
301 4<sup>th</sup> Street S.W.  
Largo, Florida 33770-2942

Dear Superintendent Grego:

We are pleased to provide you with the **2013-14 Exceptional Student Education (ESE) Monitoring and Assistance On-Site Visit Report for Pinellas County School District**. This report was developed by integrating multiple sources of information related to an on-site monitoring visit to your school district on May 13-16, 2014. Those information sources included interviews with district and school staff, student-focus groups, student record reviews, **Local Educational Agency Profiles, Guiding Questions – District-Level Needs Assessment** and an action-planning and problem-solving process. This report will be posted on the Bureau of Exceptional Education and Student Services' (BEESS) website and may be accessed at <http://www.fldoe.org/ease/mon-home.asp>.

The 2013-14 ESE Monitoring and Assistance process focused on those State Performance Plan indicators that contributed to the targeting of school districts for coordinated early intervening services and those indicators that affected equity and access in the educational environment for students with disabilities. Additionally, the process focused on a shift from ESE compliance to outcomes to prepare all students for college and career readiness, which include: increasing standard diploma graduates; decreasing the number of students dropping out of school; increasing regular class placement; decreasing the need for seclusion and restraint; and eliminating disproportionality in eligibility identification and discipline.

The Pinellas County School District was selected for an on-site visit due to equity and access issues related to: early intervening services and disproportionate representation of students with disabilities and incidents of restraint and seclusion. The on-site visit was conducted by a state support team (SST) that included BEESS and discretionary project staff.

Mrs. Lisa Grant, director, ESE, and her staff were very helpful to the SST in preparing for the on-site visit and throughout the visit. In addition, the principals and other staff members at the schools visited welcomed the SST and demonstrated a commitment to the education of students in the school district.

**Monica Verra-Tirado, Ed.D., Chief**  
Bureau of Exceptional Education and Student Services

Superintendent Grego  
March 9, 2015  
Page Two

As part of the SST's visit, representatives from the school district's ESE department, the schools visited and other school district staff participated in an action-planning and problem-solving process. This group reviewed the school district's data collected prior to and during the on-site visit, and came to consensus on a priority goal: By June 2015, reduce the number of black students being found eligible for services for students with emotional or behavioral disabilities by two percent. An action plan, developed around that goal, will be implemented by the ESE department with the assistance of designated discretionary project staff from the SST.

Thank you for your commitment to improving services to exceptional education students in the Pinellas County School District. If there are any questions regarding this report, please contact me at 850-245-0475 or via email at [monica.verra-tirado@fldoe.org](mailto:monica.verra-tirado@fldoe.org).

Sincerely,

Monica Verra-Tirado, Ed.D., Chief  
Bureau of Exceptional Education and Student Services

Enclosure

cc: Lisa Grant  
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David Wheeler

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**2013-14 Exceptional Student Education  
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**Pinellas County School District**

**May 13-16, 2014**

**Authority**

The Florida Department of Education (FDOE), Bureau of Exceptional Education and Student Services (BEESS), in carrying out its roles of leadership, resource allocation, technical assistance, monitoring and evaluation, is required to oversee the performance of district school boards in the enforcement of all exceptional student education (ESE) laws and rules (sections 1001.03(3), 1003.571 and 1008.32, Florida Statutes [F.S.]). One purpose of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) is to assess and ensure the effectiveness of efforts to educate children with disabilities (s. 300.1(d) of Title 34, Code of Federal Regulations [CFR]). The bureau is responsible for ensuring that the requirements of IDEA and the educational requirements of the state are implemented (34 CFR §300.149(a)(1) and (2)).

In fulfilling this requirement, the bureau monitors ESE programs provided by district school boards in accordance with ss. 1001.42, 1003.57 and 1003.573, F.S. Through these monitoring activities, the bureau examines records and ESE services, evaluates procedures, provides information and assistance to school districts and otherwise assists school districts in operating effectively and efficiently. The monitoring system is designed to facilitate improved educational outcomes for students while ensuring compliance with applicable federal laws and regulations and state statutes and rules.

Under 34 CFR §300.646(b)(2), if a state identifies significant disproportionality based on race or ethnicity in a local educational agency (LEA) with respect to the identification of children as children with disabilities, the identification of children in specific disability categories, the placement of children with disabilities in particular educational settings or the taking of disciplinary actions, the LEA must use the maximum amount (15 percent) of funds allowable for comprehensive coordinated early intervening services (CEIS) for children in the LEA, particularly, but not exclusively, for children in those groups that were significantly overidentified.

Section 1003.573, F.S., Use of restraint and seclusion on students with disabilities, was created in July 2010, and established documentation, reporting and monitoring requirements for districts regarding the use of restraint and seclusion for students with disabilities. School districts were required to have policies and procedures that govern parent notification, incident reporting, data collection and monitoring of the use of restraint or seclusion for students with disabilities in place no later than January 31, 2011. In July 2011, s. 1003.573, F.S., was amended to require that the FDOE establish standards for documenting, reporting and monitoring the use of manual or physical restraint and occurrences of seclusion. In September and October 2011, the standards established by the FDOE were provided to school districts and were included in the district's **Exceptional Student Education Policies and Procedures (SP&P)** document.

## ESE Monitoring and Assistance Process

### Background Information

The 2013-14 ESE Monitoring and Assistance process focused on those State Performance Plan (SPP) indicators that contributed to the targeting of school districts for CEIS and the following indicators that affected equity and access in the educational environment for students with disabilities:

- Indicator 1 – Graduation: Percentage of youth with individual educational plans (IEPs) graduating from high school with a regular diploma.
- Indicator 2 – Dropout: Percentage of youth with IEPs dropping out of high school.
- Indicator 4 – Rates of suspension and expulsion:
  - A. Percentage of districts that have a significant discrepancy in the rates of suspensions and expulsions of greater than 10 days in a school year for children with IEPs.
  - B. Percentage of districts that have (a) a significant discrepancy, by race or ethnicity, in the rate of suspensions and expulsions of greater than 10 days for children with IEPs; and (b) policies, procedures or practices that contribute to the significant discrepancy and do not comply with requirements relating to the development and implementation of IEPs, the use of positive behavioral interventions and support, and procedural safeguards.
- Indicator 5 – Educational environments:  
Percentage of children with IEPs aged 6 through 21:
  - A. Inside the regular class 80 percent or more of the day;
  - B. Inside the regular class less than 40 percent of the day; and
  - C. In separate schools, residential facilities or homebound or hospital placements.
- Indicator 10 – Disproportionality, specific disability categories: Percentage of districts with disproportionate representation of racial and ethnic groups in specific disability categories that is the result of inappropriate identification.
- CEIS – Services provided to students in kindergarten through grade 12 (with a particular emphasis on students in kindergarten through grade three) who are not currently identified as needing special education or related services, but who need additional academic and behavioral supports to succeed in a general education environment.
- Restraint – Rate of incidents of restraint, as reported in the FDOE website.
- Seclusion – Rate of incidents of seclusion, as reported in the FDOE website.

The 2013-14 ESE Monitoring and Assistance process included four phases:

- Phase 1 was composed of planning activities that occurred in advance of the first on-site visit to the school district. (Completed)
- Phase 2 was the initial on-site visit to the selected school district by the state support team (SST). (Completed)
- Phase 3 includes follow-up and post-initial visit activities that are conducted by a designated follow-up team, as determined by the SST, and identification of the ongoing data that will be collected.
- Phase 4 includes evaluation of the effectiveness of the school district's action plan, and should include participation of the comprehensive team that was involved in Phase 1.

In a letter dated August 27, 2013, the superintendent of the Pinellas County School District was informed that BEESS would be conducting an on-site monitoring visit for the following focus areas: early intervening services, disproportionate representation of students with disabilities and incidents of restraint and seclusion.



## **Secondary Focus Areas**

School districts identified as part of the monitoring and assistance process with on-site visits during the 2013-14 school year were exempt from self-assessing school records for IEP implementation (IPI) and restraint and seclusion (RS). Instead, bureau members of the school district's SST reviewed a sample of records for IPI. Based on the focus of CEIS for discipline, a sampling of records for suspension and expulsion (SE) was also reviewed by the bureau members.

In preparation for the monitoring and assistance on-site visit to the Pinellas County School District, and in consultation with the school district's ESE director, it was determined that, based on the data, the SST would not include the review of incidents of restraints as a primary focus during the on-site visit.

## **School Selection**

Upon review of the school district's data for CEIS (disproportionality regarding identification of black students with emotional or behavioral disabilities [EBD] and discipline), and incidents of seclusion, it was determined by the SST that the 2013-14 ESE Monitoring and Assistance process would include the following schools:

- Baypoint Elementary School
- Baypoint Middle School
- Calvin Hunsinger School
- Carwise Middle School
- Gibbs High School
- John Hopkins Middle School
- Lakewood High School
- Palm Harbor University High School
- Paul B. Stephens
- Pinellas Secondary School
- Richard L. Sanders School

## **On-Site Activities**

### **SST – On-Site Visit Team**

The following state support team members conducted the monitoring and assistance on-site visit:

#### **FDOE, BEESS**

- Monica Verra-Tirado, chief (co-facilitator)
- Anne Bozik, program specialist, EBD, Instructional Support Services (ISS)
- Misty Bradley, educational program director, Juvenile Justice Educational Programs, ISS
- Annette Oliver, educational program director (co-facilitator), Program Accountability, Assessment and Data Systems
- Jacqueline Roumou, program specialist, Dispute Resolution and Monitoring
- David Wheeler, consultant, school psychology, Student Support Services

#### FDOE, BEESS Discretionary Projects

- Karen A. Berkman, executive director, Center for Autism and Related Disabilities, University of South Florida
- Deanne Cowley, regional coordinator, Problem-Solving and Response to Intervention Project (PS/Rtl)
- Heather George, co-director, Florida Positive Behavior Support Project; A Multi-Tiered Support System (PBS:MTSS)
- Linda Hammonds, school improvement specialist, FDOE Office of Differentiated Accountability, Region IV, PS/Rtl
- Michael Muldoon, regional facilitator, Florida Inclusion Network, West Region
- Paula Nelson, supervisor, Florida Diagnostic and Learning Resources System, Gulfcoast
- Deborah Thornton, project manager, Multiagency Network for Students with Emotional or Behavioral Disabilities (SEDNET)
- Federico Valadez, regional representative, Project 10, Transition Education Network
- Anna Winneker, visiting human services practitioner, PBS:MTSS

#### Data Collection

On-site monitoring and assistance activities included the following:

- School-level administrator interviews – 26 participants
- Student focus groups and interviews – 42 participants
- Completion of Seclusion protocol – 15 students
- Completion of IPI protocol – 15 students
- Completion of SE protocol – five students
- Action-planning and problem-solving process – 25 participants
- Review of data from the school district's **LEA Profiles, Guiding Questions – District-Level Needs Assessment** and data compiled from district data systems
- Walk-through of seclusion rooms – three schools, 13 rooms

#### Review of Records

The school district was asked to provide the following documents, as applicable, for each of the students selected for review of seclusion, IEP implementation or discipline:

- IEPs for the 2012-13 and 2013-14 school years
- Current functional behavioral assessment (FBA)
- Current behavioral intervention plan (BIP)
- Discipline and attendance records for the 2013-14 school year
- Progress reports and report cards for the 2012-13 and 2013-14 school years
- Student's current schedule
- Parent notifications and other documentation related to incidents of restraint and seclusion
- Verification of the provision of related services and accommodations (lesson plans, teacher schedules and therapy logs)

#### Guiding Questions – District-Level Needs Assessment

Prior to the on-site visit, the school district was provided with questions to use as a guide in the collection of data. SST and district staff reviewed these data during the action-planning and problem-solving process. Pinellas County School District's questions included early intervening services related to disproportionate discipline of black students and disproportionate

identification of black students with EBD and incidents of seclusion. A list of these questions is located in Appendix A of this report.

## **Results**

The following results reflect the data collected and reviewed through the activities of the 2013-14 ESE Monitoring and Assistance process for Pinellas County School District. Also included are commendations, findings of noncompliance and next steps, as applicable.

### **Seclusion and CEIS**

#### **Seclusion**

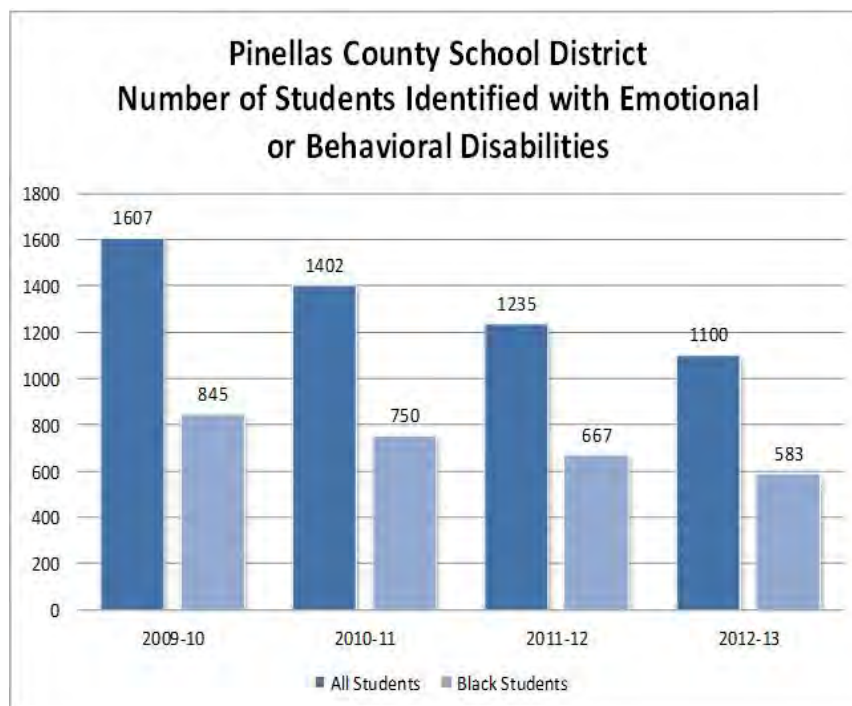
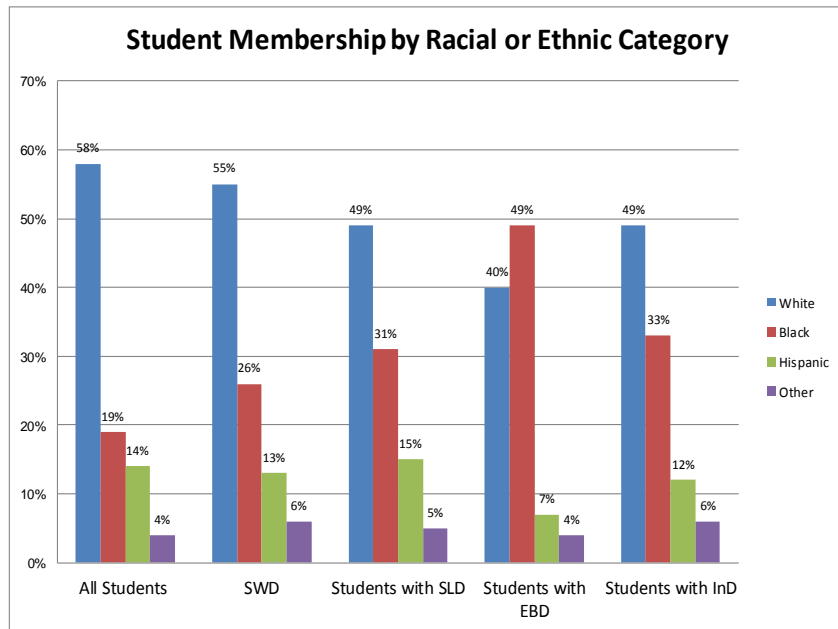
The Pinellas County School District reported the following prior to and during the on-site visit:

- Nonviolent Crisis Intervention training is used to train personnel within the school district with regard to the use of restraint and seclusion.
  - This training process focuses on teaching preventative techniques and strategies, personal safety and verbal de-escalation. Identified personnel have been trained in advanced courses, such as Trauma Informed Care, Autism and Applied and Enhancing Verbal Skills.
- Data review revealed that between August 2012 and March 2013, there were 255 incidents of seclusion reported by the Pinellas County School District. Between August 2013 and March 2014, the school district reported 176 incidents of seclusion.
- Activities that are a part of the school district's plan to reduce the use of seclusion include:
  - Conducting evaluations, reevaluations and FBAs
  - Evaluating the effectiveness of BIPS
  - Increasing parental involvement
  - Implementing, revising or increasing the use of the MTSS, which could include school-wide PBS
  - Conducting additional professional development training in PBS and crisis management
  - Problem solving with school administrators to make data-driven decisions regarding school environments
  - Developing other alternatives for students in crisis
- The use of seclusion is only permitted at center schools within the school district. There are 20 seclusion rooms used in the school district:
  - Calvin Hunsinger (four)
  - Richard Sanders (seven)
  - Paul Stephens (two)
  - Nina Harris (seven)
- To ensure that seclusion rooms meet the requirements of State Fire Marshal Rule 69A-58.0084, Florida Administrative Code, Seclusion Time-Out Rooms, the Pinellas County School District employs a fire marshal, under the authority of the state fire marshal, who oversees all state requirements for annual inspections of educational facilities.

During the on-site visit, members of the SST visited seclusion rooms at the Calvin Hunsinger, Richard Sanders and Paul Stephens schools. Two of the rooms used at Calvin Hunsinger for the seclusion of students were being repaired.

## CEIS (Disproportionate identification of black students with EBD)

According to the 2014 LEA Profile for Pinellas County School District, the October 2013 Survey 2 student membership data show the following percentages for all students, students with disabilities (SWD), students with specific learning disabilities (SLD), students with EBD and students with intellectual disabilities (InD).



Source: Pinellas County School District, May 2014

Data presented by the Pinellas County School District show the following number of black students in kindergarten and grade 1 identified as EBD from October 2010 to September 2013:

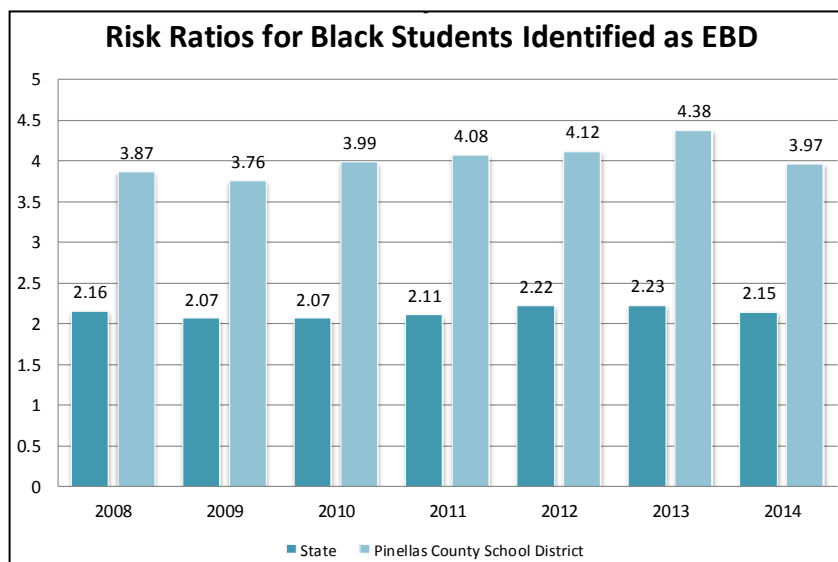
October 2010 – September 2011		October 2011 – September 2012		October 2012 – September 2013	
Kindergarten	Grade 1	Kindergarten	Grade 1	Kindergarten	Grade 1
14	5	10	5	14	11

During this period, the following elementary schools identified one or more black students as a student with EBD:

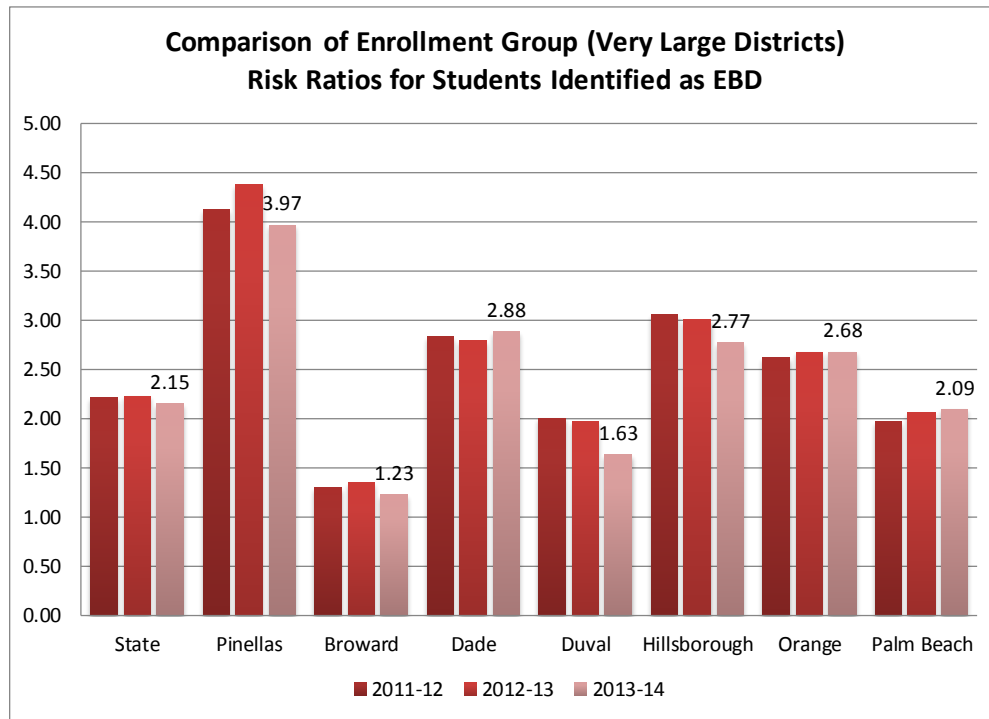
- Azalea
- Bardmoor
- Bay Point
- Belcher
- Belleair
- Campbell Park
- Curlew Creek
- Fairmount Park
- Frontier
- Garrison-Jones
- Leila Davis
- Lynch
- Maximo
- McMullen-Booth
- New Heights
- Ozona
- Pinellas Central
- Pinellas Park
- Ponce de Leon
- Rawlings
- San José
- Sanderlin
- Sandy Lane
- Sawgrass Lake
- Seminole
- Skycrest
- Southern Oak
- Sutherland
- Tarpon Springs
- Westgate
- Woodlawn

A school district is required to set aside 15 percent of IDEA, Part B funds for early intervening services if the school district's data indicate that students of any race are at least **3.5** times more likely to be identified as a student with EBD when compared to all other races combined.

According to the LEA Profiles, the Pinellas County School District's data indicate that between the 2007-08 and 2013-14 school years, the school district's risk ratio rate of identification of black students with EBD exceeded **3.5** for each of these years.



The Pinellas County School District is a member of the very large districts' enrollment group. The graph below shows the comparison of this school district's risk ratios for black students identified with EBD to other very large districts in Florida.



Source: FDOE LEA Profiles, 2012-14

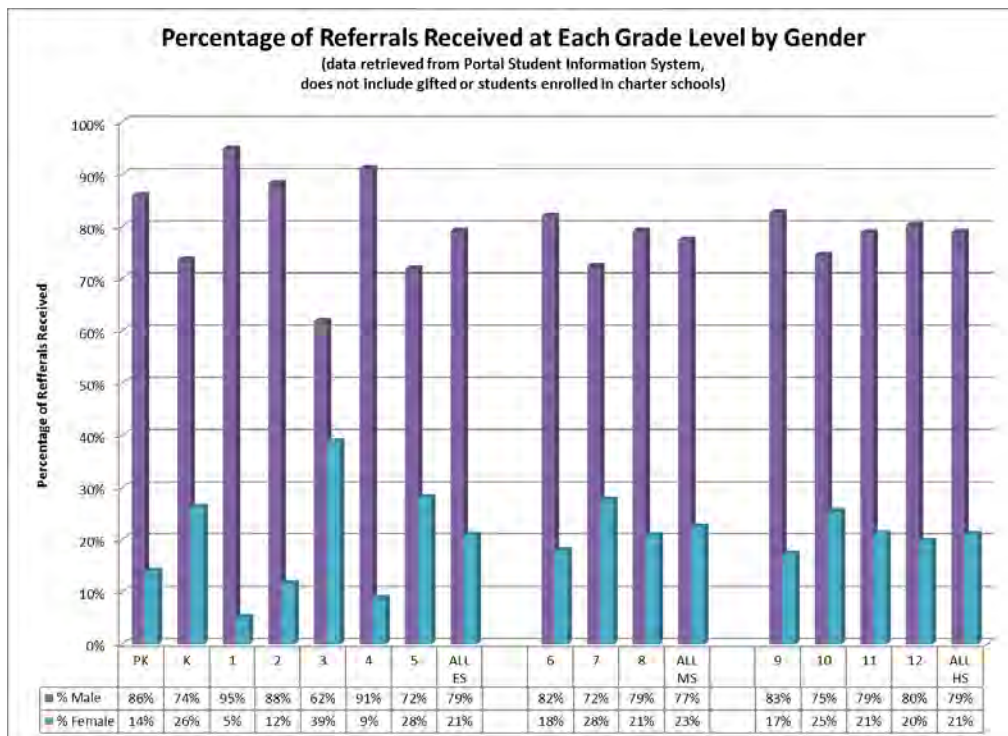
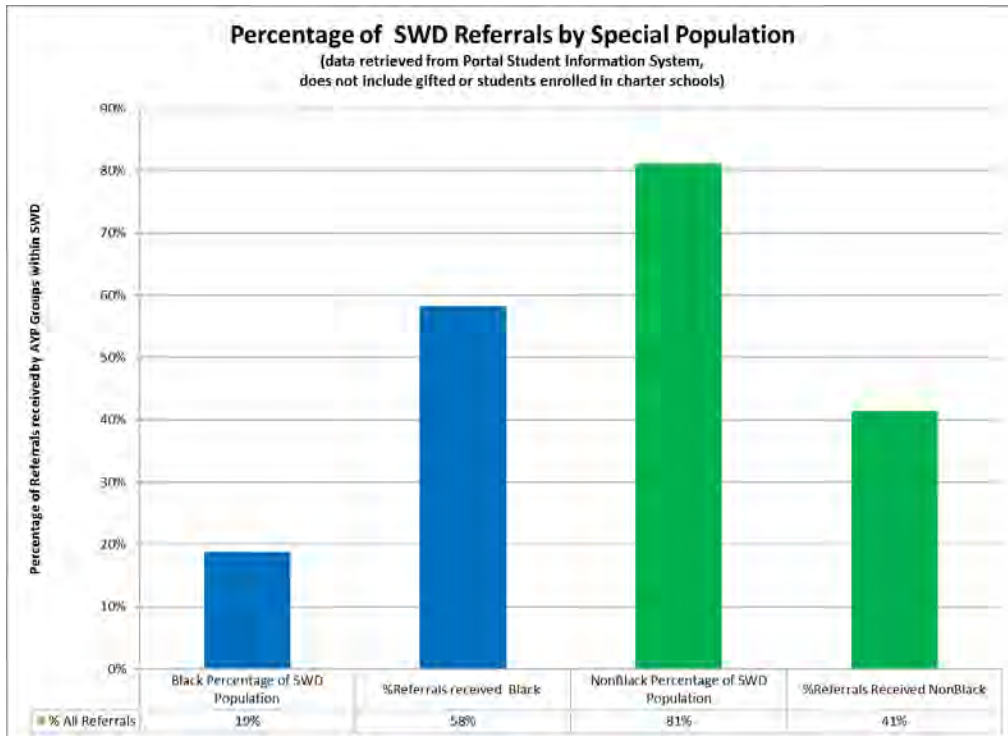
### CEIS (Disproportionate discipline of black students)

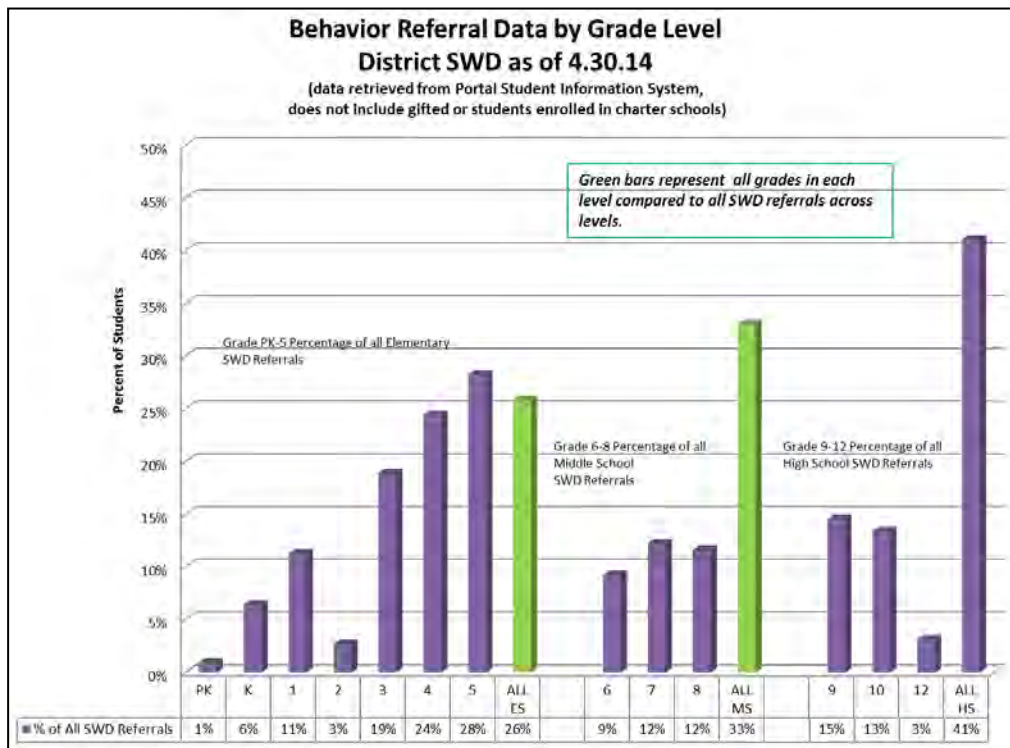
School districts are required to set aside 15 percent of IDEA, Part B funds for early intervening services if the incidents of removal of students with disabilities through in-school suspension, out-of-school suspension or expulsion for students with disabilities of any given race are at least **3.5** times more likely to occur when compared to all other races combined.

Pinellas County School District CEIS Risk Ratio for Discipline of Black Students				
	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13
Pinellas County School District	3.86	3.59	3.75	4.37

Source: FDOE, BEES CEIS Data

The Pinellas County School District provided the following four graphs related to discipline data for August 2013 to April 2014.





## Student Focus Groups

Student focus groups were conducted at the following schools during the monitoring and assistance on-site visit:

- Baypoint Middle School
- Carwise Middle School
- Gibbs High School
- Lakewood High School
- Palm Harbor University High School
- Pinellas Secondary School

Student views were collected on the following topics: IEP team meetings and parental participation, career and technical education, academics, extracurricular activities, Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test 2.0, diploma options, dropout, and suspension and expulsion. The 42 participants included students with disabilities who have an IEP and students not identified as students with disabilities. The students' comments included the following:

1. Some high school students with disabilities reported that they did not feel they were treated differently than students who did not have disabilities. Their ESE support coordinator had taught them to ask for help if they needed it. These students also stated they felt there were no set or defined rules or consequences regarding discipline referrals (e.g., actions generating a referral from one teacher might be ignored by another).
2. Students from more than one high school reported that they wanted their disability category to be explained more effectively. Students reported participation in their IEP team meetings



but recommended that there be more meetings to discuss grades and ongoing progress. These students spoke positively about the supports they were receiving.

3. Dress code violations were recurring issues, and students reported that they did not like the fact that they could receive out-of-school suspensions for dress code violations.
4. At one middle school, the majority of the students were in general education classrooms. They reported that their accommodations were not always followed, and when they discussed this with their ESE teacher, the concerns were not always addressed. They believed that when they became overwhelmed or frustrated, it appeared that some teachers thought that the students did not care. They reported feeling embarrassed to ask questions in class. One teacher allowed them to write a note if they had questions, and the teacher would follow up with them privately.
5. Students at one middle school reported that safety was an issue for them in the community.
6. Students with disabilities at more than one school perceived their principals as someone they could go to for assistance. They also had access to their case managers and could go to them, if needed.
7. Overall, the high school students knew about their IEPs, the IEP team meetings and had attended at least one of their meetings. Knowledge of IEP team meetings varied at the middle schools.
8. At one high school, almost all students interviewed participated in some type of extracurricular activity. Several students remarked that students who did not participate in extracurricular activities tended to be the students who dropped out of school.

## Commendations

1. Between the 2010-11 and 2012-13 school years, the federal uniform high school graduation rate for students with disabilities in the Pinellas County School District increased from 35 to 40 percent.
  - During this same period, the federal uniform high school graduation rate for all students in the Pinellas County School District increased from 65 to 72 percent.
  - Subsequent to the on-site visit, FDOE data revealed that the school district's graduation rate had increased to 49.42 percent for students with disabilities.
2. BEESS reports dropout data through the federal ED Facts system. The dropout rate is the number of students dropping out divided by the number reported via Ed Facts who graduated with a regular high school diploma, received a certificate, dropped out or died. In the Pinellas County School District, the ED Facts dropout rate for students with disabilities decreased from 27.6 percent to 16.2 percent between the 2012-13 and 2013-14 school years.
3. Separate class placement includes students who spend less than 40 percent of their week with students who have not been identified as students with disabilities. Between the 2010-11 and 2013-14 school years, separate class placement in the Pinellas County School District decreased from 15 to 13 percent for students with disabilities.
4. The Pinellas County School District has implemented the **Bridging the Gap Strategic Plan** to close the achievement gap between black students and their peers. District and school-based leaders worked with community members to determine specific goals and actions that will contribute to the narrowing of existing gaps between black students and their peers. The plan includes highlights that show the progress the school district has made regarding specific efforts and action items.

- The plan's five key goals include:
  - Eliminate the gap between the Pinellas County graduation rates for black students as compared to non-black students;
  - Eliminate the gap between Pinellas County's proficiency rates on state-required assessments for black students as compared to non-black students;
  - Eliminate the gap between the Pinellas County accelerated participation and performance rates for black and non-black students as measured by the percentage within ethnicity;
  - Reduce the disparity in rates of disciplinary infractions between black and non-black students as measured by the percentage within ethnicity; and
  - Reduce the number of black students being found eligible for EBD services by 2 percent by June 2015.
  
- In order to achieve a unified effort among parents, educators, religious leaders, community leaders and other members of the community who had a vested interest in closing the achievement gap in the Pinellas County School District, in October 2013 the school district conducted the **Bridging the Gap: Collaborative Engagement** summit.

The summit's objectives included:

- Build the 5-Year Strategic Vision to be recognized as the Nation's Leader in **Bridging the Gap**.
- Prioritize the **2014 Actions/Success/Metrics/Champions** for each Goal to mobilize our success in **Bridging the Gap**.

## ESE Monitoring and Compliance

### Records Review

Bureau staff who were members of the Pinellas SST reviewed records of students with disabilities in the Pinellas County School District from a sampling of 11 schools.

<b>Student Records Review</b>	
Number of IPI protocols completed	15
Number of standards per IPI protocol	8
Number of RS protocols completed	15
Number of standards per RS protocol	5
Number of SPP 4 – SE protocols completed	5
Number of standards per SE protocol	10
Total number of protocols reviewed	35
Total number of standards assessed	245
<b>Total number of findings of noncompliance</b>	<b>0</b>

### Action-Planning and Problem-Solving Process and Next Steps

As part of the monitoring and assistance on-site visit, the SST members, ESE director and representatives from the Pinellas County School District participated in an action-planning and problem-solving process. The group reviewed the data collected prior to and during the on-site visit and developed a list of priorities and obstacles. An action plan was developed to address

the first priority selected, which is number 5 from the school district's Bridging the Gap plan, "reduce the number of black students being found eligible for EBD services by 2 percent by June 2015."

<b>Next Steps</b>	
<b>Early intervening services</b>	
<b>Disproportionate representation of students with disabilities – SPP 10</b>	
Summary	<p>A school district is required to set aside 15 percent of IDEA, Part B funds for intervening services if the school district's data indicate that students of any race are at least 3.5 times more likely to be identified as a student with EBD when compared to all other races combined.</p> <p>According to the 2014 LEA Profile, the Pinellas County School District's risk ratio for black students identified with EBD was 3.97. This risk ratio was a decrease from the 2013 LEA Profile of 4.38.</p>
Recommendation	<p>The Pinellas County School District should continue the process used to address the disproportionality related to the identification of black students having EBD, as identified in the Bridging the Gap Plan.</p> <p>Additionally, the Pinellas County School District should continue to support programs through CEIS funding that are, based on data collected, shown to be effective in reducing the disproportionality related to the identification of black students with EBD.</p>
Required Action	<p>The Pinellas County School District will continue to regularly monitor and analyze schools that have determined students eligible as having EBD during 2014-15 and conduct an analysis of data trends from these schools. The results of this process will be submitted to BEESS no later than <b>April 30, 2015</b>.</p>
<b>CEIS - Discipline</b>	
Summary:	<p>The Pinellas County School District was determined to have significantly disproportionate data for black students with disabilities with respect to disciplinary actions, including suspensions and expulsions.</p>
Recommendations	<p>The Pinellas County School District should continue the process used to address the disparity in rates of disciplinary infractions between black and non-black students as identified in the Bridging the Gap Plan.</p> <p>Additionally, the Pinellas County School District should continue to support programs through CEIS funding that are, based on data collected, shown to be effective in reducing the disproportionality related to the discipline of black students with disabilities.</p>

<b>Next Steps</b>	
Required Actions	By <b>April 30, 2015</b> , the Pinellas County School District will review patterns of disciplinary actions during the 2014-15 school year, including suspensions and expulsions of black students with disabilities, and determine the impact of these results on district policies and procedures. This review will include how suspensions and expulsions compare to all other students with disabilities in the school district. The results of this review will be submitted to BEESS no later than <b>May 8, 2015</b> .
<b>Seclusion</b>	
Summary	Between August 2012 and March 2013, there were 255 incidents of seclusion reported by the Pinellas County School District. During August 2013 and March 2014, the school district's number of incidents of seclusion had declined to 176.
Recommendations	The Pinellas County School District will continue to report the number of incidents of seclusion via the FDOE's website. Data related to seclusion should continue to be reviewed and analyzed, at least monthly, and reviewed with BEESS.
Required Actions	None
<b>Phases 3 and 4 of the ESE Monitoring and Assistance process</b>	
Summary	<p>The Pinellas County School District has the following plans in place:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CEIS</li> <li>• District Strategic Plan</li> <li>• School Improvement Plans</li> <li>• Bridging the Gap</li> <li>• PBS</li> <li>• Best Practices in Inclusive Education assessments</li> </ul> <p>During the monitoring and assistance on-site visit, there was consensus that the designated SST facilitator would continue to collaborate with the ESE director, school district and other SST members on priorities selected during the action-planning and problem-solving process.</p>
Recommendations	It is recommended that the Pinellas County School District align their current plans with their goals for decreasing the disproportionality of black students with EBD and discipline of black students with disabilities.
Required Actions	By <b>May 12, 2015</b> , the SST, ESE director and designated district staff will evaluate the effectiveness of the school district's action plan(s) as related to the identification of students with EBD and the discipline of black students with disabilities. This group will determine additional next steps, as appropriate.

## Technical Assistance

1. **Implementing a Multi-Tiered System of Support for Behavior: Recommended Practices for School and District Leaders** (Florida's PBS Project) may be accessed at [http://flpbs.fmhi.usf.edu/pdfs/RTIB%20Guide%20101811\\_final.pdf](http://flpbs.fmhi.usf.edu/pdfs/RTIB%20Guide%20101811_final.pdf) and provides an overview of the critical components of an MTSS for behavior. These critical components describe systems changes that are necessary for a results-driven ESE system.
2. The district's **ESE Policies and Procedures** document provides district- and school-based standards for documenting, reporting and monitoring the use of manual, physical or mechanical restraint and seclusion developed by the FDOE. The school district's document for the 2013-14 through 2015-16 school years may be accessed at <http://beess.fcim.org/sppDistrictDocSearch.aspx>.
3. The technical assistance paper entitled **Guidelines for the Use, Documentation, Reporting, and Monitoring of Restraint and Seclusion with Students with Disabilities**, dated October 14, 2011, may be accessed at <http://info.fldoe.org/docushare/dsweb/Get/Document-6212/dps-2011-165.pdf>. This document provides guidance regarding the use, documenting, reporting and monitoring of restraint and seclusion with students with disabilities in school districts, including (a) when restraint or seclusion might be used, (b) considerations when selecting a training program for restraint, (c) what should be documented, (d) parent notification and reporting, and (e) monitoring use. It also contains information about s. 1003.573, F.S., Use of restraint and seclusion on students with disabilities.
4. The United States Department of Education, in collaboration with the United States Department of Justice, released **School Discipline Guidance** in the January 2014, Volume 4, Issue 1 of the **Office of Special Education Programs Monthly Update**. This package will assist states, districts and schools in developing practices and strategies to enhance school climate, and ensure those policies and practices comply with federal law. The resource documents listed below are included in the package, and are available at <http://www.ed.gov/school-discipline>:
  - **Dear Colleague** guidance letter on civil rights and discipline;
  - **Guiding Principles** document that draws from emerging research and best practices;
  - **Directory of Federal School Climate and Discipline Resources** that indexes federal technical assistance and other resources; and
  - **Compendium of School Discipline Laws and Regulations** that catalogue State laws and regulations related to school discipline.
5. The Project 10: Transition Education Network (<http://www.projet10.info/>) assists Florida school districts and relevant stakeholders in building capacity to provide secondary transition services to students with disabilities in order to improve their academic success and post-school outcomes. Project 10 serves as the primary conduit between BEESS and school district personnel in addressing law and policy, effective practices and research-based interventions in the area of transition services for youth with disabilities. The project also supports transition initiatives developed through the BEESS Strategic Plan.

**Florida Department of Education  
Bureau of Exceptional Education and Student Services  
2013-14 ESE Monitoring and Assistance**

**State Support Team for Pinellas County School District**

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**Appendix A**  
**Guiding Questions – District-Level Needs Assessment**

## Appendix A: Guiding Questions – District-Level Needs Assessment

1. What are the most current data levels on each of the targeted BEESS indicators?
2. What is the gap between BEESS expected level(s) of targeted indicators and your district's current level(s) of targeted indicators?
3. Do data indicate equity issues related to the selected BEESS indicators? Are there subgroups for which the gap between expected and goal levels of performance and current levels of performance is more or less significant?
  - Gender
  - Race or ethnic group
  - Economically disadvantaged
  - Students with disabilities (by each subgroup)
  - English language learners
  - Comparison within and across above subgroups
4. Disaggregate district-level indicator data to school levels. Which schools are contributing to total district frequency for each of the targeted BEESS indicators?
5. Disaggregate school-level indicator data by grade level. Which grades within each school are contributing to total school frequency for each of the targeted BEESS indicators?
6. Disaggregate between type of school (elementary, middle school and high school) by student outcomes.
7. What evidence-based practices are currently planned for use or implementation at the school level?
8. Are the expected evidence-based practices occurring sufficiently?
9. If expected evidence-based practices are not occurring or not occurring sufficiently, why not? (What are some potential barriers specific to targeted BEESS indicators at the school level?)
10. How are school-level evidence-based practices being supported by the district specific to BEESS indicators being targeted for improvement?
11. Are district supports for school-level practices being provided sufficiently?
12. If district supports are not occurring or not occurring sufficiently, why not? (What are some potential barriers specific to targeted BEESS indicators at the district level?)
13. What strategies, initiatives and resources have been identified in the District Improvement and Assistance Plan (DIAP) with regard to achieving annual measurable outcomes targets for students with disabilities?
14. As applicable, has the mid-year reflection based on mid-year assessment data been completed, and what, if any, adjustments have been made to the DIAP with regard to strategies to improve outcomes for students with disabilities?
15. What does the **ESE Policies and Procedures** document reflect with regard to the district's goal to improve targeted indicator performance? Did the district achieve the goal set during the prior year?
16. What is occurring to implement the strategies in the SP&P with regard to targeted indicator performance?
17. Based on all of the above answers, what priorities will be targeted to improve BEESS targeted indicators?



**Florida Department of Education  
Bureau of Exceptional Education and Student Services**

**Glossary of Acronyms and Abbreviations**

The following is a list of acronyms, abbreviations and terms used within this report.

BEESS	Bureau of Exceptional Education and Student Services
BIP	Behavioral intervention plan
CEIS	Coordinated early intervening services
CFR	Code of Federal Regulations
EBD	Emotional or behavioral disability
ESE	Exceptional student education
FBA	Functional behavioral assessment
FDOE	Florida Department of Education
F.S.	Florida Statutes
IDEA	Individuals with Disabilities Education Act
IEP	Individual educational plan
InD	Intellectual disabilities
IPI	IEP implementation
ISS	Instructional Support Services
LEA	Local educational agency
MTSS	Multi-tiered system of support
PBS	Positive Behavior Support
PS/RtI	Problem-Solving and Response to Intervention
RS	Restraint or seclusion
SE	Suspension or expulsion
SEDNET	Multiagency Network for Students with Emotional or Behavioral Disabilities
SLD	Specific learning disability
SP&P	Exceptional Student Education Policies and Procedures
SPP	State Performance Plan
SST	State Support Team



Pam Stewart, Commissioner

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