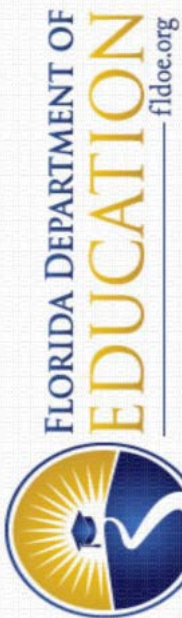


**2014-15 Exceptional Student Education  
Monitoring and Assistance  
On-Site Visit Report**

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**Sarasota County School District  
April 20-22, 2015**



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/ese/mon-home.asp>. For information on available resources, contact the BEESS Resource and Information Center (BRIC).

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July 15, 2015

Lori White, Superintendent  
Sarasota County School District  
1960 Landings Boulevard  
Sarasota, Florida 34231-3365

Dear Superintendent White:

The Bureau of Exceptional Education and Student Services (BEESS) is pleased to provide you with the 2014-15 Exceptional Student Education (ESE) Monitoring and Assistance On-Site Visit Report for Sarasota County School District. The 2014-15 monitoring process focused on reviewing progress for the action plan developed during the 2013-14 on-site visit as well as newly identified targeted areas. BEESS is committed to providing intensive supports for districts selected during the 2013-14 school year for three years of progress monitoring, of which your district was one.

The Sarasota County School District was selected as needing continued intensive supports due to coordinated early intervening services related to discipline and over-identification of students with emotional behavioral disabilities, least restrictive environment and discipline (Indicators 4A and 4B). The on-site visit was conducted by a State Support Team (SST) that included BEESS staff, department staff and discretionary project staff.

Multiple sources of information were integrated to develop this report including analyzing recent data and evaluating the effectiveness of the district's action plan. In addition, if determined necessary, district and school personnel were interviewed, and conducting student focus groups. This process focuses 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.

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

Superintendent White  
July 15, 2015  
Page Two

Ms. Sonia Figaredo-Alberts, Executive Director of Pupil Support Services, and her staff were very helpful to the SST in preparing for the on-site visit and throughout the visit. In addition, school-level personnel welcomed SST members and demonstrated a continued commitment to the education of students in the school district. This report will be posted on the BEESS website and may be accessed at <http://www.fldoe.org/ese/mon-home.asp>.

Thank you for your commitment to improving services to exceptional education students in the Sarasota 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: Sonia Figaredo-Alberts  
Cathy Bishop  
Patricia Howell  
Liz Conn  
Misty Bradley

**2014-15 Exceptional Student Education  
Monitoring and Assistance  
On-Site Visit Report**

**Sarasota County School District**

**April 20-22, 2015**

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

**2014-15 Exceptional Student Education  
Monitoring and Assistance  
On-Site Visit Report**

**Sarasota County School District**

**April 20-22, 2015**

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**2014-15 Exceptional Student Education  
Monitoring and Assistance  
On-Site Visit Report**

**Sarasota County School District**

**April 20-22, 2015**

**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 ESE laws (sections 1001.03(3), 1003.571 and 1008.32, Florida Statutes [F.S.]) and rules. 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 CEIS for children in the LEA, particularly, but not exclusively, for children in those groups that were significantly over-identified.

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 document.

## ESE Monitoring and Assistance Process

### Background Information

The 2014-15 ESE Monitoring and Assistance process focused on State Performance Plan (SPP) indicators that contributed to the targeting of school districts for CEIS and the following indicators that affect 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 six 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/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 3) 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 on the FDOE website.
- Seclusion – Rate of incidents of seclusion, as reported on the FDOE website.

The ESE Monitoring and Assistance process includes four phases:

- Phase 1 was composed of planning activities that occurred in advance of the first on-site visit to the school district.
- Phase 2 was the initial on-site visit to the selected school district by the State Support Team (SST). **This district was visited on February 12-14, 2014.**
- 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. **This report reflects a follow-up to the 2013-14 monitoring visit and identifies a new area of concern, CEIS related to discipline.**
- 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.



## **On-Site Activities**

In a letter dated February 24, 2015, the superintendent of the Sarasota County School District was informed that the bureau would be conducting an on-site monitoring visit for the following focus areas: CEIS for discipline and over-identification of students identified with an Emotional Behavioral Disability (EBD), discipline related to Indicators 4A and 4B, and LRE.

## **On-Site Visit Team**

The following SST members planned or conducted the monitoring and assistance for the on-site visit:

### **FDOE, BEESS**

- Monica Verra-Tirado, Chief, BEESS
- Misty Bradley, Program Specialist, Dispute Resolution and Monitoring (DRM)
- Heidi Metcalf, Administrator, Program Accountability, Assessment and Data Systems (PAADS)
- Curtis Williams, Program Director, Educational Services for Juvenile Justice
- Cyrilla Hackley, Program Specialist, PAADS

### **FDOE, Bureau Discretionary Projects**

- Anna Winneker (Problem-Solving Facilitator), Positive Behavior Support: Multi-Tiered System of Supports (PBS:MTSS)
- Kelly Justice, (Problem-Solving Facilitator), Florida's Problem Solving:Response to Intervention (PS:Rtl)
- Deborah Bay, Project Manager, Multiagency Network for Students with Emotional Behavioral Disabilities (SEDNET)
- Stan Weser, Facilitator, Florida Inclusion Network (FIN) West
- Federico Valadez, Regional Transition Representative, Project 10: Transition Education Network
- Donna Marquis-Cox, Consultant, Florida Diagnostic & Learning Resources System (FDLRS) Human Resource Development
- Mindy Stevens, Assistant Director, Center for Autism and Related Disorders (CARD)

## **Data Collection**

On-site monitoring and assistance activities included the following:

- Review of recent data
- District and school-level administrators' interviews and focus groups - 52 participants
- Teacher interviews - 21 participants
- Student focus groups - nine participants
- Action-planning meeting - 30 participants

## **Status Updates on the 2013-14 On-Site Visit**

The following information is excerpted from the 2013-14 on-site monitoring report. The additional information below was provided to the bureau by the school district in a document entitled Sarasota County Action Steps. This document provided an update on the status of the recommendations and required actions that were within the report.

**Next Steps from the 2013-14 On-Site Visit**

Early Intervening Services

Disproportionate Representation of Students with Disabilities–SPP 10

<p>Summary:</p>	<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 indicates that students of any race are at least 3.5 times more likely to be identified as a student with an EBD when compared to all other races combined.</p> <p>According to the 2013 LEA Profile, the Sarasota County School District’s risk ratio for black students identified with an EBD was 5.33. Additionally, black students were at least 3.01 times more likely to be identified as a student with an Intellectual Disability (InD).</p> <p>The school district has developed a process to address issues with disproportionality related to the identification of black students having an InD. The school district reported that because of this process, there was a decrease in the number of black students identified with an InD.</p>
<p>Recommendations:</p>	<p>Sarasota County School District should continue the process used to address the disproportionality related to the identification of black students having an InD.</p> <p>Sarasota 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 an EBD.</p>
<p>Required Actions:</p>	<p>The Sarasota County School District will identify the schools that are determining eligibility as students with an EBD and review data trends from these schools.</p>
<p><b>Status Update 2013-14 Monitoring Visit:</b></p>	<p>After the ESE Monitoring and Assistance Visit: The team was advised to focus on the educational needs of the students:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) The district ESE team analyzed reports following 46 black students that were found to be dually diagnosed, as having an EBD in addition to another disability category. The district ESE team met with the school-based ESE liaisons and directed them to explore with their IEP teams if students were exhibiting behaviors that were due to another disability category. For example: If a black student had been identified as having both an EBD and an InD, student data would be used to determine if the behavior concerns were due to the student’s cognitive function or if the student has an emotional or behavioral disability. As a result, 18 students were dismissed as not having an EBD leaving 28 students as dually diagnosed.</li> <li>2) At all annual IEP review meetings, there is the consideration of dismissal of elementary and middle school students identified as EBD if there are data and documentation that the student is doing well academically and behaviorally. Monitoring at the district level quarterly takes place to determine if any of the 28 remaining students are meeting their IEP goals and are on track to access the LRE 100 percent of the time.</li> </ol>

## Next Steps from the 2013-14 On-Site Visit

- 3) To analyze trends, the ESE roster report with current placement data continues to be reviewed on a monthly basis. The consistent analysis up to this point has shown an even distribution throughout the district. There is a definitive pattern among the schools in the areas of Northern Sarasota County and Southern Sarasota County, which are also identified as Title I schools, when looking at identification of black students identified as EBD. The identification of particular schools includes Wilkinson, Brentwood, AltaVista, Emma E. Booker, Glenallen, and Cranberry.
- 4) The district behavior team was created to utilize the Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) Problem-Solving Model to support schools with intervention and behavior plans prior to identification. Once students present challenging at-risk behaviors, the MTSS process begins and the district assigns additional behavioral support to monitor program design. The behavior specialist provides the ongoing behavior training to the entire MTSS team and individual teachers to guide positive behavior outcomes.
- 5) A district program specialist or ESE liaison will guide and coach the school team to utilize interventions, provide support using community resources and increase parent involvement when the student is in Tier 3 of the problem-solving process. The district has established a process that has been shared with all school counselors on how to access the SEDNET representative to align resources to the families of at-risk students.
- 6) The district will continue the use of CEIS funds to provide ongoing multi-tier levels of support for students who are at risk. Funding allows other certified instructional staff to continue to provide intensive support in order to help students access their education. Funding is used to support administration, behavior specialists and teachers. Behavioral substitute aides receive additional training in order to provide intervention. Funding is also aligned to the identified areas of need as noted in the School Improvement Plan. All school-wide staff are given the opportunity for ongoing professional development.
- 7) The district will continue with MTSS and PBS training opportunities district-wide.

### 2014-2015 Trainings provided to date:

<u>DATE</u>	<u>TITLE</u>	<u>LOCATION</u>
August 6	Pre-Planning in Support of Cluster Programs	Garden Elementary
August 7	New Counselor Orientation	Landings
August 7	Pre-Planning in Support of Cluster	Glenallen Elementary
August 12	MTSS Overview-All Staff	TRIAD
August 13	Pre-Planning in Support of Cluster Programs	Glenallen Elementary
August 14	MTSS Overview-Title I Support Staff	Booker Middle
September 4	PBS Planning-All Staff	TRIAD
September 2	Digital MTSS Training to Select Admin	Landings
September 9	PBS Planning	Garden Elementary
September 11	County-wide Behavior Specialist	Heron Creek Middle

## Next Steps from the 2013-14 On-Site Visit

September 12	MTSS Overview for Middle School Counselors	Landings
September 17	MTSS Training-Research Assessment and Evaluation and District Level Staff	Landings
September 17	Fundamentals of Applied Behavior Analysis	Landings
September 18	MTSS observation and review Elementary	Toledo Blade
September 18	MTSS observation and review	Atwater Elementary
September 18	MTSS observation and review	Cranberry Elementary
September 22	PBS overview-All staff	SMA Prep
September 22	MTSS overview-SLPs	Landings
September 24	MTSS overview-High School Counselors	Landings
September 24	Fundamentals of Applied Behavior Analysis	Landings
September 30	MTSS observation and review	Heron Creek Middle
September 30	MTSS observation and review	Glenallen Elementary
September 30	PBS meeting-Best of the Best Elementary Representatives	Landings
September 30	Restorative strategies update and planning meeting	Landings
October 1	MTSS observation and review	Venice High School
October 1	Fundamentals of Applied Behavior Analysis	Landings
October 2	MTSS observation and review	Laurel Nokomis
October 3	MTSS observation and review	Garden Elementary
October 3	MTSS observation and review	
October 6	MTSS presentation-Superintendent	Venice Elementary
October 7	MTSS observation and review Elementary	Taylor Ranch
October 8	Fundamentals of Applied Behavior Analysis	Landings
October 8	MTSS observation and review	North Port High
October 8	MTSS observation and review	Woodland Middle
October 8	MTSS observation and review	Lamarque
October 15	Fundamentals of Applied Behavior Analysis	Landings
October 21	MTSS presentation	Landings
October 22	MTSS observation and review	Venice Middle
October 22	Fundamentals of Applied Behavior Analysis	Landings
October 23	MTSS observation and review	Fruitville Elementary
October 24	Crisis Prevention Institute's Nonviolent Crisis Intervention (CPI) Initial	Landings
October 24	CPI Initial for Pre-K	Fruitville Elementary
October 29	Fundamentals of Applied Behavior Analysis	Landings
October 30	MTSS observation and review	Brentwood Elementary
November 5	MTSS overview-Middle School Counselors	Landings
November 19	MTSS overview-High School Counselors	Landings
November 20	MTSS observation and review	Alta Vista Elementary
November 24	Behavior Supports Training-PBS	Landings
December 2	Digital MTSS training-District Staff	Landings
December 3	MTSS observation and review	Brentwood Elementary
December 4	MTSS observation and review	McIntosh Middle
December 5	MTSS observation and review	Fruitville Elementary

### Next Steps from the 2013-14 On-Site Visit

January 7	New Administrators Training MTSS and PBS	Landings
January 8	Behavior and community referrals meeting-SEDNET	Landings
January 9	ESE Behavior Specialist meeting PBS and School-wide Intervention	Landings
January 20	CPI Physical	Landings
January 20	Nature and Needs of Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD)-AM	Landings
January 20	Nature and Needs of ASD-PM	Landings
January 21	Restorative Strategies	Landings
January 22	Behavior and community referrals meeting-SEDNET	Landings
January 26	ESE Behavior Specialist meeting PBS and School-wide Intervention	Landings
February 4	Behavior Cluster PBS Plan Development	Venice Middle
February 5	Behavior and community referrals meeting-SEDNET	Landings
February 6	Restorative strategies update and Superintendent and Dr. George Batsche	Landings
February 10	Behavior Cluster-PBS plan development	Venice Middle
February 19	Behavior Cluster-PBS plan development	Venice Middle
February 19	Behavior and community referrals meeting-SEDNET	Landings
February 24	Restorative Strategies School Team Training	
March 3	Restorative strategies update and planning meeting	Landings
March 4	MTSS update and review-High School Counselors meeting	Landings
March 20	MTSS and restorative strategies update and review-Elementary Counselors	Landings
March 25	MTSS Update and Review-Middle School Counselors meeting	Landings
April 2	Behavior and community referrals meeting-SEDNET	Landings
April 3	Functional Behavioral Assessment (FBA) and Behavioral Intervention Plan (BIP) Paraprofessionals	Landings
April 3	Nature & Needs of ASD	Landings
April 3	CPI Initial for ASD	Landings
April 7	MTSS and restorative strategies update and review	Elementary
April 16	Behavior and community referrals meeting-SEDNET	Landings
May 14	Behavior and community referrals meeting-SEDNET	Landings
May 28	Behavior and community referrals meeting-SEDNET	Landings

Based on Sarasota County's CEIS Narrative Response, the district plans to continue to monitor needs, review data, analyze trends, and provide support to the schools listed below.

- Atwater Elementary School
- Brentwood Elementary School
- Emma E. Booker Elementary School

**Next Steps from the 2013-14 On-Site Visit**

Fruitville Elementary School  
 Glenallen Elementary School  
 Garden Elementary School  
 Tuttle Elementary School

8) Sarasota County has also created a new report which includes the tracking of student suspensions within each school. The data (two reports including 2014-15 suspensions of students with disabilities, and general education students) will determine the risk ratio data for each school and the district.

Additional updates from the district:

Over the last three school years, Sarasota County has identified 146 students with an EBD. Thirty-six of the 146 identified students were black, which comprised 25 percent of all EBD eligibilities.

The data demonstrates a considerable downward trend in black students identified as having an EBD.

32 (2012-13)  
 4 (2013-14)  
 0 (2014-15)

Sarasota will see an improvement in this percentage of identification each year as students exit the school system in conjunction with a smaller number of recent identifications. This trend is expected to continue; however, this will be a gradual improvement.

Currently, there are 447 students with an EBD in Sarasota County School District; 28 percent of these students are black.

The number of black students identified as having an EBD has decreased as a result of the above process from thirty-six to zero in a three-year span.

Newly placed students:

**(2012-13)**

One hundred and six students were identified as having an EBD; of these, 32 students or 30 percent were black.

**(2013-14)**

Thirty-two students were identified as having an EBD; of these, four students or 12.5 percent were black. (Three of these students were in-state transfers.)

**(2014-15)**

Eight students were identified as having an EBD; of these, none were black.

**Dropout Rate**

Summary:

The dropout rate for students with an EBD decreased from 12 percent to four percent from the 2009-10 to the 2011-12 school year. This percentage is lower than the enrollment group and the state average for students with an EBD.

Subsequent to the on-site visit, the 2014 LEA Profile revealed an increase in dropout rate for students with an EBD from four percent to eight percent from

**Next Steps from the 2013-14 On-Site Visit**

	the 2011-12 to the 2012-13 school year.
Recommendation:	N/A
Required Actions:	The school district's leadership team shall review this data trend and identity factors contributing to the regression, as well as action steps needed to improve the dropout rates.
<b>Status Update 2013-14 Monitoring Visit:</b>	<p>In the Sarasota County School District, the following ongoing processes were established, presented, and approved by principals.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Additional duties were added to the Supervisor Academic Intervention to monitor and implement new strategies in Dropout Prevention.</li> <li>2. Quarterly scheduled Project 10 meetings with the Regional Representative, the district's Supervisor of Dropout Prevention and other district staff are held with the school-based teams and administrators to review the data and provide additional strategies and interventions.</li> <li>3. School staff members consistently review the Dropout report by school and follow up with students on the list each month.</li> <li>4. Bundling of Color-Coded Cohorts over a two- to three-year period (Class of 2016 and 2017) will also help both with graduation and dropout rates over a period of time.</li> <li>5. Training is to be scheduled for Project 10 teams to allow for color-coding of their own data.</li> <li>6. Refresher training for registrars and ESE liaisons takes place annually to address the proper use and importance of Withdrawal Codes. The Project 10 Coordinator also assisted with reviewing all of the Withdrawal Codes. A list of helpful hints in reviewing the Withdrawal Codes and retrieving students who have dropped out was also disseminated.</li> <li>7. All of the above reports and processes are reviewed with principals across the district at their size-alike meetings.</li> </ol> <p>To assist in providing support prior to a student dropping out:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>8. Cluster programs for students identified as having an EBD have been created at district high schools rather than at the district center school.</li> <li>9. Project 10 Graduation Project and Mentor Programs have been implemented.</li> <li>10. A behavior specialist and a job coach are assigned to programs to support students with an EBD.</li> <li>11. The school district began a pilot program with assigning additional responsibilities to the Supervisor of Academic Intervention and Dropout to attend weekly juvenile court hearings. This individual is the liaison between the school and Juvenile Justice System. The individuals involved analyze academic, discipline and attendance data. Follow-up occurs by aligning appropriate resources to provide necessary support to assist students with an EBD in need, as well as any other students in need of support within the school district.</li> <li>12. The Mental Health Counseling program through SEDNET continues to provide support for students. There is a process in place for the Pupil Support Services (PSS) staff to assist the SEDNET coordinator and monitor completion of documents so students can receive services and support in a timely manner.</li> <li>13. Social Workers also continue to link community resource and agencies</li> </ol>

**Next Steps from the 2013-14 On-Site Visit**

to students and families. The community resources available include counseling services from the following agencies: Coastal Behavioral Healthcare, Inc., Florida Mentor, Gulf Coast Psychotherapy, Providence Human Services and The Florida Center for Early Childhood. In order to access services, the school counselor or social worker completes a referral and submits it to a SEDNET representative. The SEDNET representative then follows up and provides documentation to the parents. The administrative assistant tracks progress and ensures timely completion of paperwork, in order to ensure students and families receive the services and support that they need.

14. The positive behavior supports are infused within programs at each school.

To assist in providing support if the student does drop out:

- 1) The district ESE liaison or transition teacher is assigned to retrieve these students by contacting them and offering them alternatives to dropping out.
- 2) Once retrieved, the students are monitored and supported to ensure success.

Note: In the past (2009-10, 2010-11, 2011-12 school years), the district was able to get a Withdrawal Report on a monthly basis for all students with disabilities district-wide by specific high schools. In 2011-12 to 2012-13, the district was in the process of converting the Management Information System. At that time, it was a challenge to get the report in a timely and monthly manner. This resulted in the increase in the dropout rate as district staff members were unable to track these students.

There was a decrease in the school district's overall dropout rate for students with disabilities, which included students identified as having EBD, during the 2013-14 school year.

According to 2014 LEA Profile the EBD Dropout Rate included:

- EBD Dropout Rate
- 4 percent - 2010-11
- 7 percent - 2011-12
- 9 percent - 2012-13

Additional updates from the district:

In 2013-14, the dropout rate decreased to four percent for students with an EBD. There were 71 students with an EBD in the cohort and three were dropouts. The district's overall dropout rate for all ESE students is approximately two percent.

**Suspension and Expulsion (Discipline)**

Summary:

Sarasota County School District was determined to have significantly disproportionate data for black students with disabilities with respect to disciplinary actions, including suspensions and expulsions.



**Next Steps from the 2013-14 On-Site Visit**

<p>Recommendations:</p>	<p>Sarasota County School District should continue professional development for teachers and staff in the area of PBS, CPI, Restorative Practices, Community of Caring and Accountable Talks.</p> <p>The Sarasota County School District's discipline team should continue to meet on a regular basis to review data related to the disproportionality of the discipline of black students.</p> <p>Sarasota County School District should solicit student input regarding discipline, including suspensions and expulsions, through focus groups and school or student engagement surveys.</p>
<p>Required Actions:</p>	<p>The Sarasota County School District will review current school and district policies related to the student code of conduct to determine patterns of disciplinary actions, including suspensions and expulsions for black students. This review will include how suspensions and expulsions of black students compare to other students in the school district.</p>
<p><b>Status Update 2013-14 Monitoring Visit:</b></p>	<p>Sarasota County has developed a data report that allows the district and individual schools to view live suspension and expulsion data. This report became available to school and district users during the week of February 9, 2015.</p> <p>This report details suspension events and allows the district and schools to disaggregate data that has not been previously available. The school-based staff and district staff will review data monthly. The MTSS process will be utilized within each school to reconvene and provide supports to students identified as students in need.</p> <p>North Port High School will serve as a pilot school to directly review data and implement strategies in support of students targeted for need. The initial meeting took place on February 10, 2015. North Port High School is also establishing a student forum to address the area of discipline. District support will be directly involved in the problem-solving model implemented as a result of this task force. In addition, North Port High School Administrators along with district support planned to meet with other middle and high school administrators.</p> <p>Based on information collected from the new Out-of-School Suspension (OSS) and Expulsion report, a definitive pattern does exist with regard to suspensions among students with disabilities (SPP Indicator 4A), and more specifically students with disabilities who are black (SPP Indicator 4B).</p> <p>The data indicates that additional support is needed for the following schools:</p> <p>Booker Middle School McIntosh Middle School Heron Creek Middle School Riverview High School North Port High School</p> <p>District supervisors met and determined that district personnel will provide training to registrars, ESE liaisons, MTSS coordinators, and school-based</p>

## Next Steps from the 2013-14 On-Site Visit

administrators to make sure that disciplinary and referral action codes are entered correctly to reflect appropriate action.

The Sarasota County Supervisor of Alternative Education is monitoring school interventions to assist in the problem-solving model of looking at alternatives to suspensions for individual students. The supervisor is part of the district MTSS team.

The Behavior Team (made up of district behavior specialists) will work together at the school level by providing training in the school environment, including follow-up and ongoing support.

The Sarasota County School District has been very committed to providing professional development in support of students experiencing social and emotional concerns. The following list includes the titles of several trainings that were offered to district staff who support students identified as having an EBD:

1. Positive Behavior Support
2. Crisis Prevention Institute (Verbal, ASD, PBS, and Applied Physical)
3. FBA and BIP training
4. Data collection
5. Fundamentals of Applied Behavior Analysis
6. Manifestation determinations
7. 504 and Discipline
8. Quarterly Behavior Specialist meetings
9. Presentations targeting Administrators
10. Monthly presentations targeting ESE liaisons
11. Analyzing data to guide informed decisions
12. Parent Professional Development Services coordinated by Suncoast FDLRS and PSS Department

The trainings listed below are primarily provided to parents by the Parent Professional Development Services coordinated by Suncoast FDLRS and PSS Department:

- Section 504 - Law Requirements, Eligibility, and Benefits
- Parenting Skills How to - Pre-School Through Middle/High School
- Instructional Resources for Students with Significant and Instructional Delays
- Transition - Secondary Transition Planning: A Guide for Families

In addition to providing professional development, the district level behavior specialists will work together as a "Behavior System Support Team" to provide support (based on data) to school-based staff across the district. Direct instruction will be provided and practice will take place in the school environment. Coaching and consistent guiding will be provided by the team including positive feedback and redirection strategies. The training will take

## Next Steps from the 2013-14 On-Site Visit

place across environments with an emphasis on the utilization and application of Applied Behavior Analysis strategies.

The district discipline coordinator formed a team to review the student code of conduct. Recommendations included:

Formation of a task force to re-examine the Zero Tolerance Policy to include the following considerations:

1. School-based administrators receive professional development to focus on incident, supporting evidence, witness statements, and previous discipline history to issue consequences aligned with infraction.
2. Student Code of Conduct was reviewed and determined not to be discriminatory in development or practice.
3. Additionally, the Task Force examines the behavior consequence chart and re-aligns the incident with appropriate level of action and/or consequences.

Additional updates from the district:

Over the past five years, district discipline data reveals the following:

1. There has been an overall decrease in OSS of students with disabilities.
2. There has been an overall decrease in OSS for all students (including general education students).

Data demonstrates that the antecedent-based interventions (School-wide PBS), use of the MTSS problem-solving model, county-wide behavior support team, and targeted professional development, have positively affected all students. Because these interventions have been developed and implemented for all students (not only students with disabilities), this has not resulted in a lower risk ratio. In essence, the risk ratio has not decreased because suspensions have equally decreased for all students.

The information below was gathered by using district-wide discipline data from August 2014 to March 2015. The information below includes the formula and the data that was used to determine the risk ratio.

For Indicator 4B, which includes OSS and expulsion:

The number of Black students with disabilities who were suspended or expelled for more than 10 cumulative days (34 students)

divided by

The total number of disabled Black students (1156 students)

$$34/1,156 \times 100 = \mathbf{2.94}$$

The number of all nondisabled students who were suspended and expelled for more than 10 cumulative days (123 students)

divided by

The total year enrollment for all nondisabled students (38,060 students)

$$123/38,060 \times 100 = \mathbf{0.323}$$

Therefore, the district's risk ratio is  $2.94/0.323 = \mathbf{9.1}$

## Next Steps from the 2013-14 On-Site Visit

1. The district staff continues to directly monitor data that is summarized in a report for each school in the district, which includes the following information:
  - Name
  - Exceptionality
  - Number of days of OSS
  - Ethnicity
  - Offense
  - Discipline Code
  - Consequence
  - Infraction Code
2. Based on data, meetings with principals and their teams will be set up to use problem-solving methods as the district moves forward.

Using the report from each school, the district will be able to determine risk ratio by school to make informed decisions.

Number of Black students with disabilities who were suspended/expelled for more than 10 cumulative days	34
Total number of disabled Black students	1156
Number of all nondisabled students who were suspended/expelled for more than 10 cumulative days	123
Total number of nondisabled students	38060
<b>RISK RATIO</b>	<b>9.10090</b>

### Educational Environment (LRE)

**Summary:**

Based on the data obtained before and during the Sarasota County School District's on-site monitoring visit, for the 2011-12 and the 2012-13 school years, the school district was below the enrollment group and state averages for regular class placement.

Additionally, during the 2011-12 and the 2012-13 school years, the school district was higher than their enrollment group and state averages in resource room placement.

**Recommendations:**

N/A

**Required Actions:**

According to s. 1003.57, F.S., once every three years, each school district and school shall complete a Best Practices in Inclusive Education (BPIE) assessment with a FIN facilitator and include the results of the BPIE assessment and all planned short-term and long-term improvement efforts in the school district's SP&P. BPIE is an internal assessment process designed to facilitate the analysis, implementation and improvement of inclusive educational practices at the district and school team levels.

### Next Steps from the 2013-14 On-Site Visit

	<p>Sarasota County School District will complete the BPIE process during the 2014-15 school year.</p> <p>A FIN facilitator is available to assist the school district in scheduling and completing the BPIE, and based on the results, will identify how FIN can provide support to the school district (<a href="http://www.floridainclusionnetwork.com/">http://www.floridainclusionnetwork.com/</a>).</p>
<p><b>Status Update 2013-14 Monitoring Visit:</b></p>	<p>Based on the informal conversations of the exit interview during the FDOE on-site visit, the school district of Sarasota County began the following action processes for the 2014-2015 school year. The indicator rating tally sheets for the district BPIE process was completed on February 24, 2015.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Opportunities have been provided for students to participate in the least restrictive environment and there has been implementation of the I-Engage Model in Middle School.</li> <li>2) On the high school level, classes have been capped at 18 students. These classes have been created combining ESE and lower quartile students.</li> <li>3) The closing of the separate day school in the southern part of the county took place and those students were moved to a more inclusive behavioral cluster program at the middle school.</li> <li>4) SIMS (Strategic Instructional Model Systems) training was used to provide learning strategies courses to train secondary level teachers on how to instruct students on meeting instructional standards. Training was provided and student data was tracked to measure effectiveness of implementation. A team of teachers that focus on various instructional designs and model implementation of effective instructional strategies is called a learning strategy cohort.</li> <li>5) Ongoing training was conducted with paraprofessionals and teacher teams on collaborative teaching and inclusive strategies.</li> <li>6) ESE program specialists and staff in the Curriculum Department continue to collaborate on projects and receive the same trainings.</li> <li>7) Professional learning communities' feeder work group meetings take place in order to develop action plans to make sure that there are district-wide opportunities for LRE at all levels, specifically beginning at the elementary level.</li> <li>8) ESE compliance liaisons run LRE reports and clean up data as follows:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Each school ran the Student Special Services Program Report and provided the student, grade, name, and exceptionality.</li> <li>• The data from the ESE services panel on the district's database for each individual student was reviewed.</li> <li>• Data (including Total School Week, Time with Nondisabled Peers, Percentage of Time, and Environmental Codes) was reviewed and analyzed.</li> <li>• The student data was analyzed by each school to determine actual percentage of time with non-disabled peers. System data, schedules, and IEP's were reviewed to determine if corrections were needed. Based on the review, changes were made, if necessary, by registrars at the school sites to reflect time spent with nondisabled peers. Reviews of the calculations were also submitted to principals with an explanation regarding the tracking of the data to ensure accuracy.</li> </ul> </li> </ol>

## Next Steps from the 2013-14 On-Site Visit

- The new data was added to the spreadsheet to reflect the changes.
  - Discussions have occurred with school-based personnel and data has been shared regarding the importance of having each child in the least restrictive environment
- 9) LRE and Pre-school Services: The Pre-school Diagnostic team is involved in monthly training and collaboration with community based pre-schools. The ESE liaison works with staff at the contracted sites to promote social skills instruction, specially designed instruction and how to apply positive behavior supports into the community pre-school setting. The specially designed instruction applied in preschool settings involves modeling effective use of behavioral strategies, providing continuation of support and monitoring as the teacher implements the behavioral strategies. Review of data determines the need for adjustments.
- The school psychologist works with community preschools when students have been referred to Child Find for behavior concerns, assisting in targeting intervention and measuring interventions. A new agency site was added, which serves students with disabilities and students from the community.
  - Training has been provided to community preschool teachers on how to implement social skills instruction in their natural environment.
- 10) There are ongoing co-teaching and support facilitation opportunities for English language arts and math at the middle and high school level.
- 11) Dual-certified content teachers have been used to support ESE students in core courses.
- 12) There is a district requirement for all ESE teachers to also possess content area certification.
- 13) MTSS training continues to occur across the district. Over the last two years all paperwork for the process has been converted to digital format. It provides continued access of digital information including the processes of interventions, referral, evaluations, and then eventually to IEP when appropriate.
- 14) The following dates are the dates which professional development opportunities were provided to principals, assistant principals, and district personnel regarding best practices on instructional strategies and techniques:
- June 4, 2014
  - June 5, 2014
  - October 14, 2014
  - October 15, 2014
  - November 19, 2014
  - November 20, 2014
  - December 10, 2014
  - December 11, 2014
  - January 21, 2015
  - January 22, 2015
  - February 11, 2015
  - February 12, 2015
  - March 18, 2015
  - March 19, 2015

### Next Steps from the 2013-14 On-Site Visit

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• April 8, 2015</li> <li>• April 9, 2015</li> </ul>
BPIE	<p>Pre-meeting was held on January 30, 2015. The initial BPIE meeting with FIN facilitators and stakeholders took place on February 24, 2015. From the meeting, it was determined that the indicators listed below will make up the district's BPIE Plan.</p> <p>Domain: Leadership and Decision-making</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. District analyzes data to identify barriers and initiate improvement steps that increase the number of students with low and high incidence disabilities in general education and natural contexts in every school.</li> <li>7. District has key personnel with expertise in the MTSS and Positive Behavior Intervention Plans (PBIPs) who provide ongoing Professional Development (PD) and Technical Assistance (TA) to schools to ensure that students who need them receive multi-tiered behavior supports in general education classrooms and natural contexts.</li> <li>8. District data reflect that students with disabilities who have behavior support needs are not excluded from the general education classroom at a higher rate than their peers without disabilities.</li> <li>10. District uses decision-making guidelines to ensure schools transition all students with disabilities from grade to grade, school to school and district to district to maintain placement in the least restrictive environment.</li> <li>13. District and school leaders receive ongoing and current information and professional development about best practices for inclusive education for all students with disabilities.</li> </ol> <p>Domain: Instruction and Student Achievement</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>14. District provides PD and TA to schools in the use of a variety of tools to gather and analyze data and evaluate the effectiveness of instructional and behavioral interventions for all students with disabilities in general education and other settings.</li> </ol>

### 2014-15 ESE Monitoring and Assistance On-Site Visit Results

The following data is related to the focus areas and activities for the 2014-15 ESE Monitoring and Assistance for the Sarasota County School District.

#### School Selection

After reviewing district data related to discipline (including disproportionate removal of black students with disabilities through In-School Suspension (ISS), OSS, and expulsion), LRE and disproportionate representation of black students as identified as having an EBD, the SST members determined to include the following schools for the 2014-15 on-site monitoring and assistance process:

- North Port High School
- Emma F. Booker Elementary School
- Alta Vista Elementary School
- Glenallen Elementary School
- Tatum Ridge Elementary School

## **CEIS**

Districts are required to set aside 15 percent of IDEA, Part B funds for coordinated early intervening services if **any** of the following criteria are met:

- Students of any race are at least 3.5 times more likely to be identified as disabled compared to all other races (CEIS-over-identification)
- Incidents of removal of students with disabilities through ISS, OSS, or expulsion for students with disabilities of any race are at least 3.5 more likely to occur when compared to all other races combined (CEIS-discipline)

The Sarasota County School District has consistently been required to set aside funds for CEIS-over-identification of black students as having an EBD. In 2013-14, black students in Sarasota County School District were 5.68 times more likely to be identified as having an EBD when compared to all other races. This meant that the district was required to withhold funds for CEIS during the 2014-15 school year. During the 2014-15 school year, this risk ratio decreased to 5.07, but the district will still be required to withhold funds during the 2015-16 school year. (Source: Survey 2 data from a given school year)

Using data from the 2012-13 school year, the Sarasota County School District's CEIS discipline results indicated that black students had more discipline incidents than all other races combined. Specifically, the incidents of removal of black students with disabilities through ISS, OSS, or expulsion were 3.66 times more likely to occur when compared to all other races combined during 2012-13. This was the first time data had revealed a risk ratio above 3.5 times and the subsequent analysis has again dropped below the 3.5 threshold. The one year in which the risk ratio exceeded 3.5 resulted in the district having to withhold funds in 2014-15. (Source: Survey 5 data from a given school year)

## **LRE**

The Sarasota County School District was previously targeted for SPP Indicator 5 LRE, during the 2013-14 ESE Monitoring and Assistance process. In 2013-14, Sarasota served 55.9 percent of students with disabilities in a regular classroom setting for 80 percent or more of the school week, while the state rate was 71.3 percent. In 2014-15, the district's regular class placement rate increased nine percentage points to 64.9 percent while the state rate increased three percentage points to 74.4 percent. (Source: Survey 2 data from a given school year)

## **SPP Indicator 4A and 4B**

SPP Indicator 4A and 4B include the rates of out-of-school suspension and expulsion. Specifically, SPP Indicator 4A includes districts that have a significant discrepancy in the rates of suspensions and expulsions of greater than 10 days in a school year for students with IEPs when compared to their nondisabled peers. SPP Indicator 4A was a newly identified target area for the district.

In 2012-13, the district suspended and expelled 87 students with disabilities for greater than 10 days out of a total enrollment of students with disabilities of 6,914. When compared to nondisabled students, students with disabilities were 3.027 times more likely to be suspended or expelled for greater than 10 days (Source: Survey 5, 2012-13).

SPP Indicator 4B looks at similar data to SPP Indicator 4A by race or ethnicity, but rather than only looking at the numerical calculation, it also includes looking at the district's 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. In SPP Indicator 4B, one race may be disproportionately



represented, but if policies, procedures, or practices do not contribute to the disproportionate representation, the district will be identified as meeting the state target. (Source: Survey 5, 2012-13 and subsequent review of policies, procedures and practices)

In 2012-13, the district had 43 black students with disabilities who were suspended and expelled greater than 10 days out of a total of 1,056 black students. When compared to nondisabled black students, black students with disabilities were 9.797 times more likely to be suspended or expelled for greater than 10 days. (Source: Survey 5, 2012-13) A follow-up review did not reveal inappropriate policies, procedures, or practices in the district.

On April 20-22, 2015, the school district participated in Phase 3 of the ESE Monitoring and Assistance process which involved follow-up activities related to the targeted areas of concern that affect equity and access in the educational environment for students with disabilities within the school district.

## **Interviews Conducted**

### **School-Level Administrators' and Teachers' Interviews and Student Focus Groups**

School-level administrators participated in school interviews or in administrators' focus groups. The questions during the focus groups and interviews varied depending on the participants of the activities. The questions were related to: educational environments, discipline practices and disproportionality of black students identified as EBD. The comments from these activities included the following information:

- Several schools use Restorative Circles to improve student discipline.
- Some staff stated that the use of data analysis to understand the rate of discipline incidents has been helpful as administrators decide on the next steps to improve students' discipline and behaviors.
- Several administrators indicated an increase of mental health concerns with students.
  - Some reported that students and their families do not have medical insurance to support the mental health needs of the students.
  - Some discussed the use of SEDNET as a resource in their schools to help some of their students with mental health concerns.
- Some administrators reported that the district's shift of serving more students with disabilities in a less restrictive environment has been a slow process as separate class placement is the norm for students with disabilities in some elementary schools.
- Several feeder schools have worked together with developing a positive behavioral system which includes students, parents, teachers, school visitors and school volunteers. The system's rewards may change; however, the expectations remain consistent throughout the educational settings.
- Some schools have developed alternate options of discipline referrals for students that incorporate a problem-solving process which includes the student learning better choices to deal with discipline issues.
- It was reported that students' grades are monitored quarterly by each school Professional Learning Community ESE liaison. The information is then provided to the school principal to review and adjust instructional needs per individual student. The district receives the information and monitors the ongoing process.
- The process of when a school administrator has exhausted the schools resources to address the needs of a student who has some behavioral concerns was described. The school administrator can then request assistance from the district. Once the request is submitted to the district, the student's name is placed in the order of urgency and need. School administrators stated that this process has been timely and has not delayed any support that may have been needed.

## Student Focus Groups

Participants in the student-focus groups included students with disabilities and students not identified as students with disabilities. The students within these focus groups provided feedback on the following topics: IEP meetings and parental participation, career and technical education, academics, extracurricular activities, dropout, and suspension and expulsion. The students' comments included the following:

- Some students reported that an advisory class was not beneficial and a class to prepare students for life outside of high school would be more useful for students.
- Students requested more assistance with college applications and financial assistance guidance.
- Some students requested that courses be more aligned with the real world and the future goals of students.
- The students understood the importance of graduating.
- Most students participated in their own IEP meetings.
- The majority of the students' teachers follow the accommodations within students' IEPs.

## Commendations

1. The school district has implemented an MTSS digital program, which is a progress monitoring tool to monitor Tier 2 and Tier 3 interventions for students. This program is currently being used at two schools. The district plans to provide this program to more schools during the 2015-16 school year. This program was developed to help the district identify the students in need of early intervention.
2. The importance for schools to connect with parents and the school's community increased through programs such as the Eagle Academy, educational programs for parents (General Education Development Preparation, Nurse Assistant Training, etc.) and community resources such as the Food Pantry.
3. During the classroom learning walks, teachers were observed being creative, engaged, and focused on student learning. Specifically, one kindergarten teacher at Emma E. Booker Elementary integrated a gaming application called Osmo for students' iPads in the classroom. This program has been advertised to promote social intelligence and creative thinking for students.

## 2014-15 Action-Planning and Next Steps

The school district's 2013-14 ESE Monitoring and Assistance action plan was reviewed by bureau staff. Based on the review of the action plan and the activities conducted during the 2014-15 monitoring and assistance on-site visit, the district's next steps have been identified below to improve in the target areas that affect equity and access in the educational environment for students with disabilities:

Next Steps	
Coordinated Early Intervening Services - Discipline	
Summary:	The Sarasota County School District's CEIS-discipline results indicated that black students have more discipline incidents than all other races combined. Specifically, the incidents of removal of black students with disabilities through ISS, OSS, or expulsion in 2012-13 were 3.66 times more likely to occur when compared to all other races combined. Although this figure did decrease slightly in 2013-14, to 3.44 (below the 3.50 threshold), the data indicates that this is still an area of concern. This was a newly identified area of concern for the district.

<b>Next Steps</b>	
Recommendation:	<p>It is recommended that the Sarasota County School District include the assistance of the MTSS:PBS Project, in an effort to improve district-wide discipline and behavioral concerns.</p> <p>The district will continue to use SEDNET and other discretionary projects to support the district.</p> <p>The school district will continue to disaggregate discipline data (incidents, not students) on all students with disabilities by race and ethnicity on a monthly basis to determine if there is disparity. They should use their multi-tiered system of support to address disparities and to continue to look at patterns, including looking at teacher patterns.</p>
Required Action:	<p>The Sarasota County School District will disaggregate discipline incident data in a form similar to that used in the CEIS-discipline calculation in order to target schools where black students are disproportionately receiving referrals resulting in ISS, OSS, and expulsion when compared to students with disabilities of all other races. A meeting will be scheduled by the district to review the data. The meeting will involve staff from MTSS:PBS, the BEESS Bureau Chief or a representative from BEESS, and the appropriate district and school staff.</p> <p>This review will include how discipline referrals resulting in ISS, OSS, and expulsion are being distributed among all races of students with disabilities. The school district will provide the bureau with a narrative explaining how the district's discipline practices may have contributed to the data results. If improvements need to be made based on the data, the district will need to include in the narrative what their next steps will be to improve in the area of concern that was evident in their data. If the data indicates improvements, then the district's narrative will need to indicate how the district plans to decrease their discipline incidents. The district will provide this information to the district's bureau liaison <b>no later than March 22, 2016.</b></p> <p>Additionally, the district will provide documentation of how the CEIS funds are allocated. Specifically, the district will need to include a Personnel Activity Report on how the funds are used for each individual. The district will provide this information to the district's bureau liaison <b>no later than March 22, 2016.</b></p>
<b>Coordinated Early Intervening Services - Over-identification of black students, EBD</b>	
Summary:	<p>The Sarasota County School District's CEIS over-identification results indicated that the school district continues to identify more black students as having an EBD. Specifically, in 2014-15, black students in Sarasota County School District were <b>5.07</b> times more likely to be identified as having an EBD compared to all other races. This will require that the district withhold 15 percent of IDEA funds in 2015-16 for CEIS services.</p>

<b>Next Steps</b>	
Recommendation:	The Sarasota County School District will monitor and analyze data from schools that have determined students eligible as having an EBD. In addition, the district will monitor data for all students eligible as having an EBD, not just those being newly identified. This data will capture any declines that occur due to students being dismissed or placed in another exceptional program.
Required Action:	<p>Based on the Sarasota County School District Action Step document, it was indicated that funding is used to support administration, behavior specialists and teachers. Specifically, it was stated that the behavioral substitute aides provide interventions. The district must provide specific details showing how each behavioral substitute aides' salary is being funded. This documentation must be provided to the district's bureau liaison <b>no later than March 22, 2016.</b></p> <p>Based on the district's Action Step document, the district stated that CEIS funds were provided to support those multi-tiered levels of support for students at risk. The district must provide evidence of how funds were used to support administrators, behavior specialists, and teachers to provide "intensive support" to these students in order for them to access education. This documentation must be provided to the district's bureau liaison <b>no later than March 22, 2016.</b></p> <p>Based on the district's Action Step document, the district stated that based on a review of their data and school trends, the following schools were provided support:</p> <p>Atwater Elementary School  Brentwood Elementary School  Emma E. Booker Elementary School  Fruitville Elementary School  Glenallen Elementary School  Garden Elementary School  Tuttle Elementary School</p> <p>Specifically, the district's Action Steps indicated that a new report was created to track suspensions of students within each school identified above. The district will review the data collected based on their report during the 2015-16 school year and provide a response to the data results from each identified school. The narrative will include the next steps to either continue to improve results or the next steps to improve the results of the identified schools. This documentation must be provided to the district's bureau liaison <b>no later than March 22, 2016.</b></p>
<b>Discipline (SPP Indicator 4A and 4B)</b>	
Summary:	<p>With regard to SPP Indicator 4A:  In Sarasota County School District, for the 2012-13 school year there were 87 students with disabilities who were suspended or expelled more than 10 days. The total enrollment of students with disabilities is 6,914.</p> <p>SPP Indicator 4A was a newly identified target area this year for the district. The school district's data from 2012-13 revealed that students</p>

**Next Steps**

	<p>with disabilities in the Sarasota County School District are 3.027 times more likely than non-disabled students to be suspended and expelled for more than 10 days. The 2013-14 data showed the risk ratio increased to <b>3.221</b>.</p> <p>With regard to SPP Indicator 4B:          In Sarasota County School District, there were 43 black students with disabilities who were suspended and expelled for more than 10 days during the 2012-13 school year. The total number of black students with disabilities in the district for the same year was 1,056. The total number of nondisabled black students in the district is 37,774, with 157 of those students suspended or expelled for more than 10 days. This means that black students with disabilities were 9.8 times more likely to be suspended or expelled for more than 10 days when compared to nondisabled black students. Although no inappropriate policies, procedures and practices were identified, this is an obvious area of concern. The 2013-14 data showed the risk ratio decreased slightly to <b>8.5</b>.</p>
<p>Recommendation:</p>	<p>Based on the Sarasota County School District's Action Steps, a data report was developed to allow the district and individual schools to view suspension and expulsion data.</p> <p>It is recommended that school-based staff and district continue to monitor the data monthly.</p>
<p>Required Action:</p>	<p>Based on the Sarasota County School District's Action Steps, a data report was developed to allow the district and individual schools to view suspension and expulsion data. Within the district's Action Step document, North Port High School was identified to serve as the district's pilot school to directly review the data and implement strategies in support of students targeted for need. Specifically, the district stated that North Port High School would establish a student forum to address the area of discipline.</p> <p>Per the district's Action Steps document, the district stated that based on information collected from the new OSS or expulsion report, a definitive pattern does exist with regard to suspensions among students with disabilities (SPP Indicator 4A), and more specifically of black students with disabilities (SPP Indicator 4B). Therefore, the district must provide evidence of at least two student forums throughout the 2015-16 school year. The students included in the forum must be students with disabilities and black students with disabilities. A narrative of the discussions during at least two student forums must be provided to the district's bureau liaison <b>no later than March 22, 2016</b>. In addition to a narrative about what was discussed, a narrative of each participating student's discipline history should also be included. Please do not include student specific information.</p> <p>Based on the Sarasota County School District's Action Steps, the new OSS or expulsion data report recommended that additional support be</p>

### Next Steps

provided to the following schools:  
 Booker Middle  
 McIntosh Middle  
 Heron Creek Middle  
 Riverview High School  
 North Port High School

The school district must provide the actions that have occurred during the 2015-16 school year, for the schools above with regard to improving in the areas of 4A and 4B. Evidence of the supports and action steps will be provided to the district's bureau liaison **no later than March 22, 2016.**

#### Least Restrictive Environment - Educational Environment

**Summary:** The Sarasota County School District was previously targeted for SPP Indicator 5, LRE during the 2013-14 monitoring and assistance process. The state rate was identified as 74.4 percent for regular class placement of students with disabilities. In the Sarasota County School District the rate of students with disabilities in regular classroom was identified as 64.9 percent.

**Recommendation:** Based on the comments from the interviews with school administrators and district staff during the 2014-15 on-site visit, the Sarasota County School District has made improvements with providing students the opportunity to be placed in the least restrictive environment. Specifically, the district closed a separate day school in the south part of the school district and those students were moved to a more inclusive behavioral cluster program at a middle school.

It is recommended that the school district continue to provide more opportunities for students with disabilities on all school levels to participate in a least restrictive environment. In order for this recommendation to be successful, training should be provided to the school administrators and the teachers who will be working more closely with these students.

**Required Action:** Based on the Sarasota County School District's Action Step document, the district indicated that there are ongoing co-teaching and support facilitation opportunities for English and math classes in the middle and high school levels.

During the 2014-15 on-site visit, middle school administrators indicated that the transition of students with disabilities who were served in a more restrictive environment in elementary school have a difficult time adjusting when placed in a setting that is more inclusive. It was also indicated that the teachers who provide instruction to these students also have difficulty with providing the appropriate supports for these students to be successful in the least restrictive environment.

The transition to inclusive education should be planned and should include staff preparation.

## Next Steps

In regards to staff preparation:

The district will identify the elementary schools that have a more restrictive educational setting at their school and all of the middle schools who would receive the students from these elementary schools. The English and math teachers on both school levels will participate in a group training to prepare themselves for the students involved in transition into a less restrictive educational environment in middle school. These trainings can be provided through the district's FDLRS office and must include the following topics:

- The teaching of rules and laws related to providing students with the LRE.
- The teacher's LRE responsibilities, including identifying their specific role in providing an education to students with disabilities.
- A list of what can help a student feel a sense of "belonging." Everyone wants to feel welcomed and that they "belong," especially in an environment that is new. All teachers should develop a list of what they can do to assist students in feeling a sense of belonging during their transition to a more inclusive environment.
- Understanding supplementary aides and services for students.
- The difference between behavior modifications and accommodations.
- Descriptions of several supports that can help teachers: co-teaching, support-facilitation, peer-tutoring, use of paraprofessionals and teacher collaboration. It would be helpful for teachers to develop a generic schedule of how they can implement all of these strategies within their school day.
- How a teacher can collect data for progress monitoring and what to do with the information.
- A list of available district staff, organizational resources, and outside resources to assist them in supporting the needs of each of their students.

The district is required to provide evidence that the training above occurred and include the schools that are mainly impacted with the transitioning of the students with disabilities to a more inclusive environment. Required documentation shall include a copy of the presentation for the training, a list of all the participants' names and titles, and copies of the training evaluations indicating the participants' experience. All of this documentation must be provided to the district's bureau liaison **no later than March 22, 2016**.

### Phase 4 of the ESE Monitoring and Assistance process

Summary:

By **March 25, 2016**, the SST, ESE director and designated district staff will evaluate the school district's progress or slippage in the areas of focus and 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 system 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
  - **Compendium of School Discipline Laws and Regulations** that catalogue state laws and regulations related to school discipline



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

**2014-15 ESE Monitoring and Assistance  
State Support Team for the Sarasota County School District**

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**Florida Department of Education  
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**Glossary of Acronyms and Abbreviations**

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

ASD	Autism spectrum disorder
BEESS	Bureau of Exceptional Education and Student Services
BIP	Behavioral intervention plan
BPIE	Best Practices for Inclusive Education
CARD	Center for Autism and Related Disorders
CEIS	Coordinated early intervening services
CFR	Code of Federal Regulations
CPI	Crisis Prevention Institute's Nonviolent Crisis Intervention
DRM	Dispute Resolution and Monitoring
EBD	Emotional behavioral disability
ESE	Exceptional student education
FBA	Functional behavioral assessment
FIN	Florida Inclusion Network
FDLRS	Florida Diagnostic and Learning Resources System
FDOE	Florida Department of Education
F.S.	Florida Statutes
IDEA	Individuals with Disabilities Education Act
IEP	Individual educational plan
InD	Intellectual disability
ISS	In-school-suspension
LEA	Local educational agency
MIS	Management Information System
MTSS	Multi-tiered system of support
OSS	Out-of-school suspension
PAADS	Program Accountability Assessment and Data Systems
PBIP	Positive Behavior Intervention Services
PBS	Positive Behavior Support
PBS:MTSS	Positive Behavior Support: Multi-tiered System of Supports
PD	Professional development
PS:Rtl	Problem Solving: Response to Intervention
PSS	Pupil Support Services
SEDNET	Multiagency Network for Students with Emotional Behavioral Disabilities
SIS	Student Information System
SLP	Speech-language pathologist
SPP	State Performance Plan
SST	State Support Team
TA	Technical assistance



Pam Stewart, Commissioner  
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