

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

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**Taylor County School District  
January 21-22, 2015**



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

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June 2, 2015

Paul E. Dyal, Superintendent  
Taylor County School District  
318 North Clark Street Perry,  
Florida 32347-2930

Dear Superintendent Dyal:

We are pleased to provide you with the 2014-15 Exceptional Student Education (ESE) Monitoring and Assistance On-Site Visit Report for Taylor 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. The Bureau of Exceptional Education and Student Services (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 Taylor County School District was selected as needing intensive supports for coordinated early intervening services related to discipline, graduation rates, incidents of restraint and disproportionality in discipline. The on-site visit was conducted by the State Support Team (SST) that included BEESS, Florida Department of Education 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, the SST interviewed district and school personnel, conducted classroom walk observations and conducted student focus groups. This process focuses on a shift from ESE compliance to outcomes to prepare all students for college and career readiness, which includes: 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**

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Superintendent Dyal  
June 2, 2015  
Page Two

Ms. Ramona Patrick, Director of ESE, and her staff were very helpful to the SST in preparing for the on-site visit and throughout the visit. This report will be posted on the BEESS' website and may be accessed at <http://www.fldoe.org/ease/mon-home.asp>.

Thank you for your commitment to improving services to exceptional education students in the Taylor 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: Ramona Patrick  
Cathy Bishop  
Patricia Howell  
Derek Hemenway

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**2014-15 Exceptional Student Education  
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**Taylor County School District**

**January 21-22, 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 Exceptional Student Education (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, BEESS 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 students with disabilities, the identification of students in specific disability categories, the placement of students 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 Students in the LEA, particularly, but not exclusively, for students 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 (SP&P) document.

## ESE Monitoring and Assistance Process

### Background Information

The 2014-15 ESE Monitoring and Assistance process focuses on those 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 students with individual educational plans (IEPs) graduating from high school with a regular diploma.
- Indicator 2 – Dropout: Percentage of students 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 students 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 students 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 students with IEPs ages 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 Discipline – 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, as required when a district has been determined to have significantly disproportionate data by race/ethnicity with respect to disciplinary actions, including suspensions and expulsions.
- 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). **The initial Taylor County School District on-site visit took place on December 12-13, 2013.**
- 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 two new areas of concern: CEIS related to discipline and disproportionality in discipline (Indicator 4B).**
- 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 December 15, 2014, the superintendent of the Taylor County School District was informed that the bureau would be conducting an on-site monitoring visit for the following focus areas: CEIS related to discipline, graduation rate, incidents of restraint and disproportionality in discipline. The Taylor County School District on-site visit was coordinated with the District Action-Planning and Problem-Solving (DAPPS) process which is a systems-level data-based problem-solving process that districts can use to guide their district improvement goals and related implementation efforts. The goals developed by the District Leadership Team (DLT) were included in the pre-existing District Improvement and Assistance Plan (DIAP). The DLT included district and ESE staff, SST members, Florida Department of Education (FDOE) staff and BEESS discretionary project staff members.

## **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, Bureau of Exceptional Education and Student Services
- Derek Hemenway, Program Specialist, Dispute Resolution and Monitoring (DRM)
- Cathy Howard-Williams, Program Specialist, DRM
- Karen Hallinan, Program Specialist, Instructional Support Services

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

- Beth Hardcastle, Action Planning and Problem-Solving facilitator, Florida's Problem Solving/Response to Intervention (PS/Rtl) Project
- Martha Murray, Technical Assistance Specialist, Positive Behavior Support: Multi-Tier System of Supports (PBS:MTSS)
- Tury Lewis, Regional Transition Representative, Region1, Project 10: Transition Education Network (Project 10)
- Dana Huggins, Project Manager, Region 3A, Multiagency Network for Students with Emotional/Behavioral Disabilities (SEDNET)
- Jennifer Barnhill, Human Resource Development Specialist, Florida Diagnostic and Learning Resources System (FDLRS)
- Kelly Claude, Facilitator, Florida Inclusion Network (FIN)
- Peg Sullivan, Project Director, State Personnel Development Grant (SPDG)
- Greg Gillman, Project Facilitator, SPDG

## **Data Collection**

On-site monitoring and assistance activities included the following:

- Review of recent data
- Student focus group – Four participants
- Teacher interviews – Four participants
- Administrator interviews – Two participants
- Action-planning and problem-solving process – 19 participants

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

The following information is excerpted from the 2013-14 on-site monitoring report. Additional information has been added to update the status of the recommendations and required actions.

<b>Next Steps from the 2013-14 On-Site Visit</b>	
Summary:	The district graduation and dropout rates improved significantly from 2011-12 to 2012-13, although the graduation rates, 36 percent federal uniform rate and 47 percent standard rate, require additional improvement.
Recommendation:	The district should continue to pay close attention to the data and the evidence-based practices that will keep the dropout rate low and increase the graduation rate for students with disabilities.
Required Action:	Recent legislative changes in Florida that allow all students to earn a standard diploma, combined with a better-prepared 2014-15 ninth grade cohort, should assist in the efforts to improve these results. It is imperative that the district ensure that current ninth grade students are enrolled in courses that will contribute to their graduation success. Students on access points should be enrolled in access or higher level courses and students not on access points with IEPs should be enrolled in general education courses, not fundamental courses, access courses or other ESE courses. The district will review course enrollments for all students with disabilities in ninth grade and provide a report to BEESS by November 14, 2014.
<b>Status Update 2013-14 Monitoring Visit:</b>	The district reviewed course enrollments for ninth grade students with disabilities and completed the required action prior to the 2014-15 on-site visit.
Summary:	At the time of the visit to Taylor Technical, there were several ESE students working on their standard diploma using a computer-based curriculum. There was no ESE teacher assigned to the facility.
Recommendation:	N/A
Required Action:	The district must ensure that an ESE teacher is available on-site at all times to provide instruction and support to students with IEPs.
<b>Status Update 2013-14 Monitoring Visit:</b>	The district provided documentation that indicated a Florida-certified ESE teacher was available on-site at all times to provide instruction and support to students with IEPs.  Taylor Career Academy (Formerly Taylor Technical Institute) has been redesigned to facilitate more “community” within the school and staff are embracing this new model. Enrollment has increased and Out-of-School Suspensions (OSS) have decreased.
Summary:	The team asked to visit an 18-22, post-special diploma program as part of the monitoring and assistance visit and was told that there were no students in this type of program.
Recommendations:	The district should conduct a needs assessment, review programs in size-alike districts and consider developing a program for students aged 18-22 years.

Required Actions:	N/A
<b>Status Update 2013-14 Monitoring Visit:</b>	Based on small enrollment numbers, the district has developed an individualized program for students aged 18-22 years. Two students currently are in the program and are engaged in academic and vocational training as well as paid employment.
Phases 3 and 4 of the ESE Monitoring and Assistance process	
Summary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Additional action-planning and problem solving for other priorities for the school district in regard to increasing the graduation rate and maintaining the decrease in the drop-out rate is needed.</li> <li>• This should take place in conjunction with the District Action Planning and Problem-solving Process (DAPPS).</li> <li>• By January 30, 2015, the SST and DAPPS team, ESE director and designated district staff will evaluate the effectiveness of the school district's action plan(s) and determine additional next steps, as appropriate.</li> </ul>
<b>Status Update 2013-14 Monitoring Visit:</b>	A DAPPS meeting was held on January 22, 2015, in conjunction with the district's DIAP meeting. The ESE director, DAPPS team members, and SST members were in attendance. Modifications related to improving graduation rates for current seniors and incoming ninth graders were made to the DIAP.

## 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 Taylor County School District.

### School Selection

After reviewing district data related to CEIS-discipline, incidents of restraint, graduation, and disproportionate use of disciplinary actions, the SST members determined to visit Taylor County High School.

### CEIS – Discipline

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 a particular race are at least 3.5 times more likely to be identified as disabled when compared to all other races combined. The calculation is repeated for students with disabilities, students identified with intellectually disabilities, students with emotional or behavioral disabilities, students with specific learning disabilities, students with Autism Spectrum Disorder, students identified as other health impaired, and students identified as speech or language impaired.
- Students with disabilities ages six to 21 of any race are at least 3.5 times more likely to be placed in a separate class or other separate environment when compared to all other races combined. The calculation is used only for the total of all students with disabilities.
- Incidents of removal of students with disabilities through In-School Suspension (ISS), OSS, 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. The calculation is used only for the total of all students with disabilities.

Taylor County was required to set aside these funds during the 2014-15 school year due to Black students with disabilities being **4.22** times more likely to be removed due to ISS, OSS, or expulsion than all other races combined. The calculation was based on 2011-12 discipline data.

The CEIS calculation for discipline is different from the calculation for SPP Indicators 4A and 4B. Indicator 4 calculations are based on the **number of students** with disabilities being removed for greater than 10 days due to OSS or expulsion compared to their nondisabled peers. The CEIS Discipline calculation is based on the **number of incidents**, including ISS, OSS and expulsion and only looks at students with disabilities.

The 15 percent of the IDEA Part B funds was to be used for students who are not currently identified as needing special education or related services, but who are receiving additional behavioral supports in order to succeed in the general education curriculum. 2014-15 was the first year the district was required to set aside 15 percent of their IDEA funds for CEIS related to discipline. During 2015-16 the district will not be required to set aside 15 percent as the district's risk ratio for 2015-16 is **3.47**.

Year	2014-15	2015-16
<b>Risk Ratio</b>	4.22	3.47

The district reported that the following actions were supported with CEIS funds during the 2014-15 school year:

- Created a joint district and school-based leadership team which conducted a systematic review of data from the district's Early Warning System (EWS) and other relevant data
- Added staff to participate in the joint data review, identify students, and develop, deliver and monitor behavioral and academic interventions
- Funded a speech-language pathologist to help schools identify language barriers that may be interfering with student learning and that may be contributing to social mores that may be contributing to inappropriate behavior
- Funded certified behavior analysts to provide interventions for nondisabled students, develop functional behavioral assessments and behavioral intervention plans and provide staff training
- Funded a behavior specialist to provide interventions at the district's alternative school
- Provided support for Failure Free Reading, a program designed for severely delayed readers identified in Grades 6 through 12
- Conducted a math intervention for students in Grades 3 through 5 identified by the EWS

### Disproportionate Use of Disciplinary Actions (4B)

District				
Taylor	5.63	*	8.00	4.67

\*Signifies fewer than 10 students with disabilities suspended/expelled for greater than 10 school days.

In 2013-14, the district's risk ratio was 4.67 for incidents of removal of Black students with disabilities through suspension and expulsion for greater than 10 days in a school year. Although

the risk ratio was a decrease from 8.00 in the prior year, it represents a significant discrepancy (3.0 or higher).

### Graduation Rates

**Federal Uniform High School Graduation Rate:** This calculation uses the number of first-time ninth graders from four years ago, plus incoming transfer students on the same schedule to graduate, minus students from this population who transferred out or left to enroll in a private school or home education divided by the number of standard diplomas from the same group.

### Students with Disabilities

	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14
Taylor	27.27%	35.71%	26.32%
State	47.71%	52.33%	55.06%

On April 21, 2015, the DAPPS team met regarding graduation. After reviewing data the team determined that 80 percent of the district’s seniors were on track to graduate and 20 percent were in jeopardy of not graduating. In addition, it was determined that the majority of the students that were in jeopardy of not graduating were enrolled in Smart Horizons, a career online education program offered by the district.

The DAPPS team discussed the use of their EWS to intervene earlier with undergraduate students. The DAPPS team discussed the Credit Recovery program and providing a more focused transition between eighth grade and ninth grade (and fifth grade and sixth grade), as well a summer program for over-age students. The district shared that they were recently approved for the Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID) program which provides professional learning for educators to improve college readiness for all students, especially those traditionally underrepresented in higher education. In addition, the team shared that Taylor County High School offers a Magnify Ninth plan, which targets at-risk freshman. It was determined that a status update on this program would be provided at the end of the school year.

### Incidents of Restraint

2011-12					
Number of Incidents	Number of Students	Number of Incidents	Number of Students	Number of Incidents	Number of Students
28	19	*	*	14	*

\*Signifies less than 10

After the 2013-14 on-site visit which took place on December 12-13, 2013, the district developed and completed the following action steps to decrease the number of incidents of restraint.

1. On February 19, 2014, the district held an additional meeting for further evaluation of procedures and implementation related to seclusion and restraint.
2. It was decided that by February 21, 2014, the director would disseminate a previously developed *Seclusion and Restraint Reporting Requirements Checklist* to all site-based administrators.

3. On February 21, 2014, behavior management consultants shared a seclusion and restraint reporting protocol regarding procedures, developed for Perry Primary, with the director, who disseminated it to other schools for possible replication.
4. During March 2014, the district trained newer administrators and deans on FDOE and BEESS definitions and reporting requirements using materials developed by SEDNET related to the use of seclusion and restraint with ESE students.
5. On March 7, 2014, the district compiled an information list regarding staff at each site trained in Crisis Prevention Institute's Nonviolent Crisis Intervention (CPI), and compared the list to FDLRS training documents.
6. The district and MTSS support team met to discuss and determine "standards" for who should be trained and certified in CPI at each site, and decided that ESE classroom personnel would be trained in CPI. They also decided that FDLRS would train all district staff in de-escalation strategies.

From August 2014 through April 2015, the district reported fewer than ten incidents of restraint.

## **Interviews Conducted**

### **Student Focus Group**

Students from Taylor County High School participated in a student focus group that included the following topics: IEP and transition IEP meetings, career and technical education, college preparation, academic experiences, participation in extracurricular activities, accommodations and assessment waivers, dropping out of school, suspensions and expulsions from school, and other resources or services needed. The students interviewed shared the following information:

- Students indicated that they had participated in IEP and transition meetings and described their experiences as having been helpful and informative.
- Students stated that preparation for careers or college was discussed often, and staff was very helpful with research on postsecondary institutions and in providing assistance with the college application process.
- One student noted that recruiters from colleges did not routinely visit the school.
- Several students stated that their parents and family encouraged them to think about what they wanted to do after high school.
- Students were enrolled in a variety of courses, including core areas such as math, language arts or English, social studies, and science, as well as in supportive classes such as learning strategies and intensive reading.
- Students with disabilities did not feel that they were treated differently than other students.
- The students' thoughts regarding their courses of study ranged from challenging without being overwhelmed, to mediocre and "boring."
- Students described having the opportunity to participate in a variety of extracurricular activities, including junior reserve officers training corps, community service clubs, science technology engineering and mathematics activities, cheerleading, football, and band.
- Students with disabilities did not feel that their participation in school and extracurricular activities was limited in any manner due to their disabilities and noted that in regard to accommodations, school staff provided accommodations according to the students' IEPs.
- Students felt that other students who had dropped out or been suspended or expelled from school had simply made "bad choices" either in engaging in inappropriate behavior resulting in disciplinary actions or choosing to drop out.
- Students understood the school's disciplinary procedures and how a student could get referred to in-school or out-of-school suspension.

- Most students did not feel they needed additional resources or services. However, one student expressed appreciation for a tutoring program that had been offered in the past.

### **Teacher Interviews**

Teachers participated in interviews on the following topics: graduation, discipline, CEIS-discipline, course enrollment, progress monitoring and use of data. The following information was provided by four teachers:

- Teachers felt that the biggest barriers toward improving graduation rates were community and family views regarding the value of earning a diploma. Teachers stated that many students and students' family members felt that a high school diploma was not necessary for employment. However, teachers individually and as a group tried hard to keep students motivated and they felt supported by the school's administration in this area.
- Teachers familiar with the Check and Connect mentoring initiative felt it was helpful in keeping students from dropping out of school and focused on graduation. One teacher indicated an awareness of a similar district-level intervention.
- Teachers also mentioned tutoring and credit recovery as important supports.
- Teachers did not indicate having received training for the use of a formal early warning system.
- In regard to the use of the Response to Intervention (Rtl) and progress monitoring, teachers stated they were unaware of the status of Rtl, or personnel formerly responsible for coordinating Rtl activities. Rtl "coaches" were no longer active at the school. Some teachers also noted that although meetings without an Rtl "label" occur related to a variety of interventions, they may occur at a less frequent level than at elementary or middle school grade levels.
- Teachers also used district-wide assessments for progress monitoring and had a variety of individualized progress monitoring systems in use at the classroom level.
- In regard to discipline, teachers felt that although the school had a PBS program, it was not very active.

### **Administrator Interviews**

School-based administrators provided the following information regarding graduation rate, discipline, CEIS-discipline, course enrollment, progress monitoring and use of data:

- Administrators believed the major reasons for decreases in graduation rates for all students included student non-attendance, student behavioral concerns, and students who did not pass courses early in their high school career.
- Administrators also noted that students in self-contained settings were not always exposed to the general education curriculum in the earlier grades (prior to their entry into high school) and were not adequately prepared for the increased rigor in order to meet current and future graduation standards.
- Administrators also felt that more age-appropriate interventions and supports (e.g., interventions and supports appropriate to high school aged students) might also help increase the graduation rate.
- Administrators noted that many supports and interventions to address graduation rate have recently been implemented.
- Administrators mentioned that the school had applied for membership in the AVID program but did not receive funding for implementing the program at the high school level. School staff then began to develop a course locally at the high school with the intent to provide some of the benefits of the AVID program. Primary components in the course included critical thinking strategies, self-advocacy, and knowledge of requirements for graduation. The course was first

offered at the beginning of the 2014-15 school year. While school staff continues to pursue funding for the AVID program, administrators felt that the course they developed had been beneficial to students. Administrators also noted that a summer version of the course designed for incoming ninth graders who were identified as at-risk eighth graders was also offered. Students who completed the course were allowed to receive high school credit. Administrators stated that they planned to offer the course again during the summer of 2015.

- Administrators stated that the EWS is currently being used to identify ninth graders in need of the summer program.
- Administrators felt that although the EWS was being used, staff had some difficulties in using it, and better ways to access the system were needed.
- Administrators also felt that additional professional development was needed, especially related to differentiated instruction.
- Administrators believed that a better process for incorporating new staff was needed, as training new teachers was challenging.

## **Commendations**

1. The Taylor County High School administration has been diligent in investigating alternatives and resources that support graduation. Examples include the following:
  - Development of course content from Project Start on Success for a critical thinking course which promotes self-advocacy, and awareness of graduation requirements.
  - Implementation of evidence-based initiatives such as Check and Connect to address individual student needs.
2. Classroom learning walks revealed an orderly school climate that was conducive to learning. Students and teachers appeared to be engaged and motivated.
3. The school's administration is making solid efforts at implementing an inclusive educational environment and is providing supports to facilitate moving students out of self-contained settings.
4. School staff members regularly monitor students' progress using state and district assessments (Florida Assessments for Instruction in Reading, Discovery Education Assessment) as well as individualized methods.

## **2014-15 Action-Planning and Problem-Solving Process and Next Steps**

As part of the 2014-15 monitoring and assistance on-site visit, the SST members, ESE director and representatives from the Taylor County School District participated in a problem-solving and action-planning process on January 22, 2015. The district's DAPP team updated Goal One within the DIAP for graduation and dropout. In addition, Goal Two within the DIAP was updated by implementing an MTSS in order to provide supports and interventions for current twelfth graders to ensure graduation and to provide immediate and long-term supports to incoming ninth graders at risk of dropping out. The DIAP is the district's action plan.

The team stated that the process for gathering and inputting data for the EWS was cumbersome and time intensive. The district indicated that they were working on having FOCUS and Performance Matters communicate with each other as this has been identified as the primary barrier. In addition, glitches in the system were to be resolved as the Performance Matters system had been operational since December 2014.

The district completed their indicator tally sheet for the Best Practices for Inclusive Education (BPIE) process on June 17, 2014. On July 14, 2014, the services plan was completed and revised on December 15, 2014. The District FIN services plan includes the following three goals:

- Goal 1: Taylor County ESE will disseminate a selection of job interview questions related to

inclusion of diverse populations to school administrators for use by November 2014.

- Goal 2: FIN will support Taylor County ESE in decreasing the number of students receiving instruction in a separate class placement from 23 percent district-wide to 11 percent by May 2017-18 by providing strategies and information to teachers.
- Goal 3: FIN will support Taylor County Schools in increasing achievement for students with disabilities in the general education setting from 35 percent to 42 percent proficiency in reading and from 43 percent to 53 percent proficiency in math by June 2016.

<b>Next Steps</b>	
Summary:	The district's number of restraints decreased significantly from the 2013-14 school year. At the time of the 2014-15 visit, fewer than 10 restraints had occurred.
Recommendation:	The district should continue to implement strategies to decrease the number of incidents of restraint in coordination with PBS and SEDNET.
Required Action:	N/A
Summary:	In 2013-14, the district's risk ratio was 4.67 for incidents of removal of black students with disabilities through suspension and expulsion for greater than 10 days in a school year. Although this risk ratio was a decrease from 8.00 in the prior year, it was a significant discrepancy (3.0 or higher).
Recommendation:	The district should continue to make an effort to identify measures to decrease the number of discipline referrals and suspensions and expulsions and consider conducting focus groups with teachers, students and parents. The district's PBS team should continue to work on the goals established in the district's DIAP, specifically, the district's goal to enhance the implementation of an MTSS via PBS and behavior management training and further implementation of Rtl-B data analysis, and EWS data.
Required Action:	The DAPPS team is scheduled to meet in May 2015 to discuss disproportionate discipline, PBS implementation and restraint and seclusion. The district is to provide an update to BEESS no later than <b>July 1, 2015</b> .

<b>CEIS- Discipline</b>	
Summary:	The 15 percent of the IDEA Part B funds were to be used for students who are not currently identified as needing special education or related services, but who are receiving additional behavioral supports in order to succeed in the general education curriculum. 2014-15 was the first year the district was required to set aside 15 percent of their IDEA funds for CEIS related to discipline. During 2015-16 the district will not be required to set aside 15 percent as the district's risk ratio for 2015-16 is 3.47.
Recommendation:	The 2015-16 data for CEIS discipline for the district is 3.47, which is just under the bureau's definition of significant disproportionate representation of 3.5. It is recommended that the district continue efforts to decrease the risk ratio.
Required Action:	N/A
<b>Graduation</b>	
Summary:	In 2011-12, the district's federal graduation rate for students with disabilities was 27.3 percent. In 2012-13, this increased to 35.7 percent. However, in 2013-14, the district's federal graduation rate decreased to 26.3 percent.
Recommendation:	<p>The district should continue to focus its efforts on implementation of the district's DIAP particularly regarding activities related to improving graduation rates, including the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Implementation of the Performance Matters EWS and the Check and Connect initiative</li> <li>• Implementation of activities identified in the district's BPIE with support from FIN</li> <li>• Development of transition plans using best practices and support from Project 10</li> <li>• Focusing on efforts to ensure graduation of current twelfth graders and vertical articulation for eighth and ninth graders</li> </ul> <p>The district should also continue to implement an MTSS with fidelity with a goal of supporting students to proficiently master grade level standards.</p>
Required Action:	N/A
<b>Phases 3 and 4 of the ESE Monitoring and Assistance process</b>	
Summary:	By <b>March 31, 2016</b> , 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 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
  - **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 Taylor 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.

AVID	Advancement Via Individual Determination
BEESS	Bureau of Exceptional Education and Student Services
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
DAPP	District action-planning and problem-solving
DIAP	District improvement and assistance plan
DLT	District Leadership Team
DRM	Dispute Resolution and Monitoring
ESE	Exceptional student education
EWS	Early Warning System
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
ISS	In-school-suspension
LEA	Local educational agency
MTSS	Multi-tiered system of support
OSS	Out-of-school suspension
PBS	Positive Behavior Support
PBS:MTSS	Positive Behavior Support/Multi-tiered System of Supports
PS:Rtl	Problem solving: Response to Intervention
Rtl-B	Response to intervention behavior database
SEDNET	Multiagency Network for Students with Emotional Behavioral Disabilities
SPDG	State Personnel Development Grant
SPP	State Performance Plan
SST	State Support Team



Pam Stewart, Commissioner

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