

**2018-19 Exceptional Student Education
On-Site Monitoring Report**

**DeSoto County School District
February 19-21, 2019**



This publication is produced through the Bureau of Exceptional Education and Student Services (BEES), Division of K-12 Public Schools, Florida Department of Education (FDOE), and is available online at <http://www.fldoe.org/ese/mon-home.asp>. For information on available resources, contact the BEES Resource and Information Center (BRIC).

BRIC website: <http://www.fldoe.org/ese/clerhome.asp>

BEES website: <http://www.fldoe.org/ese/>

Email: BRIC@fldoe.org

Telephone: 850-245-0475

Fax: 850-245-0987



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

Authority.....	1
Exceptional Student Education (ESE) On-Site Monitoring Process	1
Background Information.....	1
School Selection.....	2
2018-19 ESE On-Site Monitoring Focus Areas	3
Graduation Rate	3
Dropout Rate	3
Educational Environment (Least Restrictive Environment)	4
Prekindergarten Proficiency in Communication	4
English Language Arts Scores for Third Grade Students with Disabilities.....	4
Math Scores for Middle-Grades Students with Disabilities	5
Interviews Conducted.....	6
Administrator Focus Groups	6
Teacher Focus Groups.....	6
Parent Focus Group	7
Student Focus Groups.....	7
Commendations.....	8
2018-19 Next Steps	8
Technical Assistance	13
State Support Team Members for DeSoto County School District.....	16

Authority

The Florida Department of Education (FDOE), Bureau of Exceptional Education and Student Services (BEES), 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 1003.01(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]). BEES 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, BEES 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, BEES examines records and ESE services, evaluates procedures, provides information and assistance to school districts and otherwise assists school districts in operating effectively and efficiently. The monitoring system is designed to facilitate improved educational outcomes for students while ensuring compliance with applicable federal laws and regulations and state statutes and rules.

Under 34 CFR §300.646(b)(2), if a state identifies significant disproportionality based on race or ethnicity in a local educational agency (LEA) with respect to the identification of children as children with disabilities, the identification of children in specific disability categories, the placement of children with disabilities in particular educational settings or the taking of disciplinary actions, the LEA must use the maximum amount (15 percent) of funds allowable for comprehensive coordinated early intervening services (CEIS) for children in the LEA who are not currently identified as needing special education or related services, but who need additional academic or behavioral supports in order to succeed in a general education environment. These children should include particularly, but not exclusively, children in those groups that were significantly overidentified.

Section 1003.573, F.S., Use of restraint and seclusion on students with disabilities, establishes documentation, reporting and monitoring requirements for districts regarding the use of restraint and seclusion on students with disabilities. It also requires districts to have policies and procedures in place that govern parent notification, incident reporting, data collection and monitoring the use of restraint or seclusion for students with disabilities. As required, the FDOE has established district- and school-based standards for documenting, reporting and monitoring the use of restraint and seclusion. These standards are included in each district's Exceptional Student Education Policies and Procedures document.

ESE On-Site Monitoring Process

Background Information

The 2018-19 ESE On-Site Monitoring process focuses on those State Performance Plan 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 more 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 rates of suspensions and expulsions of more than 10 days for children with IEPs; and (b) policies, procedures or practices that contribute to the significant discrepancy and do not comply with requirements relating to the development and implementation of IEPs, the use of positive behavioral interventions and support, and procedural safeguards.
- Indicator 5 – Educational environments:
Percentage of children with IEPs aged 6 through 21:
 - A. In the regular class 80 percent or more of the day;
 - B. In the regular class less than 40 percent of the day; and
 - C. In separate schools, residential facilities or homebound or hospital placements.
- Indicator 10 – Disproportionality, specific disability categories: Percentage of districts with disproportionate representation of racial and ethnic groups in specific disability categories that is the result of inappropriate identification.
- CEIS – Services provided for 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 support to succeed in a general education environment.
- Restraint – Rate of incidents of restraint, as reported in the FDOE database.
- Seclusion – Rate of incidents of seclusion, as reported in the FDOE database.

The ESE On-Site Monitoring process includes four phases:

- Phase 1 is composed of planning activities that occur in advance of the initial on-site visit to the school district.
- Phase 2 is the initial on-site visit to the selected school district by the state support team (SST). The SST consists of BEESS staff, peer monitors from other districts and discretionary project staff. The SST assists with facilitating focus groups at each school site that may consist of administrators, teachers, students and parents.
- Phase 3 is follow-up activities, which are conducted by a designated follow-up team, as determined by the SST, and identification of the ongoing data that will be collected.
- Phase 4 is evaluation of the effectiveness of how the district is addressing each of the focus areas, and should include participation of the action-planning and problem-solving process team.

In a letter dated August 13, 2018, the superintendent of the DeSoto County School District was informed that BEESS would be conducting an on-site monitoring visit for the following focus areas: graduation rate, dropout rate, least restrictive environment (LRE), prekindergarten (PreK) proficiency in the communication domain, English language arts (ELA) scores for third grade students and math scores for middle-grades students.

School Selection

Upon review of the school district's data, it was determined that the on-site monitoring process would involve all of the following schools for school administrator and teacher focus groups, and some schools for parent and student focus groups:

- Memorial Elementary School
- Nocatee Elementary School
- DeSoto Middle School
- DeSoto County High School
- Early Childhood Center

2018-19 ESE On-Site Monitoring Focus Areas

The following data are related to the focus areas and activities for the 2018-19 ESE On-Site Monitoring for the DeSoto County School District.

Graduation Rate

The federal uniform high school graduation rate for students with disabilities is calculated by taking the number of first-time ninth graders from four years ago, plus the number of incoming transfer students on the same schedule to graduate, minus the number of 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. Although, the district's federal graduation rate for students with disabilities increased each school year from 2015-16 to 2017-18, the district did not meet the state target for each of the three years.

	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18
DeSoto	37.1%	40.0%	46.3%
State Target	58.3%	60.3%	62.3%

Dropout Rate

The federal dropout rate for students with disabilities is calculated by taking the number of students who exited special education as a result of dropping out, divided by the number of students who graduated with a regular high school diploma, a special diploma, a certificate of completion, or a special certificate of completion, and who dropped out or died. Although the district's federal dropout rate for students with disabilities decreased each school year from 2015-16 to 2017-18, the district did not meet the state target for each of the three years.

	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18
DeSoto	34.4%	26.7%	20.0%
State Target	13.4%	11.7%	10.0%

Educational Environment (Least Restrictive Environment)

To the maximum extent appropriate, students with disabilities are to be educated with students without disabilities. These LRE data are calculated by dividing the number of students with disabilities aged 6 through 21 served in the regular class for 80 percent or more of the day, by the total number of students with disabilities aged 6 through 21 reported in October (survey 2). These data do not include parentally placed private school students or students served in Florida county jails, Florida Department of Juvenile Justice facilities or Florida Department of Corrections. Although the district’s percentage of students with disabilities being served in the regular class increased by 4.3 percent from 2016-17 to 2018-19, the district did not meet the state target for each of the three years.

	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19
DeSoto	78.7%	77.5%	83.0%
State Target	82.0%	83.0%	85.0%

Prekindergarten Proficiency in Communication

Early literacy and communication are the building blocks for the development of effective reading skills; therefore, BEESS identified the communication domain for PreK-aged children with disabilities as an area of focus for the district. The district’s percentage of PreK students with disabilities functioning within age expectations in the communication domain increased each school year from 2015-16 to 2017-18. For each of the three years, the district did not meet the state target.

	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18
DeSoto	54.8%	58.8%	64.0%
State Target	71.4%	73.4%	75.9%

English Language Arts Scores for Third Grade Students with Disabilities

After reviewing state assessment data trends for the FSA, BEESS has identified students with disabilities in third grade ELA as an area in critical need of support. BEESS established tiered criteria in order to provide needed supports for kindergarten through grade 3 ELA in each district to increase the number of students with disabilities scoring level three and above and close the achievement gap between all students and students with disabilities. The percentage of students with disabilities that scored level three and above in third grade ELA decreased from 2015-16 to 2016-17 and then increased by 7.9 percent during the 2017-18 school year, but is still below the 2015-16 percentage. For each of the three years, the district did not meet the state target.

FSA Scores of Level Three and Above in Third Grade ELA	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18
DeSoto			
Percentage of Students with Disabilities	22.0%	14.0%	21.9%
Percentage of All Students	35.5%	31.3%	29.3%
Achievement Gap between Students with Disabilities and with All Students	13.5%	17.3%	7.4%
State			
State Target for Students with Disabilities	56.0%	61.0%	66.0%
Average for All Students	54.4%	57.8%	56.9%
Average for Students with Disabilities	26.2%	31.2%	30.4%
Achievement Gap between Students with and without Disabilities	28.2%	26.6%	26.5%

Note: All students includes students with disabilities and students without disabilities.

Math Scores for Middle-Grades Students with Disabilities

After reviewing state assessment data trends for the Florida Standards Assessment (FSA), BEESS identified students with disabilities in middle-grades (grades 6-8) math as an area in critical need of support. BEESS established tiered criteria in order to provide needed supports for middle-grades math in each district to increase the number of students with disabilities scoring level three and above and close the achievement gap between all students and students with disabilities. Three-year trend data for 2015-16 to 2017-18 for middle-grades math scores indicate an increase in the achievement gap between students with disabilities and students without disabilities. Students with disabilities scoring a level three and above increased by 4.9 percent from 2015-16 to 2017-18.

FSA Scores of Level Three and Above in Middle-Grades Math	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18
DeSoto			
Percentage of Students with Disabilities	6.0%	13.1%	10.9%
Percentage of Students without Disabilities	28.4%	35.9%	38.4%
Achievement Gap between Students with and without Disabilities	22.4%	22.8%	27.5%
State			
State Target for Students with Disabilities	56.0%	61.0%	66.0%
Average for Students with Disabilities	21.0%	22.3%	23.4%
Average for Students without Disabilities	55.9%	56.7%	57.6%
Achievement Gap between Students with and without Disabilities	34.9%	34.4%	34.2%

Interviews Conducted

Administrator Focus Groups

Members of the SST conducted focus groups with administrators from Memorial Elementary School, Nocatee Elementary School, DeSoto Middle School, DeSoto County High School and the Early Childhood Center regarding graduation rate, dropout rate, LRE, PreK students functioning within age expectations in the communication domain, ELA scores for third grade students with disabilities and math scores for middle-grades students with disabilities.

Themes that emerged from these focus groups included the following:

- At the Early Childhood Center there is strong collaboration between general education and ESE teachers to support all students.
- After-school tutoring is available to all students in third through fifth grade and one hour of ELA and math intervention or enrichment is provided daily for students in elementary school.
- All students have access to laptops to increase their ability to use technology.
- At the middle and high schools, an early warning system (EWS) is used to identify and support students who are at risk of dropping out and not graduating on time.
- The district is providing a more rigorous curriculum to improve learning gains by adopting Eureka for math and Wit and Wisdom (K-2) and Great Minds (3-5) for reading and language arts.
- The assistant principals and curriculum specialists are responsible for ensuring that supports for Tiers 2 and 3 are provided; however, a team approach using a multi-tiered system of supports (MTSS) framework was not clearly evident.
- There is a need to recruit and retain certified teachers, including ESE teachers.
- Some of the kindergarten through third grade students from the elementary schools receive support in the classroom from teacher assistants through consultation under the direction of a certified ESE teacher. The general education teachers reported consulting with ESE teachers.
- A full-time reading coach is needed at each school to support teachers in improving the literacy of the students.

Teacher Focus Groups

Members of the SST conducted focus groups with teachers from Memorial Elementary School, Nocatee Elementary School, DeSoto Middle School, DeSoto County High School and the Early Childhood Center regarding graduation rate, dropout rate, LRE, PreK students functioning within age expectations in the communication domain, ELA scores for third grade students with disabilities and math scores for middle-grades students with disabilities.

Themes that emerged from these focus groups included the following:

- Common planning time for teachers is a priority and professional learning communities help teachers feel valued and supported.
- The district has moved to an inclusion model and is working to improve the implementation of this new way of work.
- More ESE teacher support is needed for students with disabilities in general education classes at the elementary and middle schools.
- Teachers focus on student success and place a high priority on using data to inform instruction in the classroom.

- Increased training for teachers and paraprofessionals is needed regarding who is required to provide specially designed instruction to students with disabilities.
- A full-time reading coach is needed at each school to support teachers in improving the literacy of the students.
- The assistant principals and curriculum specialists are responsible for ensuring that supports for Tiers 2 and 3 are provided; however, a team approach using an MTSS framework was not clearly evident.
- Some of the kindergarten through third grade students from the elementary schools receive support in the classroom from teacher assistants through consultation under the direction of a certified ESE teacher. The general education teachers reported consulting with ESE teachers.
- More vocational, career and technical classes are needed at the high school to provide students with the needed skills for postsecondary education and workplace success.

Parent Focus Group

Members of the SST conducted a focus group with parents of students with disabilities aged 14 years or older.

Themes that emerged from this focus group included the following:

- ESE services have improved in the district compared to past years.
- Most teachers provide the accommodations students need; however, in some courses that rely heavily on reading and writing, teachers need to be more mindful of the accommodations on students' IEPs.
- General education teachers need more training related to specially designed instruction.
- Increased and improved communication between schools and parents is needed to support positive student outcomes.
- There is a need for more transition planning and services related to agencies (e.g., Vocational Rehabilitation) that can provide services to students with disabilities.
- Accurate information is needed about the deferral process and how to access services for students with disabilities aged 18-21 who may continue to need services.

Student Focus Groups

Members of the SST conducted focus groups with students from DeSoto Middle School and DeSoto County High School. Students were asked to share their perspectives on topics such as graduation, dropout and postsecondary activities.

Comments from these focus groups included the following:

- All students have an adult they can speak with if they are having problems.
- In the middle and high schools, students have regular data chats with teachers on their progress.
- Most of the students participate in their IEP team meetings and know their accommodations.
- Students believe that some teachers have low expectations for students.
- Teachers need training to better understand students' disabilities and how to assist them in the classroom.
- Content-certified teachers are needed instead of long-term substitute teachers.
- Teachers should use innovative and engaging teaching strategies rather than the traditional teaching methods, which hinder students' progress.

Commendations

1. The district’s standard diploma rate for students with disabilities increased from 66.7 percent during the 2016-17 school year to 79.3 percent during the 2017-18 school year.
2. The district’s percentage of PreK students functioning within age expectations in the use of appropriate behaviors increased from 82.4 during the 2016-17 school year to 88.0 percent during the 2017-18 school year, which is above the state target of 81.5 percent.

2018-19 Next Steps

Graduation Rate	
Summary	Although, the district’s federal graduation rate for students with disabilities increased each school year from 2015-16 to 2017-18, the district did not meet the state target for each of the three years.
Recommendations	<p>The district should consider the following actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to collaborate with staff from Project 10: Transition Education Network on the use of the EWS. • Partner with Vocational Rehabilitation, under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act, to provide pre-employment services to students with disabilities throughout the district. • Utilize a variety of online courses available on the BEESS Portal for Professional Development Alternatives, at http://www.fl-pda.org/independent/descriptions.aspx, to increase educators’ abilities to respond to the needs of students with disabilities (e.g., MTSS, universal design for learning [UDL], graduation requirements and using an EWS to increase graduation success).
Required Actions	<p>The district must collaborate with Project 10 staff and provide documentation of the following actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A summary indicating how the district will ensure fidelity of the implementation of the EWS, including the process of how training will be implemented and the timeline. • Establish targets and project the 2019-20 graduation rates for students with disabilities and create a plan for how to provide targeted support to monitor students for on-time graduation for the 2019-20 and 2020-21 school years. <p>The district must develop interventions and activities for students at risk of not graduating and provide documentation of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A list of interventions and activities for students at risk of not graduating. • The name and title of the school-level designee who will be responsible for ensuring that appropriate interventions and activities are made available to students. <p>The district must provide a detailed narrative describing each of the above-mentioned actions to the district’s BEESS liaison via BEESSMonitoring@fldoe.org by August 22, 2019.</p>

Dropout Rate	
Summary	Although the district’s federal dropout rate for students with disabilities decreased each school year from 2015-16 to 2017-18, the district did not meet the state target for each of the three years.
Recommendations	<p>The district should continue to work toward the strategic plan goals shared by the district during the 2018-19 on-site visit by considering the following actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collaborate with the State Personnel Development Grant (SPDG) discretionary project staff on dropout prevention strategies and scaling up existing research-based practices. • Continue to review district data for coding issues that may affect the district’s dropout rate. • Provide professional development for staff on how to use the available data systems to increase student achievement.
Required Actions	<p>The district must complete the following actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish goals for the performance targets for on-time graduation for students with disabilities throughout the district. • Review data for the students coded as a dropout to determine if they are coded accurately. A definition of the dropout codes (DNE, W05, W13, W15, W18, W21, W22 and W23) can be found in the PK-12 Database Manuals, Appendix A, at http://www.fldoe.org/accountability/data-sys/database-manuals-updates/. • Continue to collaborate with Project 10 staff to provide training on the use of data to identify students at risk of not graduating on time or dropping out. <p>The district must provide a detailed narrative describing each of the above-mentioned actions to the district’s BEESS liaison via BEESSMonitoring@fldoe.org by August 22, 2019.</p>
Least Restrictive Environment	
Summary	<p>Although the district’s percentage of students with disabilities being served in the regular class increased by 4.3 percent from 2016-17 to 2018-19, the district did not meet the state target for each of the three years.</p> <p>During the on-site visit, it was reported that some of the kindergarten through third grade students from the two elementary schools receive support in the classroom from teacher assistants through consultation under the direction of a certified ESE teacher. In addition, the general education teachers reported consulting with ESE teachers. On February 27, 2019, members of the BEESS leadership team conducted a call with the district’s ESE director to discuss this model and reiterate that if a student’s IEP includes specially designed instruction it must be provided by a qualified teacher in accordance with the Course Code Directory.</p>

<p>Recommendations</p>	<p>The district should continue to work toward the strategic plan goals shared during the 2018-19 on-site visit by considering the following actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collaborate with project staff from Problem Solving/Response to Intervention (PS/RtI), Florida Diagnostic and Learning Resources System (FDLRS), and the Florida Inclusion Network (FIN) for professional development in MTSS and inclusive scheduling and implementation. • Utilize the variety of online courses available on the BEESS Portal for Professional Development Alternatives, at http://www.flpda.org/independent/descriptions.aspx, to build the capacity of educators to respond to the needs of students with disabilities (e.g., MTSS, UDL, integrating standards aligned instruction across tiers).
<p>Required Actions</p>	<p>The district must complete the following actions:</p> <p>District staffing specialists:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The district must collaborate with FDLRS staff to provide professional development to district staffing specialists on the delivery of specially designed instruction and writing quality IEPs by August 22, 2019. • The district must review the schedules for all the kindergarten through third grade students at the elementary schools and identify if any students should have received direct services from a qualified ESE teacher as identified in their IEP. • If it is determined that a student did not receive the identified specially designed instruction on the IEP from a qualified teacher, the student’s IEP team must reconvene with the appropriate participants in attendance, including the parents of the student, to determine if the student needs compensatory services. • The district must provide the following to the bureau by September 26, 2019: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – A list of the students’ IEPs reviewed. – A list of the students that did not receive specially designed instruction by a qualified teacher as identified on their IEPs. – The compensatory services determined to be needed. – For all students determined to be in need of compensatory services, a copy of the schedule to provide the compensatory services during the 2019-20 school year. <p>Verification of the provision of these services must be provided to the bureau, until completed, on the following dates, as applicable: December 12, 2019, and March 26, 2020.</p> <p>District and school staff:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The district must collaborate with FDLRS staff to provide professional development to district and school staff in the areas of quality IEPs, specifically writing IEPs based on the needs of the student; documenting specially designed instruction; and providing specially designed instruction by a qualified teacher, following the requirements outlined in the Course Code Directory.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The district must collaborate with FIN staff to provide additional training to district and school staff working with students with disabilities in all three elementary schools on job-embedded professional development on the inclusive scheduling process and collaborative teaching strategies. The training must include UDL; differentiated instruction to allow for additional inclusion model classrooms (e.g., co-teaching and support facilitation); and cooperative learning strategies. <p>Beginning with the 2019-20 school year, the district must ensure that all students with disabilities are being provided specially designed instruction by a qualified teacher as documented in their IEPs and in accordance with the Course Code Directory.</p> <p>The district must provide a detailed narrative describing each of the above-mentioned actions and verification for each training to include the date of the training; names, signatures and titles of training participants; copies of any content presented; and the name and title of the presenter. This must be provided to the district's BEESS liaison via BEESSMonitoring@fldoe.org by September 26, 2019.</p>
PreK Proficiency in Communication	
Summary	The district's percentage of PreK students with disabilities functioning within age expectations in the communication domain increased from 58.8 percent during the 2016-17 school year to 64.0 percent during the 2017-18 school year, which is below the state target of 75.9 percent.
Recommendations	<p>The district should consider the following actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collaborate with PS/Rtl project staff to identify and review allocations of resources for PreK. • Collaborate with Technical Assistance and Training System staff to provide professional development opportunities to PreK teachers that are specific to early childhood, communication and early literacy skill development.
Required Actions	None.
ELA scores for Third Grade Students with Disabilities	
Summary	The percentage of students with disabilities that scored level three and above in third grade ELA decreased from 22.0 percent during the 2015-16 school year to 14.0 percent during the 2016-17 school year. The 2017-18 percentage increased to 21.9 percent, which is below the state average of 30.4 percent for students with disabilities and below the 2015-16 percentage.
Recommendations	See recommendations for LRE.
Required Actions	See required actions for LRE.

Math Scores for Middle-Grades Students with Disabilities	
Summary	Three-year trend data for 2015-16 to 2017-18 for middle-grades math scores indicate no significant increase or decrease in the achievement gap between students with disabilities and students without disabilities. Students with disabilities scoring a level three and above increased by 4.9 percent from 2015-16 to 2017-18.
Recommendations	<p>The district should consider the following actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify barriers in core instruction, as well as barriers in Tiers 2 and 3, that are preventing all students from having access to and mastering grade-level standards. • Engage students in their own learning through academic talk, including questions, tasks and assessments that connect the relevancy of the content as they build on prior knowledge. • Implement UDL principles so that students have options to access and engage with instruction, as well as options for demonstrating their learning. • Develop practices at schools for common planning, common instruction and common assessment to ensure consistency and support. • Collaborate with the PS/Rtl project staff to provide professional development to math teachers that will increase knowledge of content and pedagogy. • Continue to collaborate with FDLRS and FIN project staff for professional development, including inclusive scheduling and collaborative teaching, and ensure that all students have access to support from teachers with knowledge of content and pedagogy.
Required Actions	See required actions for LRE.
Follow up to the ESE Monitoring Visit	
Summary	<p>The DeSoto County School District was selected for an on-site visit for the following focus areas related to students with disabilities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Graduation rate • Dropout rate • LRE • PreK proficiency in communication • ELA scores for third grade students with disabilities • Math scores for middle-grades students with disabilities
Required Actions	By October 24, 2019 , designated BEESS staff and members of the district problem-solving team will reconvene via a conference call to share how the district is addressing each of the above-mentioned focus areas and determine next steps. The district will coordinate with BEESS regarding the date and time of the conference call and provide documentation (e.g., recent data, professional development, problem-solving notes and action plans) via BEESSMonitoring@fldoe.org by September 26, 2019 .

Technical Assistance

1. **Implementing a Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS) for Behavior: Recommended Practices for School and District Leaders** (Florida Positive Behavioral Interventions and Support Project: MTSS [FLPBIS:MTSS]) may be accessed at https://www.pbis.org/common/cms/files/pbisresources/RTIB_Guide_101811_final.pdf. FLPBIS:MTSS 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 **Exceptional Student Education 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 2015-16 through 2017-18 school years may be accessed at <http://beess.fcim.org/sppDistrictDocSearch.aspx>.
3. The FDOE's technical assistance paper DPS: 2016-13, entitled, "**Least Restrictive Environment Considerations Related to Individual Educational Plans,**" dated January 15, 2016, may be accessed at <https://info.fldoe.org/docushare/dsweb/Get/Document-7540/dps-201613.pdf>. This document provides guidance on the provision of services for students with disabilities in the LRE.
4. The United States Department of Education, in collaboration with the United States Department of Justice, released **School Discipline Guidance** in 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 following resource documents 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, which draws from emerging research and best practices;
 - **Directory of Federal School Climate and Discipline Resources**, which indexes federal technical assistance and other resources; and
 - **Compendium of School Discipline Laws and Regulations**, which catalogs state laws and regulations related to school discipline.
5. The **Project 10: Transition Education Network** may be accessed at <http://project10.info>. Project 10 assists Florida school districts and relevant stakeholders in building capacity to provide secondary transition services to students with disabilities in order to improve their academic success and postsecondary outcomes. Project 10 serves as the primary conduit between BEESS and school-district personnel in addressing law and policy, effective practices, and research-based interventions in the area of transition services for youth with disabilities. The project also supports transition initiatives developed through the BEESS Strategic Plan. Examples of assistance provided related to graduation rates include using school-level data for graduation success, technical assistance to improve data collection, analysis and data-driven decision making, in order to develop a color-coded student graduation tracking system that can be coordinated with existing initiatives or systems. Regarding dropout, Project 10 supports dropout prevention strategies for students with disabilities, school-based enterprise, service learning and early warning system.

6. The **Florida Diagnostic and Learning Resource System (FDLRS) Associate Centers Support** may be accessed at <http://www.fdlrs.org>. The 19 FDLRS associate centers provide an array of instructional and technical support services to school districts statewide. The four central functions of each FDLRS center are Child Find, parent services, human resource development, and professional learning and technology. The centers collaborate with districts, agency and support personnel, communities, families, and educational personnel providing support services for educators, school administrators, parents, and students with disabilities. Examples of professional development related to graduation rates include Florida standards and access points, differentiated instruction, access to the general curriculum, Strategic Instruction Model™, behavior and discipline, Standing up for Me, self-advocacy, responsive classroom, and district-specific supports. Professional development related to dropout include differentiated instruction, accommodations, Conversation, Help, Activity, Movement, Participation, and Success (known as CHAMPS), Tough Kids, discipline in the secondary classroom, support for parent involvement, Professional Development Alternatives for Positive Behavior Support module, universal design for learning, small-group planning and problem solving, disability awareness, and district-specific supports.
7. The **Florida Inclusion Network (FIN)** may be accessed at <http://www.floridainclusionnetwork.com/>. FIN collaborates with all districts and schools to provide customized services and supports to ensure that students with disabilities have the same educational, social and future opportunities as their peers. In partnership with districts and schools, FIN facilitates implementation of best practices for inclusive education through data-driven, student-focused problem solving across districts and schools. In addition, FIN facilitates implementation of professional development and provides technical assistance and resources to district and school personnel in order to increase knowledge and skills to build and sustain capacity.
8. The **Problem Solving and Response to Intervention Project (PS/Rtl) Technology** may be accessed at <http://www.floridarti.usf.edu/index.html>. One function of this project is to provide support to regional technology coordinators and technology specialists to effectively implement accessible instructional materials, assistive technologies, learning technologies and universal design for learning principles within all tiers of instruction. This project also manages, coordinates and supports the regional assistive technology loan libraries.
9. The **Multiagency Network for Students with Emotional/Behavioral Disabilities (SEDNET)** may be accessed at <http://www.sednetfl.info/>. The 19 regional SEDNET centers assist Florida school districts and relevant stakeholders in building capacity to provide the necessary mental health and academic supports to students with or at risk of emotional and behavioral disabilities to prepare students to achieve academic success; graduate high school; and become college, career and life ready.
10. The **PS/Rtl – Technology and Learning Connections (TLC)** may be accessed at <http://www.tlc-mtss.com>. TLC provides guidelines and resources to support the implementation of universal design for learning. A quarterly newsletter that focuses on technology integration to support the local development of highly effective classrooms for all students may also be accessed. TLC's winter 2016-17 newsletter focused on math instruction, resources and tools to eliminate barriers and increase achievement for all students and can be viewed at <http://conta.cc/2kjsuGt>. To sign up to receive this quarterly newsletter, go to <http://bit.ly/1TLoHLQ>. Additional resources are available at <https://www.tlc-mtss.com/resources>.

11. The **Center for Autism and Related Disabilities** may be accessed at <http://florida-card.org>. The seven regional autism centers provide nonresidential resource and training services for persons of all ages and of all levels of intellectual functioning who have autism, a pervasive developmental disorder, an autistic-like disability, a dual sensory impairment, or a sensory impairment with other disabling conditions. Each center provides services within its geographical region of the state and service delivery is consistent for all centers and each center coordinates services within and between state and local agencies and school districts.
12. The **Technical Assistance and Training System (TATS)** may be accessed at <https://tats.ucf.edu/>. TATS is a statewide system of technical assistance and training that promotes high-quality programs, which lead to and support positive outcomes for prekindergarten children with disabilities and their families.
13. The **State Personnel Development Grant (SPDG)** project builds capacity to increase school completion rates of students with disabilities, through the provision of professional development to support and scale-up existing research-based practices, develop capacity for use of evidence-based dropout prevention strategies, and enlist parental support of these research based practices. These practices include Check & Connect (C&C) and the Strategic Instruction Model™ (SIM). C&C is a Tier 2 and Tier 3 intervention used with secondary school students who show warning signs of disengagement with school and who are at risk of dropping out. At the core of C&C is a trusting relationship between the student and a trained mentor who both advocates and challenges the student to keep education salient. SIM is a literacy program centered on promoting effective teaching and learning of critical content in schools. Focusing on the Learning Strategies Curriculum and Content Enhancement Routines, SIM strives to help teachers make decisions about what is of greatest importance, what can be taught to help students become more effective learners, and how to teach so that all students, including students with disabilities, increase their proficiency in the Florida standards. SPDG does not have a website; however, if you have questions, contact Margaret Sullivan, director of SPDG, at msullivan@fgcu.edu.
14. The **FLPBIS:MTSS** may be accessed at <http://flpbs.fmhi.usf.edu>. Significant behavior problems contribute to unsafe school environments and to reductions in student performance; therefore, FLPBIS:MTSS is committed to building the capacity of school districts so that they may better assist schools to develop effective discipline, social skills teaching and behavior support strategies for all students.
15. The **Institute for Small and Rural Districts (ISRD)** may be accessed at <http://isrd.nefec.org/>. ISRD provides a forum for school district staff to keep abreast of a wide array of topics impacting the delivery of services to students with disabilities and their families, such as curriculum and instructional practices; educational policies, procedures and practices; behavior support; and transition. ISRD's primary purpose is to provide staff development, training and technical support to a network of 35 small and rural school districts, lab schools, the Florida Virtual School and the Department of Corrections. Overall, ISRD's goal is to ensure that service to students with disabilities and their families is enhanced and that positive outcomes for students with disabilities is achieved through increased student performance.

SST Members for DeSoto County School District

Bureau of Exceptional Education and Student Services

325 West Gaines Street
Suite 614, Turlington Building
Tallahassee, Florida 32399
850-245-0475
<http://www.fldoe.org/ese>

April Katine
Educational Program Director
Instructional Student Support (ISS)
April.Katine@fldoe.org

Karrie Musgrove
Program Specialist
ISS
Karrie.Musgrove@fldoe.org

Patricia Strickland
Program Specialist
Dispute Resolution and Monitoring
Patricia.Strickland@fldoe.org

Peer Monitors

Vicki Jenkins
ESE Director
Martin County School District

Lesley Lynn
School Specialist
FDOE Bureau of School Improvement

BEES Discretionary Projects

Federico Valdez
Regional Representative
Project 10
fvaladez@usfsp.edu

Deanne Cowley
Regional Coordinator
PS/Rtl
dcowley@usf.edu

Kathleen Mathis
Coordinator
FDLRS
Kathy.Mathis@heartlanded.org

Diana Whitehead
Project Manager
Multiagency Network for Students with
Emotional/Behavioral Disabilities
whiteheadd@manateeschools.net

JaSheena Ekhaton
Statewide Leadership Facilitator
FIN
jekhaton@contactfin.com

Stephani Moreo
Inclusion Specialist
FIN
smoreo@contactfin.com

Pam Sudduth
Learning and Development Facilitator of
Literacy
PS/Rtl
psudduth@usf.edu

Tony Dutra
Unit Coordinator
PS/Rtl
tdutra@usf.edu

Sheila Ward
Learning and Development Facilitator
Check and Connect
SPDG
sheilaward@mail.usf.edu

Janice Creneti
SIM Project
SPDG
CrenetiJ@pcsb.org

Alice Schmitges
Program Specialist
Institute for Small and Rural Districts
SchmitgesA@nefec.org



Richard Corcoran, Commissioner

313232K