

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

**Sarasota County School District
February 12-14, 2014**



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

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

Email: BRIC@fldoe.org

Telephone: 850-245-0475

Fax: 850-245-0987





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December 15, 2014

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

Dear Superintendent White:

We are pleased to provide you with the **2013-14 Exceptional Student Education (ESE) Monitoring and Assistance On-Site Visit Report for Sarasota County School District**. This report was developed by integrating multiple sources of information related to an on-site monitoring visit to your school district on February 12-14, 2014. Those information sources included interviews with district and school staff, student-focus groups, student record reviews, **Local Educational Agency Profiles, Guiding Questions – District-Level Needs Assessment** and an action-planning and problem-solving process. This report will be posted on the Bureau of Exceptional Education and Student Services' (BEESS) website and may be accessed at <http://www.fldoe.org/ease/mon-home.asp>.

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

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

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

Superintendent White
December 15, 2014
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Mrs. Sonia Figaredo-Alberts, executive director, ESE, and her staff were very helpful to the SST in preparing for the on-site visit and throughout the visit. In addition, the principals and other staff members at the schools visited welcomed the SST and demonstrated a commitment to the education of students in the school district.

As part of the SST's visit, representatives from the school district's ESE department, the schools visited and other school district staff participated in an action-planning and problem-solving process. This group reviewed the school district's data collected prior to and during the on-site visit, and came to consensus on a priority goal to increase the number of graduates who are college and career ready. An action plan, developed around that goal, will be implemented by the ESE department with the assistance of designated discretionary project staff from the SST.

Thank you for your commitment to improving services to exceptional education students in the 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.

Sincerely,

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

Enclosure

cc: Sonia Figaredo-Alberts
Cathy Bishop
Patricia Howell
Annette Oliver

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Sarasota County School District

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

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Sarasota County School District

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

February 12-14, 2014

Authority

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

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

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

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

ESE Monitoring and Assistance Process

Background Information

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

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

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

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

In a letter dated August 27, 2013, the superintendent of the Sarasota County School District was informed that the bureau would be conducting an on-site monitoring visit for the following focus areas: early intervening services, discipline, least restrictive environment (LRE) and disproportionate representation for students with disabilities.

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

School Selection

Upon review of the school district's data reported via the FDOE's web-based reporting systems for CEIS, disproportionality, incidents of restraint and seclusion, SPP indicators 4B and 5 and additional data provided by the school district, it was determined that the 2013-14 Monitoring and Assistance process would include the following schools:

- Booker Middle School
- Brentwood Elementary School
- Glenallen Elementary School
- Heron Creek Middle School
- McIntosh Middle School
- North Port High School
- Oak Park (North) School
- Oak Park (South) School
- Riverview High School
- Tuttle Elementary School
- Venice Elementary School
- Venice High School
- Wilkinson Elementary School

On-Site Activities

SST – On-Site Visit Team

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

FDOE, BEESS

- Monica Verra-Tirado, chief (facilitator)
- Misty Bradley, educational program director, Instructional Support Services
- Mary Elizabeth Conn, educational program director, Dispute Resolution and Monitoring team
- Annette Oliver, program specialist, Program Accountability, Assessment and Data Systems (co-facilitator)
- David Wheeler, consultant, school psychology, Student Support Services

FDOE, BEESS Discretionary Projects

- Deborah Bay, project manager, Multiagency Network for Students with Emotional or Behavioral Disabilities (SEDNET)
- Patti Brustad, project manager and professional development, Florida Diagnostic and Learning Resources System (FDLRS), Suncoast
- Linda Hammonds, school improvement specialist, Region IV FDOE Office of Differentiated Accountability (DA), University of South Florida, Problem-Solving/Response to Intervention Project (PS/Rtl)

- Devon Minch, technical assistance specialist, Florida's Positive Behavior Support: Multi-tiered System of Supports (PBS:MTSS) Project
- Stan Weser, west regional facilitator, Florida Inclusion Network (FIN)/West Region
- Anna Winneker, visiting human services practitioner, PBS:MTSS

Data Collection

On-site monitoring and assistance activities included the following:

- School-level administrator interviews – 16 participants
- Student focus groups and interviews – 42 participants
- Completion of Seclusion and Restraint protocol – 10 students
- Completion of IPI protocol – 10 students
- Completion of Suspension and Expulsion protocol – five students
- Action-planning and problem-solving process – 32 participants
- Review of data from the school district's **LEA Profiles**, Guiding Questions – District-Level Needs Assessment and data compiled from district data systems

Review of Records

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

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

Guiding Questions – District-Level Needs Assessment

Prior to the on-site visit, the school district was provided with questions to use as a guide in the collection of data. SST and district staff reviewed these data during the action-planning and problem-solving process. Sarasota County School District's questions were related to early intervening services for students identified with emotional or behavioral disabilities (EBD), disproportionate representation and percent of students with IEPs, ages 6 through 21 inside the regular class 80 percent or more of the day and significant discrepancy of black students with IEPs suspended or expelled for greater than 10 days in a school year. A list of these questions is located in Appendix A of this report.

Results

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

Focus Areas – CEIS and SPP Indicators 10, 4B and 5

Selected Disabilities by Racial or Ethnic Category

Racial or ethnic data for students with a primary disability of EBD or intellectually disability (InD) as reported in **October 2012** (survey 2):

Racial or Ethnic Category	State EBD	District EBD	State InD	District InD
White	39%	52%	35%	56%
Black	40%	34%	39%	22%
Hispanic	18%	7%	22%	18%
Asian	<1%	<1%	2%	1%
American Indian/Alaskan Native	<1%	<1%	<1%	<1%
Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Island	<1%	<1%	<1%	<1%
Two or more races	3%	6%	2%	2%

Source: FDOE, 2013 LEA Profile

Risk Ratios for Students Placed in Exceptional Education (SPP Indicator 10 – Disproportionality, Specific Disability Categories)

Risk ratio is the risk that students of a given race will be identified as a student with a disability or a student in selected disability categories when compared to students of all other races. A risk ratio of 1.0 indicates the students of a given race are equally likely as all other races combined to be identified as disabled.

Risk Ratio for Black Students Identified as EBD						
	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
Sarasota County School District	3.73	4.23	4.48	4.19	5.03	5.33
State	2.16	2.07	2.07	2.11	2.22	2.23

Source: FDOE, LEA Profiles (2008-2013) (<http://www.fldoe.org/ese/datapage.asp>)

SPP Indicator 4 – Discipline (Suspensions and Expulsions)

Discipline risk ratios by racial or ethnic group are calculated for students with disabilities by dividing the discipline rate of a specific racial or ethnic group by the rate of all nondisabled students. A risk ratio of 1.0 indicates that, for instance, black students with disabilities are equally likely to be suspended or expelled as all nondisabled students.

Discipline Risk Ratio for Black Students with Disabilities		
	2010-11*	2011-12**
Sarasota County School District	7.88	7.19
State	2.81	2.67

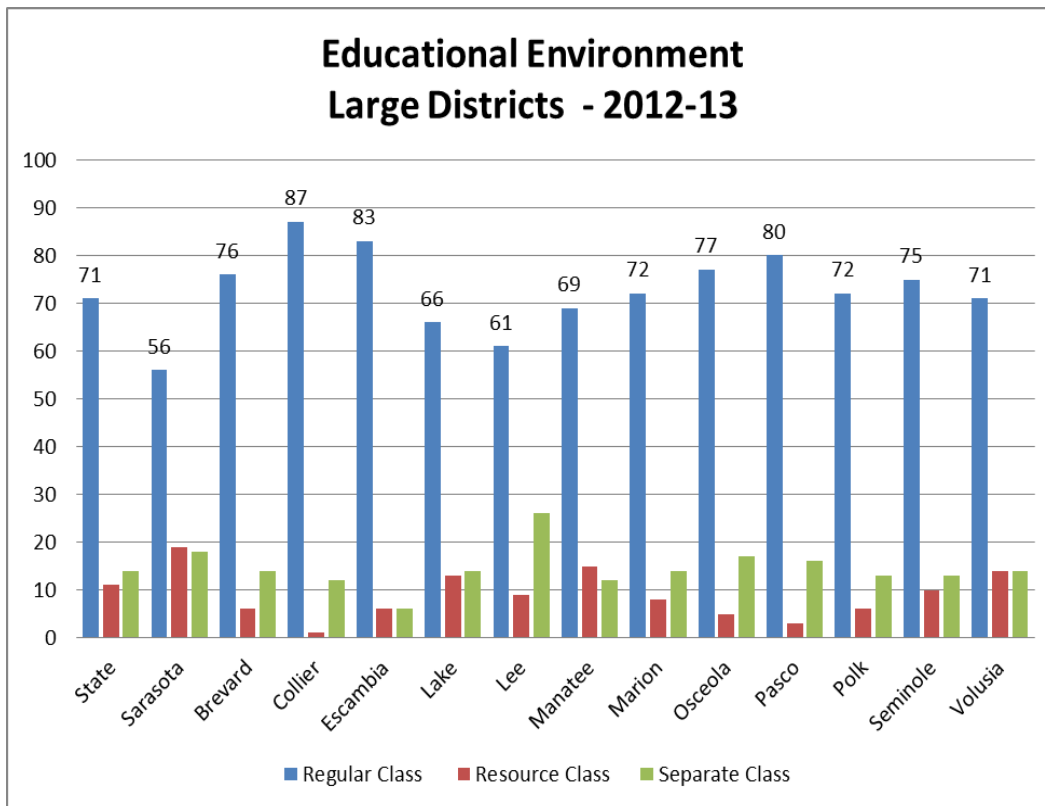
Source: FDOE, LEA Profiles (2012*, 2013**) (<http://www.fldoe.org/ese/datapage.asp>)

SPP Indicator 5 – Educational Environments; Least Restrictive Environment

Educational environments percentages include the number of students with disabilities ages 6-21 in regular class, resource room, separate class and other separate environment, divided by the total number of students with disabilities ages 6-21 reported in October (survey 2).

- Regular class includes students who spend 80 percent or more of their school week with nondisabled peers.
- Resource room includes students spending between 40 and 80 percent of their school week with nondisabled peers.
- Separate class includes students spending less than 40 percent of their week with nondisabled peers.
- Other separate environment includes students served in public or private separate schools, residential placements or hospital or homebound placements.

Educational Environment Comparison (%) of School Districts in the Large School Districts Enrollment Group



Source: FDOE, 2013 LEA Profile

**Sarasota County School District
Educational Environments – Comparison with State Percentages**

School Year	Regular Class Placement		Resource Room Placement		Separate Class Placement		Other Separate Environment	
	State	District	State	District	State	District	State	District
2012-13	71%	56%	11%	19%	14%	18%	4%	8%
2011-12	69%	56%	12%	18%	15%	19%	4%	7%
2010-11	69%	58%	12%	16%	15%	19%	4%	7%
2009-10	67%	59%	13%	14%	16%	18%	4%	9%
2008-09	64%	58%	15%	14%	17%	20%	4%	8%

Source: FDOE, 2013 LEA Profile

**Sarasota County School District – Students with Disabilities
Regular Class Placement (schools with less than 50%)**

School	Regular Class	Resource Room	Special Class	Other Separate Environment
Riverview High School	48.5%	30.2%	21.3%	0.0%
Wilkinson Elementary School	48.3%	29.2%	22.5%	0.0%
Sky Academy	46.7%	33.3%	20.0%	0.0%
Venice Senior High School	46.1%	32.8%	19.5%	1.6%
Tatum Ridge Elementary School	45.8%	22.2%	31.9%	0.0%
Tuttle Elementary School	45.1%	37.8%	17.1%	0.0%
Fruitville Elementary School	43.5%	4.0%	51.6%	0.0%
AMI Kids Sarasota County	40.0%	40.0%	20.0%	0.0%
Brookside Middle School	39.1%	28.3%	32.6%	0.0%
McIntosh Middle School	38.1%	29.5%	32.4%	0.0%
North Port High School	36.4%	46.6%	17.0%	0.0%
Woodland Middle School	35.8%	36.8%	27.4%	0.0%
Heron Creek Middle School	35.2%	30.5%	34.4%	0.0%
Venice Elementary School	29.7%	13.2%	57.1%	0.0%
Oak Park North School	0.0%	0.0%	0.9%	99.1%
Oak Park South School	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%

Source: Sarasota County School District (February 2014)

Student Focus Groups

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

- Heron Creek Middle School
- North Port High School
- Oak Park School (North)
- Riverview High School

Participants in the focus groups included students with disabilities who have an IEP and students not identified as students with disabilities. Through these focus groups, 42 students provided feedback on the following topics: IEP team meetings and parental participation, career and technical education, academics, extracurricular activities, Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test ® (FCAT) 2.0, diploma options, dropout, and suspension and expulsion.

Comments from the middle school students included the following:

- The majority of the students reported being in a separate class for most of their academic courses. The separate classes were aligned to general education standards.
- They described their classes as not being challenging enough; they were concerned about being ready for high school courses and desired more opportunities for inclusion.
- They were concerned that their courses were not preparing them for success on the FCAT 2.0, which they perceived was a requirement for participating in courses with nondisabled peers.
- They perceived that at times, they received too much assistance from their special education teachers. Some students reported that they felt that their ESE teachers “babied” them too much by giving easy work and hovering over them.
- Those who were in inclusion classes reported that they felt they were being challenged at an appropriate level and their teachers allowed for more independence.
- Some of the students had questions about learning styles and the meaning of an IEP. In one group, there appeared to be a lack of awareness of their disability or the content of an IEP.
- The students who had participated in their IEP team meeting reported that they did not feel as if they were part of the team. Several students reported that they felt uncomfortable in a meeting with adults talking about them.
- One group of students reported that they are given too much computer work in their ESE classes, and preferred direct instruction over independent computer work.
- Some students reported that they have experienced some bullying and teasing in their general education classes, and discipline issues in class interfere with their learning and concentration.

Comments from the high school students included the following:

- One group interviewed had previously been served in a separate ESE center school. They felt strongly that their services could best take place on a traditional campus and were concerned that the middle and elementary school students were still on a separate ESE school campus.
 - They also reported that they wanted more opportunities to be fully included in general education classes; however, they were concerned that their previous coursework had not prepared them adequately for success in these classes.
 - They reported that they were treated differently from other students during the initial transition from the separate school (e.g., walk in a line between classes).

- Their current perceptions were that they were now becoming more integrated into the school body and allowed more independence on campus.
- Other students with disabilities reported that they were pleased with school and enjoyed being in school. Several students reported that they liked when they have higher expectations from their teachers and administrators.
- All students with disabilities reported that they had participated in at least one IEP team meeting and knew the purpose of the meeting.
- The students indicated that they wanted more choices of classes that would support their post-high school plans, including vocational and technical classes.
- Students indicated that they were given the opportunity to participate in extracurricular activities.
- Some students reported that discipline is not consistent with all teachers. The majority of the students presented a clear understanding of the kinds of behaviors that would trigger disciplinary actions.

School-Level Administrators' Interviews and Focus Groups

School-level administrators participated in school interviews or in administrators' focus groups. Glenallen Elementary School did not have an on-site visit, but the administrator participated in a focus group with administrators from Heron Creek Middle School and North Port High School. Prior to the on-site visit, interviews were conducted via telephone with administrators from Booker Middle School and McIntosh Middle School. Interview questions related to: educational environments, suspension and expulsion, disproportionality and early intervening services for students identified with emotional or behavioral disabilities and parent participation.

Comments from the administrators included the following:

- Some reported that they perceived there was adequate support staff for most students' needs. They perceived a need for intense interventions at the elementary school level to respond to both mental health-based behaviors as well as socially maladjusted behaviors.
- Some were concerned that a shift of the voluntary prekindergarten (pre-k) programs from the school district to the community may limit student opportunities for pre-k interventions.
- Some reported positively on initiatives that support best practices for inclusion and were eager to engage in future professional development.
- Some described a variety of placement options for students with disabilities, but separate placement was the norm for students with emotional or behavioral problems.
 - Some were open to inclusion. It was noted that the prevailing belief of one group interviewed was that "separate is better or best for students with disabilities."
 - Some discussed the importance of having the resources (staffing and funding) to meet the needs of students with disabilities in an inclusion model.
 - It was indicated that there is a need for professional development for general education teachers for inclusion to be successful. Several indicated that general education teachers seem to lack the knowledge to address the needs of students with disabilities.
- Several indicated that there was a need to address the impact of academic frustration with regard to behaviors and discipline.
 - Additional assistance is needed to learn how to address students with social-emotional needs. Alternatives are needed, as schools have to balance discipline and safety concerns.
 - There is a lack of mental health services in the schools.

Commendations

1. The school district has moved their program for students with EBD from a separate environment to a traditional high school campus with opportunities for inclusion. There are plans to move their elementary and middle school programs for students with EBD to traditional campuses.
2. The school district has developed a process to address issues with disproportionality related to the identification of black students having intellectual disabilities that resulted in improvements in this area.
3. For the Sarasota School District, the federal uniform high school graduation rate for students with disabilities is higher than the rate of other school districts in this enrollment group, as well as the state average. The school district rate increased from 44 percent for the 2010-11 school year to 53 percent for 2012-13.
4. For the 2013-14 school year, the Sarasota County School District met their goal for the reduction of incidents of restraints over the 2012-13 school year.

ESE Monitoring and Compliance

Records Review

Bureau staff who were members of the Sarasota SST reviewed 25 records of students with disabilities in the Sarasota County School District, from a sampling of 12 schools.

Student Records Review	
Number of IPI protocols completed	10
Number of standards per IPI protocol	8
Number of Restraint and Seclusion (RS) protocols completed	10
Number of standards per RS protocol	5
Number of SPP 4 – Suspension and Expulsion (SE) protocols completed	5
Number of standards per SE protocol	10
Total number of protocols reviewed	25
Total number of standards assessed	180
Total number of findings of noncompliance	0

Action-Planning and Problem-Solving Process and Next Steps

As part of the monitoring and assistance on-site visit, the SST members, ESE director and representatives from the Sarasota County School District participated in an action-planning and problem-solving process. The group reviewed the data collected prior to and during the on-site visit and developed a list of priorities and obstacles. An action plan was developed to address the first priority selected, which was related to increasing the number of graduates who are college and career ready.

The school district's action plan included the following:

- Desired outcome – By December 2017, the Sarasota County School District will demonstrate a 5 percent increase in graduates who are college and career ready.

Next Steps	
Early intervening services Disproportionate representation of students with disabilities – SPP 10	
Summary:	<p>A school district is required to set aside 15 percent of IDEA, Part B funds for intervening services if the school district's data indicate that students of any race are at least 3.5 times more likely to be identified as a student with EBD when compared to all other races combined.</p> <p>According to the 2013 LEA Profile, the Sarasota County School District's risk ratio for black students identified with EBD was 5.33.</p> <p>Additionally, black students were at least 3.01 times more likely to be identified as a student with InD.</p> <p>The school district has developed a process to address issues with disproportionality related to the identification of black students having InD. The school district reported that because of this process, there was a decrease in the number of black students identified with InD.</p>
Recommendations:	<p>Sarasota County School District should continue the process used to address the disproportionality related to the identification of black students having 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 EBD.</p>
Required Actions:	By February 13, 2015 , the Sarasota County School District will identify the schools that are determining eligibility as students with EBD and review data trends from these schools. The results of this process will be submitted to BEESS no later than February 27, 2015 .
SPP 2 – Dropout rate	
Summary:	<p>The dropout rate for students with EBD decreased from 12 to 4 percent from 2009-10 to 2011-12 school year. This percentage is lower than the enrollment group and the state average for students with EBD.</p> <p>Subsequent to onsite visit, the 2014 LEA Profile revealed an increase in dropout rate for students with EBD from 4 to 8 percent from the 2011-12 to 2012-13 school year.</p>
Recommendation:	N/A
Required Actions:	By February 13, 2015 , the school district's leadership team shall review this data trend and identify factors contributing to the regression of the prior positive trend, as well as action steps taken to

Next Steps	
	improve the dropout rates. These review results will be submitted to BEESS no later than February 27, 2015 .
SPP 4 – 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.
Recommendations:	<p>Sarasota County School District should continue professional development for teachers and staff in the area of PBS.</p> <p>Sarasota County School District 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>
Required Actions:	By February 13, 2015 , the Sarasota County School District will review current school and district policies related to 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 compare to other students in the school district. The results of this review will be submitted to BEESS no later than February 27, 2015 .
SPP 5 – Educational environment, LRE	
Summary:	<p>Based on the data obtained before and during the Sarasota County School District’s on-site monitoring visit, for the 2011-12 and 2012-13 school years, the school district was below the enrollment group and state averages for regular class placement.</p> <p>Additionally, during the 2011-12 and 2012-13 school years, the school district was higher than their enrollment group and state averages in resource room placement.</p>
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	
	<p>Sarasota County School District must 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 (http://www.floridainclusionnetwork.com/).</p>
Phases 3 and 4 of the ESE Monitoring and Assistance process	
Summary:	<p>During the monitoring and assistance on-site visit, there was a consensus that the designated SST facilitator would continue to collaborate with the ESE director, school district and other SST members on priorities selected during the action-planning and problem-solving process.</p> <p>In addition to the selected priority to increase the number of graduates who are college and career ready, the school district identified early identification and intervention of students with EBD as a second priority.</p>
Recommendations:	N/A
Required Actions:	By February 27, 2015 , the Sarasota School District will provide BEESS with an evaluation of the action-planning and problem-solving process related to the two priorities selected.

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 and provides an overview of the critical components of an MTSS for behavior. These critical components describe systems changes that are necessary for a results-driven ESE system.
2. The district's **ESE Policies and Procedures** document provides district- and school-based standards for documenting, reporting and monitoring the use of manual, physical or mechanical restraint and seclusion developed by the FDOE. The school district's document for the 2013-14 through 2015-16 school years may be accessed at <http://beess.fcim.org/sppDistrictDocSearch.aspx>.
3. The technical assistance paper entitled **Guidelines for the Use, Documentation, Reporting, and Monitoring of Restraint and Seclusion with Students with Disabilities**, dated October 14, 2011, may be accessed at <http://info.fldoe.org/docushare/dsweb/Get/Document-6212/dps-2011-165.pdf>. This document provides guidance regarding the use, documenting, reporting and monitoring of restraint and seclusion with students with disabilities in school districts, including (a) when restraint or seclusion might be used, (b) considerations when selecting a training program for restraint, (c) what should be documented, (d) parent notification and reporting, and (e) monitoring use. It also contains information about s. 1003.573, F.S., Use of restraint and seclusion on students with disabilities.
4. The United States Department of Education, in collaboration with the United States Department of Justice, released **School Discipline Guidance** in the January 2014, Volume 4, Issue 1 of the **Office of Special Education Programs Monthly Update**. This package will assist states, districts and schools in developing practices and strategies to enhance school climate, and ensure those policies and practices comply with federal law. The resource documents listed below are included in the package, and are available at <http://www.ed.gov/school-discipline>:
 - **Dear Colleague** guidance letter on civil rights and discipline;
 - **Guiding Principles** document that draws from emerging research and best practices;
 - **Directory of Federal School Climate and Discipline Resources** that indexes federal technical assistance and other resources; and
 - **Compendium of School Discipline Laws and Regulations** that catalogue State laws and regulations related to school discipline.
5. The Project 10: Transition Education Network (<http://www.projct10.info/>) assists Florida school districts and relevant stakeholders in building capacity to provide secondary transition services to students with disabilities in order to improve their academic success and post-school outcomes. Project 10 serves as the primary conduit between BEESS and school district personnel in addressing law and policy, effective practices and research-based interventions in the area of transition services for youth with disabilities. The project also supports transition initiatives developed through the BEESS Strategic Plan.

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

2013-14 ESE Monitoring and Assistance

State Support Team for Sarasota 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>

FDOE, BEESS

Monica Verra-Tirado (Co-Facilitator)
Bureau Chief
monica.verra-tirado@fldoe.org

Annette Oliver (Co-Facilitator)
Program Specialist IV
Program Accountability, Assessment and Data Systems
annette.oliver@fldoe.org

Misty Bradley
Educational Program Director, Juvenile Justice
Instructional Support Services
misty.bradley@fldoe.org

Mary Elizabeth Conn
Program Specialist IV
Dispute Resolution and Monitoring
liz.conn@fldoe.org

David Wheeler, Student Support Services
Project Consultant, School Psychologist
Student Support Services
david.wheeler@fldoe.org

FDOE, BEESS Discretionary Projects

Deborah Bay
Project Manager, SEDNET
bayd@manateeschools.net

Patti Brustad
Project Manager and Professional Development
FDLRS Suncoast

Devon Minch
Technical Assistance Specialist
PBS:MTSS Project
dminch@usf.edu

Linda Hammonds
School Improvement Specialist, Region IV
FDOE, Office of DA, PS/RtI Project
linda.hammonds@fldoe.org

Kim Megrath
Regional Facilitator
Technical Assistance and Training Systems for Programs Serving Young Children with Disabilities
tats-fgcu@ucf.edu

Stan Weser
West Region Facilitator, FIN
sweser@contactfin.com

Anna Winneker
Visiting Human Services Practitioner
PBS: MTSS Project
awinneker@usf.edu

Appendix A
Guiding Questions – District-Level Needs Assessment

Appendix A: Guiding Questions – District-Level Needs Assessment

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

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

Glossary of Acronyms and Abbreviations

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

BEES	Bureau of Exceptional Education and Student Services
BPIE	Best Practices for Inclusive Education
CEIS	Coordinated early intervening services
CFR	Code of Federal Regulations
DA	Differentiated Accountability
EBD	Emotional or behavioral disability
ESE	Exceptional student education
FCAT 2.0	Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test 2.0
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
IPI	IEP implementation
LEA	Local educational agency
LRE	Least restrictive environment
MTSS	Multi-tiered system of support
PBS	Positive Behavior Support
PS/RtI	Problem-Solving/Response to Intervention Project
RS	Restraint or seclusion
SE	Suspension or expulsion
SEDNET	Multiagency Network for Students with Emotional or Behavioral Disabilities
SP&P	Exceptional Student Education Policies and Procedures
SPP	State Performance Plan
SST	State Support Team



Pam Stewart, Commissioner

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