

**2019-20 Exceptional Student Education  
On-Site Monitoring Report**

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**Volusia County School District  
February 25-27, 2020**



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).

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**Florida Department of Education  
Bureau of Exceptional Education and Student Services  
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## 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 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]). BEESS 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, BEESS 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(d), 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 provide comprehensive coordinated early intervening services (CCEIS) to address factors contributing to the significant disproportionality.

Section 1003.573, F.S., Use of restraint and seclusion on students with disabilities (SWD), establishes documentation, reporting and monitoring requirements for districts regarding the use of restraint and seclusion on SWD. 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 SWD. 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 (SP&P) document.

The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) was signed into law in December 2015, amending the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 and replacing No Child Left Behind provisions. States were required to submit a state plan describing their approach to ESSA compliance. Drafted with public input and submitted to the Governor for review, as required by ESSA, the Florida state plan for ESSA was approved by the U.S. Department of Education on September 26, 2018. The state's ESSA plan preserves the focus on increased student achievement and includes details on the added federal calculation to satisfy ESSA requirements, which includes accountability provisions for the inclusion of English Language Learner (ELL) proficiency as a separate accountability indicator; additional focus on the reporting of subgroups' performances; additional federal school improvement designations and support; and a revamped public report card of state, district and school data. The new Federal Percent of Points Index (Federal Index) is calculated overall and by subgroup to include all school grade components in conjunction with English Language Proficiency (ELP) progress.

The Federal Index is calculated for 10 subgroup categories, which include the seven major racial and ethnic groups, SWD, ELLs, and economically disadvantaged students for academic achievement and student growth in schools.

Schools were identified under ESSA for support based on their Federal Index score. The threshold of support is a score below 41 percent on their overall Federal Index or by subgroup. Annually, any school below 41 percent in the Federal Index for any subgroup is identified for Targeted Support and Improvement; annually, any school below 41 percent in the overall (school grade components and ELP progress) Federal Index will be designated as in need of Comprehensive Support and Improvement. Schools will be responsible for developing a School Improvement Plan for their identified ESSA subgroups. BEESS will support districts with schools with a grade of A, B, and C and all ESE center schools with a Federal Index below 41 percent with SWD. In addition, BEESS will provide support to alternative schools and Department of Juvenile Justice programs with a Federal Index below 41 percent.

In addition, ESSA limits the percentage of students that a State may assess with an alternate assessment based on alternate academic achievement standards (AA-AAAS) to no more than 1.0 percent of all assessed students in the grades assessed in a State for each subject. While there is a limit on the percentage of students statewide who may take the AA-AAAS, there is no such limit among LEAs. However, 34 CFR §§200.6(c)(3)(ii) and (iv) require that an LEA submit information justifying the need to assess more than 1.0 percent of its students in any subject with an AA-AAAS. The State must make that information publicly available, provided that such information does not reveal personally identifiable information about an individual student. The required justification information will be collected in Florida via the annual SP&P and the focus of Florida's training and technical assistance will continue to be on ensuring that individual educational plan (IEP) teams make appropriate, individualized and data-based decisions for each student.

## **ESE On-Site Monitoring Process**

### **Background Information**

The 2019-20 ESE On-Site Monitoring process focuses on those State Performance Plan indicators that contributed to the targeting of school districts for CCEIS and the following indicators that affect equity and access in the educational environment for SWD:

- Indicator 1 – Graduation: Percentage of youth with 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.
- CCEIS – Significant disproportionality in overrepresentation of a particular racial group within special education programs for identification of children in specific disability categories, the placement of children with disabilities in particular educational settings or the taking of disciplinary actions.
- Restraint – Rate of incidents of restraint, as reported in the FDOE database.
- Seclusion – Rate of incidents of seclusion, as reported in the FDOE database.
- ESSA – Accountability and one percent cap for participation in the Florida Standards Alternate Assessment.

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.

On July 31, 2019, the superintendent of the Volusia County School District was notified that BEESS would be conducting an on-site monitoring visit. After a review of the district's data, the following focus areas were identified in need of support: least restrictive environment (LRE), proficiency in communication for prekindergarten (PreK) SWD, transition individual educational plans (IEP)s aligned with postschool outcomes, incidents of restraint, English language arts (ELA) scores for third grade SWD and math scores for middle-grades SWD.

### **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, teacher and school support focus groups, and some schools for paraprofessional, parent and student focus groups:

- Forest Lake Elementary School
- Holly Hill Elementary School
- Spruce Creek Elementary School
- Campbell Middle School
- Mainland High School
- University High School

## 2019-20 ESE On-Site Monitoring Focus Areas

The following data are related to the focus areas and activities for the 2019-20 ESE On-Site Monitoring for the Volusia County School District.

### Educational Environment (Least Restrictive Environment)

To the maximum extent appropriate, SWD are to be educated with students without disabilities. These LRE data are calculated by dividing the number of SWD aged 6 through 21 served in the regular class for 80 percent or more of the day, by the total number of SWD 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 facilities. The district's percentage of SWD being served in the regular class increased from 69.9 percent during the 2017-18 school year to 73.4 percent during the 2018-19 school year. The 2019-20 LRE rate was 73.4 percent, which is below the state target of 85 percent. The district did not meet the state target for any of the three years.

	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20
Volusia	69.9%	73.4%	73.4%
State Target	83.0%	85.0%	85.0%

### Proficiency in Communication for Prekindergarten Students with Disabilities

Early literacy and communication are the building blocks for the development of effective reading skills. The percentage of PreK SWD functioning within age expectations in the communication domain decreased from 68.6 percent during the 2016-17 school year to 66.2 percent during the 2017-18 school year. The 2018-19 percentage increased to 69.9 percent, which is below the state target of 78.9 percent. The district did not meet the state target for any of the three years.

	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19
Volusia	68.6%	66.2%	69.9%
State Target	73.4%	75.9%	78.9%

### Transition Individual Educational Plans Aligned with Postschool Outcomes

Each year districts are required to complete web-based protocols on the BEESS General Supervision website. Correction of noncompliance and corrective action plans are reported by districts and tracked via the website. One of the required protocols is SPP 13 – Secondary Transition for SWD (Age 16), which is comprised of 19 standards. Standard (T16-16) includes all the requirements for a transition IEP to be compliant.

The 2017-18 self-assessment results identified 100 percent noncompliance for standard T16-16 for student records entered by the district and the 2018-19 self-assessment results identified 9.1 percent of records entered had findings of noncompliance. The 2019-20 self-assessment results identified 100 percent compliance for standard T16-16 for student records entered by the district. The district met the state target in 2019-20.

	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20
Percentage of Compliance for Standard T16-16	0%	90.9%	100%

### Incidents of Restraint

According to the FDOE's restraint and seclusion database, the number of incidents of restraint in the district increased from 222 incidents during the 2016-17 to 246 incidents during the 2017-18 school year. During the 2018-19 school year, the number of incidents of restraint decreased to 240. The total percentage of SWD restrained in the district for the 2018-19 school year was 1.32 percent, while the state average was 0.77 percent.

According to the district's 2018-19 SP&P document, the district's annual goal for the 2018-19 school year was to see no increase of incidents of restraint from the 2017-18 school year. During the 2018-19 school year, there were six fewer incidents of restraint reported. The district met the goal as there was not an increase in the number of incidents.

	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19
Number of Incidents	222	246	240
Number of Students	116	124	147

### English Language Arts Scores for Third Grade Students with Disabilities

After reviewing state assessment data trends for the Florida Standards Assessment (FSA), BEESS identified SWD in third grade ELA as an area in critical need of support. BEESS established a tiered criteria in order to provide needed supports for grades K-3 ELA in each district in order to increase the number of SWD scoring level three and above and close the gap between all students and SWD. Three-year historical data for ELA scores for students in third grade (from the 2016-17 to 2018-19 school years) showed that the achievement gap between SWD and students without disabilities had decreased by 0.4 percent. However, the rate for SWD scoring at level three and above had decreased by 0.1 percent from the 2016-17 to the 2018-19 school year.

FSA Scores of Level Three and Above in Third Grade ELA	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19
Volusia			
Students without Disabilities	65.9%	62.7%	65.4%
SWD	25.1%	22.8%	25.0%
Achievement Gap between Students with and without Disabilities	40.8 percentage points	39.9 percentage points	40.4 percentage points

### Math Scores for Middle-Grades Students with Disabilities

After reviewing state assessment data trends for the FSA, BEESS identified SWD in middle-grades math as an area in critical need of support. BEESS established a tiered criteria in order to provide needed supports for middle-grades math in each district (grades 6-8) in order to increase the number of SWD scoring level three and above and close the gap between all students and students with disabilities. Three-year historical data for middle-grades math scores (from the 2016-17 to 2018-19 school years) showed that the achievement gap between SWD and students without disabilities had decreased by one percent. In addition, the rate for SWD scoring at level three and above had increased by 0.6 percent from the 2016-17 to the 2018-19 school year.

FSA and End-of-Course Scores of Level Three and Above in Middle-Grades Math	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19
Volusia			
Students without Disabilities	59.8%	60.2%	59.6%
SWD	16.3%	17.5%	16.9%
Achievement Gap between Students with and without Disabilities	43.6 percentage points	42.7 percentage points	42.6 percentage points

### Interviews Conducted

#### Administrator Focus Groups

Members of the SST conducted focus groups with administrators from Holly Hill Elementary School, Forest Lake Elementary School, Spruce Creek Elementary School, Campbell Middle School, Mainland High School and University High School regarding LRE, proficiency in communication for prekindergarten SWD, transition IEPs aligned with postschool outcomes, incidents of restraint, ELA scores for third grade SWD and math scores for middle-grades SWD.

Themes that emerged from these focus groups included the following:

- Administrators shared the importance of early intervention for PreK SWD.
- Most administrators reported that inclusive education works for all students and they would like to see an increase in opportunities for inclusion in their schools.
- Administrators support common planning time and the use of Professional

Learning Communities (PLCs) for general education and ESE teachers.

- Administrators reported that data is used in making decisions for individualized student success.
- Administrators reported the need for training in Universal Design for Learning (UDL) in order to meet students' individualized needs.
- Most administrators expressed a need for more opportunities for planning across grade levels so that SWD have greater access to the standard curriculum in the general education setting.
- Administrators shared students with behavioral needs require more support in the general education setting.
- Some administrators feel there is a need for additional training in implementing IEPs, including accommodations in general education settings.

### **Teacher Focus Groups**

Members of the SST conducted focus groups with teachers from Holly Hill Elementary School, Forest Lake Elementary School, Spruce Creek Elementary School, Campbell Middle School, Mainland High School and University High School regarding LRE, proficiency in communication for prekindergarten SWD, transition IEPs aligned with postschool outcomes, incidents of restraint, ELA scores for third grade SWD and math scores for middle-grades SWD.

Themes that emerged from these focus groups included the following:

- Most teachers shared they have strong relationships with families and students.
- Teachers shared data sources and resources used to support individualized student learning.
- Some teachers at the elementary schools shared that SWD who require more academic supports are being served in more restrictive settings.
- Teachers shared students with behavioral needs require more supports in the general education setting.
- Middle and high school teachers reported that students with behavioral needs that require a self-contained classroom are provided core instruction exclusively through computer-based learning.
- Teachers feel that some students transitioning from elementary school to middle school and middle school to high school are not fully prepared for grade-level expectations.

### **Parent Focus Group**

Members of the SST conducted a focus group with parents of SWD aged 14 years or older who were invited by the district.

Themes that emerged from the focus group included the following:

- Parents shared there is positive communication and interaction with teachers.
- Some parents of SWD accessing general education through access courses are pleased with the increased rigor and support for inclusive opportunities.
- Most parents understand the postsecondary options available for their children and collaborate with agencies for support.
- Parents believe that ESE teachers need more knowledge in core content areas and the use of curriculum mapping to track what is being taught.
- Parents are concerned that diagnostic assessments are being used for student

grades as opposed to being used for planning instruction and suggested training for general education teachers on providing supports for SWD.

### **Student Focus Groups**

Members of the SST conducted focus groups with students from Campbell Middle School, Mainland High School and University 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 shared they have at least one adult they can go to for support.
- At the high schools, all students reported they attend their IEP team meetings.
- At the middle school, students would like to be in more challenging classes and be included in the general education setting.
- At the middle and high schools, students who need behavioral supports in the self-contained classroom reported being on computer based instruction for core content. Some students reported this was not meeting their learning needs.
- Students want a better understanding of their own disability, including information about accommodations and transition services.

### **School Support Team and Paraprofessionals Focus Groups**

Members of the SST conducted focus groups with school support team staff and paraprofessionals who support SWD from Holly Hill Elementary School, Forest Lake Elementary School, Spruce Creek Elementary School, Campbell Middle School, Mainland High School and University High School.

Themes that emerged from these focus groups included the following:

- Most staff feel supported by their administrators, which has improved the culture and environment at their schools.
- Support staff expressed concern for SWD receiving behavioral supports in the self-contained classroom, because there is not a plan to mainstream them into the general education setting.
- Paraprofessionals expressed compassion and commitment for the students they serve.
- Paraprofessionals feel they are equipped to de-escalate volatile situations; however, they would like additional trainings to be site-based.
- Paraprofessionals in the middle schools shared they need technology (i.e., telephones) in the classrooms to communicate with parents.
- Paraprofessionals expressed a need for professional development (PD) to help understand the characteristics of various disabilities and how to provide support to SWD.
- All staff expressed concerns for SWD with behavioral needs and working below grade level being served in a restrictive setting and feel the gap is widening as a result.

### **Additional Information Regarding Monitoring Activities**

During the focus groups conducted on-site, some of the teachers and students shared that students who need behavioral supports in the self-contained classrooms are receiving computer-based instruction for core content and this was not meeting each student's learning needs. Regarding this same issue, a recent FDOE, BEESS state complaint for Volusia was investigated, concerning the development of a SWD's IEP. The BEESS 2020-026 Bureau Resolution Determination included the following conclusion: The district violated the requirements of Title 34, Code of Federal Regulations §300.320 and Rule 6A-6.03028, Florida Administrative Code, because, although the district ensured that the IEP team met periodically to review the student's IEP, the district failed to ensure that the student's IEP was revised to address any lack of expected progress in the general education curriculum.

It was determined that because of the potential for systemic noncompliance, the district was required to ensure that students served in self-contained classrooms with support for emotional behavioral disabilities (EBD) must be provided with specially-designed instruction that addresses the unique needs of students that result from their disability. The district was required to do the following:

**By June 5, 2020**, the district must:

- Identify all secondary students with IEPs who are currently identified as EBD and whose placement is "separate" in the district's jurisdiction.
- Determine the extent of students primarily receiving instruction through computer-based instruction.
- Determine whether the students identified had IEPs developed that included a statement of special education that included specially designed instruction that addressed the unique needs of students that resulted' from the students' disabilities.
- Develop a corrective action plan based on any findings of noncompliance identified through the district's self-assessment.
- Submit a summary of the review and the corrective action plan to the bureau.

In addition, a recent desk-top monitoring review was conducted regarding the district's 2018-19 restraint incident records reported in the FDOE restraint and seclusion web application. During the review, the district was requested to provide evidence that the written report as required by section 1003.573 (1)(d), Florida Statute (F.S.), was provided to the parent or guardian for a sampling of records selected, which showed greater than three school days between the date of the incident and date of the final record.

Documentation provided showed the following:

- The district could not provide evidence for 25 percent of the sample records requested for the same-day notification informing the parent or guardian that an incident of restraint had occurred involving their child, as required in section 1003.573(1)(c), F.S. The district provided evidence for same-day notification for 75 percent of the records requested.
- The district could not provide evidence for 42 percent of the sample records requested showing the parent or guardian was provided a written incident report within three school days after the restraint incident occurred. The district provided evidence for 58 percent of the records reviewed showing that the parent or guardian received a written report within three days of the incident.

- Results of the desk-top review indicate a need for improved monitoring and tracking of incidents by school and district staff to ensure that same-day notifications and written incident reports are provided to parents within the required timelines. In response to the desk-top review, the district has agreed to draft a new monitoring plan to track required timelines for same-day notifications and written reports for incidents of restraint to correct the issues.

**Commendation**

The district’s federal cohort graduation rate for SWD increased from 72.3 percent during the 2017-18 school year to 78.6 percent during the 2018-19 school year, which is above the state target of 70.0 percent.

**2019-20 Next Steps**

<b>Least Restrictive Environment</b>	
Summary	The district’s percentage of SWD being served in the regular class increased from 69.9 percent during the 2017-18 school year to 73.4 percent during the 2018-19 school year. The 2019-20 LRE rate was 73.4 percent, which is below the state target of 85 percent. The district did not meet the state target for any of the three years.
Recommendations	The district should consider the following actions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue to collaborate with project staff from the Florida Diagnostic and Learning Resource System (FDLRS) and the Florida Inclusion Network (FIN) for PD to support inclusive scheduling and implementation for SWD, and, in particular, students with behavioral needs.</li> <li>• Continue the implementation of a common planning period and use of PLCs for general education teachers and ESE teachers.</li> <li>• Consider the need for greater vertical alignment so that students have greater access to standard curriculum in the general education setting.</li> <li>• Review FDOE’s Technical Assistance Paper, DPS: 2016-13, “Least Restrictive Environment Considerations Related to Individual Educational Plans,” which can be accessed at <a href="https://info.fldoe.org/docshare/dsweb/Get/Document-7540/dps-201613.pdf">https://info.fldoe.org/docshare/dsweb/Get/Document-7540/dps-201613.pdf</a>.</li> </ul>
Required Actions	The district’s Plan for Inclusive Education dated January 27, 2020, includes the following short- and long-term improvement efforts to increase the district’s rate of inclusion: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Collaborate with FIN project staff to provide UDL planning sessions with general education and ESE teachers.</li> <li>• Continue to provide coaching and support to teachers to build capacity to include students with behavioral needs in the general education setting.</li> </ul> <p>The district must provide documentation for each of the above-</p>

	mentioned actions to the district's BEESS liaison via <a href="mailto:BEESSMonitoring@fldoe.org">BEESSMonitoring@fldoe.org</a> by <b>January 21, 2021</b> .
<b>Proficiency in Communication for PreK Students with Disabilities</b>	
Summary	The percentage of PreK SWD functioning within age expectations in the communication domain decreased from 68.6 percent during the 2016-17 school year to 66.2 percent during the 2017-18 school year. The 2018-19 percentage increased to 69.9 percent, which is below the state target of 78.9 percent. The district did not meet the state target for any of the three years.
Recommendations	The district should consider the following actions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Review the current available curriculum in PreK ESE classes and ensure the curriculum includes rich language and early literacy skill development for all skill levels.</li> <li>● Utilize a progress monitoring system to drive instruction and identify whether targets are being met.</li> </ul>
Required Actions	The district's Plan for Inclusive Education dated January 27, 2020, includes short- and long-term improvement efforts to increase academic progress for SWD. In an effort to improve PreK student communication the district must complete the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Collaborate with Technical Assistance and Training System (TATS) project staff to provide training to PreK staff for children with disabilities who attend district programs.</li> </ul> <p>The district must provide verification of the above-mentioned trainings and include the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Detailed narrative of the trainings.</li> <li>● Dates of the trainings.</li> <li>● Copies of any content presented.</li> <li>● Names and titles of the presenters.</li> <li>● Names, titles and signatures of the staff who participated in the trainings.</li> <li>● Number of staff who participated in the trainings from schools designated as Targeted Support &amp; Improvement and Comprehensive Support &amp; Improvement schools under ESSA.</li> </ul> <p>This documentation must be provided to the district's BEESS liaison via <a href="mailto:BEESSMonitoring@fldoe.org">BEESSMonitoring@fldoe.org</a> by <b>January 21, 2021</b>.</p>
<b>Transition IEPs Aligned with Postschool Outcomes</b>	
Summary	The 2017-18 self-assessment results identified 100 percent noncompliance for standard T16-16 for student records entered by the district and the 2018-19 self-assessment results identified 9.1 percent of records entered had findings of noncompliance. The 2019-20 self-assessment results identified 100 percent compliance for standard T16-16 for student records entered by the district. The district met the state target in 2019-20.
Recommendations	The district should continue to monitor transition IEPs for compliance to determine which schools and staff need additional training.
Required Actions	None.

<b>Incidents of Restraint</b>	
Summary	The number of restraints increased from 222 incidents involving 116 students during the 2016-17 school year to 246 incidents involving 124 students during the 2017-18 school year. The number of restraints during the 2018-19 school year decreased to 240 incidents involving 147 students. This means that 1.32 percent of SWD in the district were restrained, while the state average is 0.77 percent.
Recommendations	The district should continue the following activities: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Collaborate with the Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) project staff to implement a plan to reduce the need for restraint.</li> <li>• Provide restraint report training to all administrators and review policies and procedures.</li> <li>• Implement de-escalation training which utilizes Crisis Prevention Institute as the foundation.</li> <li>• Increase supports and resources to support the Mental Health Plan.</li> </ul>
Required Actions	The district must review data for incidents of restraint quarterly and engage in data-based problem solving that focuses on reducing the need for restraint. The quarterly restraint data and the summary of the problem-solving activities must be provided to the district's BEESS liaison via <a href="mailto:BEESSMonitoring@fldoe.org">BEESSMonitoring@fldoe.org</a> by the following dates: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>October 16, 2020</b></li> <li>• <b>November 11, 2020</b></li> <li>• <b>January 21, 2021</b></li> </ul>
<b>ELA Scores for Third Grade Students with Disabilities</b>	
Summary	Three-year historical data for ELA scores for students in third grade (from the 2016-17 to 2018-19 school years) showed that the achievement gap between SWD and students without disabilities had decreased by 0.4 percent. However, the rate for SWD scoring at level three and above had decreased by 0.1 percent from the 2016-17 to the 2018-19 school year.
Recommendations	The district should consider the following activities: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Collaborate with project staff from the Problem Solving and Response to Intervention Project (PS/Rtl), to progress monitor the district strategic plan for third grade ELA and for guidance on the implementation of MTSS for targeted support aligned with identified student needs.</li> <li>• Utilize the variety of online courses available on the BEESS Portal for PD Alternatives, which can be accessed at <a href="https://fl-pda.org">https://fl-pda.org</a>, to build the capacity of educators to respond to the needs of SWD (e.g., MTSS, UDL and integrating standards aligned instruction across tiers).</li> </ul>
Required Actions	The district's Plan for Inclusive Education dated January 27, 2020, includes short- and long-term improvement efforts to increase academic progress for SWD in ELA and must complete the following:

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review iReady data and other progress monitoring data, including FSA outcomes to determine the growth of SWD who were moved into less restrictive environments during the 2019-20 school year.</li> <li>• ESE coordinators and FIN project staff will provide training, and ongoing support on Collaborative Teaching for ESE and general education teachers in support facilitation roles.</li> </ul> <p>The district must provide documentation of the completion of the above-mentioned activities and verification of the training for staff. The documentation must include the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Detailed narrative of the trainings.</li> <li>• Dates of the trainings.</li> <li>• Copies of any content presented.</li> <li>• Names and titles of the presenters.</li> <li>• Names, titles and signatures of the staff who participated in the trainings.</li> <li>• Number of staff who participated in the trainings from schools designated as Targeted Support &amp; Improvement and Comprehensive Support &amp; Improvement schools under ESSA.</li> </ul> <p>This documentation must be provided to the district's BEESS liaison via <a href="mailto:BEESSMonitoring@fldoe.org">BEESSMonitoring@fldoe.org</a> by <b>January 21, 2021</b>.</p>
<b>Math Scores for Middle-Grades Students with Disabilities</b>	
Summary	<p>Three-year historical data for middle-grades math scores (from the 2016-17 to 2018-19 school years) showed that the achievement gap between SWD and students without disabilities had decreased by one percent. In addition, the rate for SWD scoring at level three and above had increased by 0.6 percent from the 2016-17 to the 2018-19 school year.</p>
Recommendations	<p>The district should consider the following activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue to work with the BEESS Best Practices for Standards-Based Instructional Support Math team to increase achievement in math of SWD in grades 6-8.</li> <li>• Review middle grades math assessment data with the BEESS Math Team to identify trends and possible barriers.</li> <li>• Collaborate with the BEESS Math Team and discretionary projects to implement best practices in middle grades math instruction.</li> </ul>
Required Actions	<p>The district's Plan for Inclusive Education dated January 27, 2020, includes short- and long-term improvement efforts to increase academic progress for SWD in math and must complete the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review progress monitoring data, including FSA outcomes to determine the growth of SWD in the area of math who were moved into less restrictive environments in the 2019-20 school year.</li> <li>• ESE Coordinators and FIN staff will provide training, and ongoing support on Collaborative Teaching for ESE and general education teachers in support facilitation roles.</li> </ul>

	<p>The district must provide documentation of the completion of the above-mentioned activities and verification of the training for staff. The documentation must include the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Detailed narrative of the trainings.</li> <li>• Dates of the trainings.</li> <li>• Copies of any content presented.</li> <li>• Names and titles of the presenters.</li> <li>• Names, titles and signatures of the staff who participated in the trainings.</li> <li>• Number of staff who participated in the trainings from schools designated as Targeted Support &amp; Improvement and Comprehensive Support &amp; Improvement schools under ESSA.</li> </ul> <p>This documentation must be provided to the district's BEESS liaison via <a href="mailto:BEESSMonitoring@fldoe.org">BEESSMonitoring@fldoe.org</a> by <b>January 21, 2021</b>.</p>
<b>Follow up to the ESE Monitoring Visit</b>	
Summary	<p>The Volusia County School District was selected for an on-site visit for the following focus areas related to SWD:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• LRE</li> <li>• Proficiency in communication for PreK SWD</li> <li>• Transition IEPS aligned with postschool outcomes</li> <li>• Incidents of restraint</li> <li>• ELA scores for third grade SWD</li> <li>• Math Scores for middle-grades SWD</li> </ul>
Required Actions	<p>By <b>January 21, 2021</b>, 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. By <b>December 11, 2020</b>, the district will coordinate with BEESS via <a href="mailto:BEESSmonitoring@fldoe.org">BEESSmonitoring@fldoe.org</a> to schedule the date and time for the conference call</p>

## 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](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 SWD 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 SWD 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 SWD 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](mailto: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 SWD 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 SWD and their families is enhanced and that positive outcomes for SWD is achieved through increased student performance.

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Richard Corcoran, Commissioner

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