**2015-16 Exceptional Student Education
Monitoring and Assistance
On-Site Visit Report**

**Manatee County School District
May 17-19, 2016**

October 25, 2016

Dr. Diana Greene, Superintendent
Manatee County School District
215 Manatee Avenue West
Bradenton, Florida 34205-9069

Dear Superintendent Greene:

The Bureau of Exceptional Education and Student Services (BEESS) is pleased to provide you with the 2015-16 Exceptional Student Education (ESE) Monitoring and Assistance On-Site Visit Report for the Manatee 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 May 17-19, 2016. Those information sources included interviews with district and school staff, local educational agency profiles, and an action-planning and problem-solving process.

The Manatee County School District was selected for an on-site visit for the following focus areas related to students with disabilities: coordinated early intervening services (CEIS) related to over-identification, graduation rate, dropout rate and incidents of seclusion. The on-site visit was conducted by a state support team (SST), which included BEESS staff, peer monitors and discretionary project staff.

The 2015-16 ESE Monitoring and Assistance process focuses on those State Performance Plan indicators that contributed to the targeting of school districts for CEIS and those indicators that affect equity and access in the educational environment for students with disabilities. Additionally, the process focuses on a shift from ESE compliance to outcomes to prepare all students for college, career and life 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.

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

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

Thank you for your commitment to improving services to exceptional education students in the Manatee 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: Wylene Herring-Cavasso
Heidi Metcalf

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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 1001.03(3), 1003.571 and 1008.32, Florida Statutes [F.S.]) and rules. One purpose of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) is to assess and ensure the effectiveness of efforts to educate children with disabilities (s. 300.1(d) of Title 34, Code of Federal Regulations [CFR]). 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(b)(2), if a state identifies significant disproportionality based on race or ethnicity in a local educational agency (LEA) with respect to the identification of children as children with disabilities, the identification of children in specific disability categories, the placement of children with disabilities in particular educational settings or the taking of disciplinary actions, the LEA must use the maximum amount (15 percent) of funds allowable for comprehensive coordinated early intervening services (CEIS) for children in the LEA who are not currently identified as needing special education or related services, but who need additional academic or behavioral supports in order to succeed in a general education environment. These children should include particularly, but not exclusively, children in those groups that were significantly over-identified.

Section 1003.573, F.S., Use of restraint and seclusion on students with disabilities, establishes documentation, reporting and monitoring requirements for districts regarding the use of restraint and seclusion on students with disabilities. It also requires districts to have policies and procedures in place that govern parent notification, incident reporting, data collection and monitoring the use of restraint or seclusion for students with disabilities. As required, 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 ESE Policies and Procedures (SP&P) document.

ESE Monitoring and Assistance Process

Background Information

The 2015-16 ESE Monitoring and Assistance process focuses on those State Performance Plan indicators that contributed to the targeting of school districts for CEIS and the following indicators that affect equity and access in the educational environment for students with disabilities:
- Indicator 1 – Graduation: Percentage of youth with individual educational plans (IEPs) graduating from high school with a regular diploma.

- Indicator 2 – Dropout: Percentage of youth with IEPs dropping out of high school.
- Indicator 4 – Rates of suspension and expulsion:
  A. Percentage of districts that have a significant discrepancy in the rates of suspensions and expulsions of more than 10 days in a school year for children with IEPs.
  B. Percentage of districts that have (a) a significant discrepancy, by race or ethnicity, in the rate 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/hospital placements.
- Indicator 10 – Disproportionality, specific disability categories: Percentage of districts with disproportionate representation of racial and ethnic groups in specific disability categories that is the result of inappropriate identification.
- CEIS – Services provided to students in kindergarten through Grade 12 (with a particular emphasis on students in kindergarten through Grade 3) who are not currently identified as needing special education or related services, but who need additional academic and behavioral supports to succeed in a general education environment.
- Restraint – Rate of incidents of restraint, as reported on the FDOE website.
- Seclusion – Rate of incidents of seclusion, as reported on the FDOE website.

The ESE Monitoring and Assistance process includes four phases:
- Phase 1 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 initial on-site visit was conducted on October 23-25, 2013, and the second visit was conducted on May 18-20, 2015.**
- Phase 3 is follow-up and post-initial visit 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 the school district's action plan, and should include participation of the comprehensive team that was involved in Phase 1.

In a letter dated September 21, 2015, the superintendent of the Manatee County School District was informed that BEESS would be conducting an on-site monitoring visit for the following focus areas: CEIS related to over-identification, graduation rate, dropout rate and incidents of seclusion.

School Selection

Upon review of the district's data, it was determined that the monitoring and assistance process would involve the following schools for school-level administrator, teacher and student focus groups, school walk-through debriefings or multi-tiered system of supports focus group (MTSS):
- Blackburn Elementary School
- Manatee Elementary School

- Bay Shore High School
- Braden River High School
- School of Academic and Behavioral Learning Excellence (SABLE) School

On-Site Activities

On-Site Visit Team

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

FDOE, BEESS
- Monica Verra-Tirado, State Director for Special Education, Bureau Chief
- Cathy Howard-Williams, Program Specialist, Dispute Resolution and Monitoring
- Sean Freeman, Program Specialist, Program Accountability, Assessment and Data Systems
- Jessica Brattain, Program Specialist, Instructional Support Services
- David Wheeler, School Psychologist, Student Services Project
- Alricky Smith, Certified Public Accountant, Director, Audit Resolution and Monitoring

Peer Monitors
- Elizabeth McBride, ESE Director, Collier
- Nancy Redmond, ESE Director, Volusia

FDOE, BEESS Discretionary Projects
- Lisa Yount, Problem-Solving Facilitator, Problem Solving: Response to Intervention (PS:RtI)
- Anne Winneker, Problem-Solving Facilitator, Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports: Multi-Tiered System of Supports (PBIS:MTSS) Project
- Federico Valadez, Regional Transition Representative, Project 10: Transition Education Network
- Nickie Zenn, Director, Multiagency Network for Students with Emotional/Behavioral Disabilities (SEDNET)
- Katie Kelly, Facilitator, Florida Inclusion Network (FIN)
- Karen Berkman, Executive Director, Centers for Autism and Related Disabilities (CARD)
- Sara Gaines, Education Management, Florida Diagnostic and Learning Resource System Associate Centers (FDLRS)

Data Collection

On-site monitoring and assistance activities included the following:
- Review of recent data
- Welcome session with district and school-level staff – 21 participants
- District-level CEIS and MTSS behavior focus group – five participants
- School-level MTSS team focus group – seven participants
- District-level finance and budget personnel focus group – five participants
- District-level emotional behavioral disability (EBD) evaluation specialist focus group – seven participants
- Administrator focus groups – 11 participants
- Teacher focus groups – 21 participants

- Student focus groups – 18 participants
- School walk-through debriefings – eight classrooms
- Action-planning and problem-solving process – 24 participants

Status Update for the 2014-15 ESE Monitoring and Assistance On-Site Visit

The following information is taken from the **2014-15 on-site monitoring** report. A status update to the required actions and recommendations has been added for each area listed.

Next Steps	
Incidents of Seclusion	
Summary	The total percentage of students with disabilities secluded in the district for the 2014-15 school year is 0.46 percent, while the state average is 0.21 percent. The district's 2014-17 SP&P states that seclusion incidents would be reduced by two percent; however, the percentage of seclusions has increased.
Recommendations	N/A
Required Actions	The district must: • Continue to track the incidents of seclusion on a quarterly basis • Participate in the statewide PBIS Seclusion Workgroup In addition, the district must continue to collaborate with SEDNET regarding facilitating a comprehensive system of care for high-risk students and students with an EBD and their families. Documentation regarding this collaboration and quarterly data must be provided to BEESS through quarterly updates no later than the following dates: • **January 15, 2016** • **April 15, 2016** • **June 15, 2016**
Status Update	On February 2, 2016, the district provided documentation to BEESS dated January 15, 2016, regarding collaboration with SEDNET and participation in the statewide PBIS Seclusion Workgroup. On April 15, 2016, the district provided BEESS with seclusion data. On May 10 and July 8, 2016, the district provided BEESS with documentation regarding collaboration with SEDNET. One of the required updates was submitted after the required timeline. In addition, the district reported that its behavior support team meets on a monthly basis to review restraint and seclusion data and determines the areas of need. District staff and teachers are trained in de-escalation techniques as part of the Professional Crisis Management training. Staff is encouraged to contact behavior specialists regarding individual student concerns prior to behaviors escalating, whenever possible. Behavior tools training regarding classroom management and behavior techniques for crisis situations are available to staff.

Graduation Rate	
Summary	The district's graduation rate for students with disabilities has decreased from 51 percent in 2012-13 to 49 percent in 2013-14. Graduation rates for both school years are below the state rates of 52 percent for 2012-13 and 55 percent for 2013-14.
Recommendations	The district shall consider working with Project 10 to assist the district with continued efforts to increase the graduation rate.
Required Actions	N/A
Status Update	On March 17, 2016, Project 10 provided training on an early warning system that tracks graduation for students.
Dropout Rate	
Summary	The district's dropout rate for students with disabilities increased from 19 percent in 2012-13 to 29 percent in 2013-14. The 2013-14 dropout rate of 29 percent is above the state rate of 19 percent for the 2013-14 school year.
Recommendations	N/A
Required Actions	The district will collaborate with the following discretionary projects or other evidence-based support: • Project 10: Transition Education Network • SEDNET **By April 15, 2016**, the district is to provide BEESS with an update on the status of the activities and collaboration with Project 10 and SEDNET.
Status Update	On April 11, 2016, the district provided BEESS with documentation regarding collaboration with Project 10 and SEDNET. In addition, the district reported that ESE administrators met with Project 10 in February and March 2016 to create an early warning system to monitor student progress toward graduation for high school students based on the data. ESE administrators met with Project 10 and updated the color-coded charts to prepare for meetings with district leaders regarding the data reviewed. ESE administrators, FIN, Project 10, FDLRS and SEDNET met with district leaders to review trends in graduation and dropout rates.
Coordinated Early Intervening Services – Over-identification, Black, Emotional Behavioral Disability	
Summary	The district's risk ratio for CEIS over-identification has decreased over the last three years. During the 2013-14 school year, the risk ratio was 4.49. Florida has identified 3.5 as the risk ratio for significant disproportionality for CEIS. In the district, black students are 4.49 times more likely to be identified as having an EBD compared to all other races combined.
Recommendations	It is recommended that the district consider reviewing whether existing students with an EBD are appropriately identified and whether the students are in need of special education services.

	The district should also consider adding steps to identify students with an EBD who may be demonstrating persistent and consistent emotional or behavioral responses that adversely affect performance in the educational environment.
Required Actions	The district will continue its collaboration with PS:RtI to support the district's MTSS implementation efforts. The district will provide information regarding this collaboration on a quarterly basis no later than the following dates: • **January 15, 2016** • **April 15, 2016** • **June 15, 2016**
Status Update	On February 2, 2016, the district provided BEESS with documentation dated January 15, 2016, regarding collaboration with PS:RtI to support the district's MTSS implementation efforts. On April 11, 2016, the district provided an update related to collaboration with PS:RtI for the district's MTSS implementation efforts. While the required documentation was provided late, on July 8, 2016, the district provided BEESS with an update regarding ongoing collaboration efforts. Two of the required reports were submitted after the required timeline. In addition, the district provided information regarding collaboration with PS:RtI and implementing MTSS. The district's MTSS committee developed an action plan that provides each school with assistance and training with the MTSS framework. School psychologists have been working closely with the MTSS specialists in curriculum to ensure that academic and behavioral concerns are addressed and that interventions are in place to meet students' specific needs. PS:RtI developed a district action plan to improve MTSS across the district. MTSS is now the responsibility of the district's student services department in order to bridge the gap between general education and exceptional education. The district also provided BEESS with documentation regarding collaboration with SEDNET, which has begun providing trauma-informed care to schools for their neediest students. The intent of the training is to help teachers differentiate students that may have trauma-related issues as opposed to behavior disabilities. This will allow teachers to work more effectively with these students.
Additional Concern Found Regarding Least Restrictive Environment Data	
Summary	There was an apparent discrepancy discovered with the students reported in the separate class placement at Blanche H. Daughtrey Elementary School. The school-level data indicated that there were two students reported for the separate class placement for the 2014-15 school year; however, during the classroom walk-through visits, BEESS staff observed multiple classrooms as self-contained where students with disabilities spent the majority of their day.
Required Actions	The district must review the district's least restrictive environment (LRE) data for regular class, resource class, separate class and

	other separate environment, and provide verification to BEESS of the data's accuracy no later than **November 16, 2015**. Additional actions may be required following BEESS' review.
Status Update	The district was unable to determine the cause of the inaccuracies with the LRE data. The district indicated they would continue their efforts to address the discrepancies by collaborating with their district information technology department to resolve this issue until a solution is reached. This action will continue in the 2016-17 school year.
Phases 3 and 4 of the ESE Monitoring and Assistance Process	
Summary	**By April 15, 2016**, the SST, ESE director and designated district staff will evaluate the effectiveness of the school district's action plans and determine additional next steps, as appropriate.
Status Update	On March 3, 2016, the district ESE director and assistant director conducted a follow-up meeting with members of the SST and BEESS staff. District staff provided updates for each of the targeted areas from the 2014-15 on-site visit. This information is included in each of the targeted areas previously mentioned, but LRE data accuracy has not been resolved.

2015-16 ESE Monitoring and Assistance On-Site Visit Results

The following data are related to the focus areas and activities for the 2015-16 ESE Monitoring and Assistance On-Site Visit for the Manatee County School District.

Coordinated Early Intervening Services – Over-identification, Black, Emotional Behavioral Disability

Districts are required to set aside 15 percent of IDEA, Part B funds for CEIS if students of any race are at least **3.5** times more likely to be identified as disabled compared to all other races combined.

The district's 2014-15 risk ratio of CEIS over-identification of black students with an EBD indicated that black students in the district were **4.49** times more likely to be identified as having an EBD compared to all other races combined. The 2015-16 data indicated that black students in the district were **4.56** times more likely to be identified as having an EBD compared to all other races combined, which is an increase.

Year funds are to be used	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17
Manatee	4.77	5.14	4.70	4.49	4.56

Graduation Rate

The federal uniform high school graduation rate for students with disabilities is calculated by taking the number of first-time ninth graders from four years ago, plus the number of incoming transfer students on the same schedule to graduate, minus the number of students from this population who transferred out or left to enroll in a private school or home education, divided by

the number of standard diplomas from the same group. The district's 2014-15 federal uniform graduation rate for students with disabilities is **below** the state rate.

	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15
Manatee	**49.7%**	**51.0%**	**49.2%**	**45.0%**
State	**47.7%**	**52.3%**	**55.1%**	**56.8%**

Dropout Rate

The federal dropout rate for students with disabilities is calculated by taking the number of students who exited special education as a result of dropping out, divided by the number of students who graduated with a regular high school diploma, special diploma, certificate of completion, special certificate of completion, dropped out or died. The district's 2014-15 federal dropout rate for students with disabilities is **above** the state rate.

	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15
Manatee	**17.9%**	**19.0%**	**29.3%**	**19.8%**
State	**21.1%**	**20.3%**	**19.2%**	**18.7%**

Incidents of Seclusion

According to the FDOE's restraint and seclusion database, the number of incidents of seclusion in the district **increased** from the 2014-15 school year. In addition, the total percentage of students with disabilities secluded in the district for the 2015-16 school year was **0.55** percent, while the state average was **0.17** percent.

	2013-14 (August – July)	2014-15 (August – July)	2015-16 (August – July)
Number of Incidents	**80**	**101**	**117**
Number of Students	**38**	**34**	**41**

Interviews Conducted

District-Level Coordinated Early Intervention Service and Multi-tiered System of Supports Behavior Focus Group

Members of the SST conducted a focus group with district-level MTSS behavior staff responsible for the CEIS narrative and budget.

Themes that emerged from this focus group included the following:
- District personnel are responsible for establishing the framework for MTSS at the school level.
- There is a perceived barrier to implementing MTSS on the school level; the MTSS district team must be invited by the school principal.
- There are Tier 2 and Tier 3 interventions provided at the school level.

- There are a few schools implementing the MTSS framework well.
- There is a need for increased knowledge of the MTSS implementation process at the school level.

School-Level Multi-tiered System of Supports Team

Members of the SST conducted a focus group with school-level MTSS staff from Manatee Elementary School.

Themes that emerged from this focus group included the following:
- The school has a well-established MTSS framework that the school-based leadership considers to be effective.
- The school-based leadership team has strong administrative and teacher support.
- Interaction with the district primarily consists of services from a psychologist and a social worker.
- The ability to do more preventative work throughout the MTSS framework is desired.

District-Level Finance and Budget Personnel Focus Group

Members of the SST conducted a focus group with district-level finance and budget personnel.

Themes that emerged from this focus group included the following:
- District staff develops the CEIS budget by analyzing student needs and district data regarding disproportionality.
- Requests from other stakeholders are taken into account, such as funding for personnel positions and continued use of i-Ready® software.
- District staff conducts monthly fiscal meetings with program staff to review "spend rates" for CEIS funds.
- Adjustments are made if there are problems detected with "spend rates" or documentation and determinations are made on which staff will help resolve the issues.
- The monthly meetings are very helpful and will continue.

District-Level Emotional Behavioral Disability Evaluation Specialist Focus Group

Members of the SST conducted a focus group with district-level EBD evaluation specialists.

Themes that emerged from this focus group included the following:
- District-level evaluation specialists for EBD and other health impairment review and check compliance prior to eligibility determination.
- Some schools are implementing programs to make school culture more responsive to culturally diverse students and families, such as Big Brothers and Ministers of Justice; however, current professional development for culturally responsive practices should be increased.
- Problem solving tends to be used with individual students with more severe behaviors rather than for prevention and early intervention.
- The district and schools are strong at identifying externalizing behaviors; however, identifying students with internalizing difficulties is more challenging.
- There is a need for increased resources to support student mental health needs.
- Data systems for behavior are not always able to provide sufficient information for effective problem solving.

Administrator Focus Groups

Members of the SST conducted focus groups with administrative staff members from Blackburn Elementary School, Bay Shore High School, Braden River High School and SABLE School regarding graduation, dropout and seclusion.

Themes that emerged from these focus groups included the following:
- Staff are aware that the district has a high number of seclusions.
- There is a need for trauma-informed care training, mental health awareness training and behavior technicians to support the system in place.
- The MTSS team meets once a week, or more often if necessary, for data review and discussion.
- Behavior data are used to adjust students' individual behavior plans and to monitor progress.
- Behavior technicians or assistants provide support for students to transition back to mainstream classes.
- Schools have data-driven systems in place that are used to inform schools of systematic changes regarding graduation and dropout.
- Schools have a strong desire to keep at-risk students on campus.
- Students, teachers and administrators have positive relationships.
- At one school, to assist those struggling in their academics, honor students are paired with students with disabilities.
- Transcripts and grades are periodically reviewed with students by guidance and ESE staff.
- There is a need for consistent continuation of the MTSS process when a student moves or transitions from one school to another, rather than having to start over.
- Consistency and accountability are needed for implementation of MTSS at the school level.
- There is a need to raise awareness of drug use and prevention.
- Districtwide implementation of Check & Connect is present, which provides mentoring and ongoing support to struggling students.
- At one school, students with a history of misbehavior have made increased academic gains with additional support to reduce behavioral barriers to classroom participation.

Teacher Focus Groups

Members of the SST conducted focus groups with teachers from Blackburn Elementary School, Bay Shore High School, Braden River High School and SABLE School regarding graduation, dropout and seclusion.

Themes that emerged from these focus groups included the following:
- Increased academic rigor for students with disabilities is desired.
- There is a need to identify and access professional development opportunities for schools that are below the state rate for graduation and dropout.
- Advanced Via Individual Determination (frequently referred to as AVID) strategies for professional development for teachers are needed.
- More inclusive scheduling is needed for "push in" versus "pull out" services.
- More professional development is needed to address specific exceptionalities and cultural awareness.
- More evidence-based interventions are needed to provide Tier 2 and Tier 3 supports.

- Seclusion is used to protect the safety of the students and is only used after all de-escalation attempts are exhausted.
- Strong collaboration with community stakeholders is present.
- Teacher relationships with students and a sense of safety are key components for student success.

Student Focus Groups

Members of the SST conducted focus groups with students from Blackburn Elementary School, Bay Shore High School, Braden River High School and SABLE School. Students were asked to share their perspectives on topics such as graduation, dropout and seclusion.

Comments from these focus groups included the following:
- In one school, there is a strong support system in place and the school is focused on relationships.
- There is limited access to technology after hours.
- Credit recovery, class offerings, time conflicts and transportation needs can be challenging.
- There are very few fights on the campuses.
- Identification badges help to increase safety and security.
- Safe environments are conducive to learning.
- Smaller class size and individual attention are perceived as keys to success when students struggle in school.

School Walk-Through Debriefings

Members of the SST conducted school walk-through debriefings at Blackburn Elementary School, Bay Shore High School, Braden River High School and SABLE School.

Observations from the school walk-through debriefings included the following:
- Welcoming environments were present.
- There were positive relationships within classrooms.
- Students were actively engaged in activities.
- Staff was visible and all staff wore name badges.

Commendations

1. The district's use of monthly meetings between program and fiscal staff is an effective method to ensure proper use of IDEA resources.
2. The district has demonstrated, through the submission of reports to BEESS and the Office of Audit Resolution and Monitoring at FDOE, an increase in its level of fiscal standards and documentation.

2015-16 Action-Planning and Problem-Solving Process and Next Steps

Next Steps	
Coordinated Early Intervening Services – Over-identification	
Summary	The district's risk ratio of CEIS over-identification of black students with an EBD using 2014-15 data indicated that black students in the district are **4.49** times more likely to be identified as having an EBD compared to all other races combined. The 2015-16 data indicated that black students in the district are **4.56** times more likely to be identified as having an EBD compared to all other races combined.
Recommendations	The district should monitor and analyze data from schools that have determined students eligible as having an EBD. In addition, the district should monitor data for all students eligible as having an EBD, not just those being newly identified. These data will capture any declines that occur due to students being dismissed or identified for another exceptional program.
Required Actions	The district must continue to collaborate with PS:RtI to support the district's MTSS implementation efforts. The district will provide information regarding this collaboration and documentation of how the MTSS framework is being implemented throughout the district. Documentation is to be provided on a quarterly basis to the district's BEESS liaison by the following dates: • **November 10, 2016** • **February 13, 2017** • **April 17, 2017** The district must provide trainings on the MTSS framework to elementary, middle and high school administrators and MTSS teams. Each training should include data-based problem solving, core instructional programming, cultural responsiveness, universal screening and progress monitoring, and tiered interventions and supports matched to students' needs. The following documentation must be provided to the district's BEESS liaison as evidence of implementation of the required trainings **by April 17, 2017**: • A copy of the materials used for each training • A copy of the sign-in sheets for each training, which includes participants' titles and school names • A copy of the district's comprehensive MTSS framework for academic and behavior support
Coordinated Early Intervening Services Activities with Finance and Budget Staff	
Summary	District staff indicated that monthly fiscal meetings are very helpful and will continue. Based on this information, FDOE staff determined that the district will be removed from financial special conditions status.

Recommendations	The district should seek broader stakeholder (e.g., parents, district personnel and community partners) input in developing the budget for CEIS. An increase in stakeholder input would increase the district's ability to properly plan for students' needs and provide for greater efficiencies, both problematically and fiscally, as it continues to augment the MTSS process for behavior at the Tier 2 and Tier 3 levels.
Required Actions	N/A

Graduation Rate

Summary	The district's federal uniform graduation rate for the 2014-15 school year is 45 percent, which is **below** the state rate.
Recommendations	The district should collaborate with Project 10 to review graduation data, conduct a needs assessment and develop an early warning system plan that is consistent across the district.
Required Actions	The district must review its current policy and procedures regarding fifth-year student cohort groups to ensure these students are on track to graduate. Additionally, the district must determine specific strategies and implement them.
	Documentation of specific strategies and a timeline of the implementation plan must be provided to the district's BEESS liaison **by November 10, 2016**. Documentation regarding the progress, which includes a data review, must be provided to the district's BEESS liaison by the following dates: **February 13, 2017** **April 17, 2017**

Dropout Rate

Summary	The district's dropout rate for students with disabilities for the 2014-15 school year is 19.8 percent, which is slightly **above** the state rate.
Recommendations	The district should continue to collaborate with Project 10 and SEDNET on strategies to reduce the dropout rate.
Required Actions	See required actions under graduation rate.

Incidents of Seclusion

Summary	Incidents of seclusion have **increased** from the 2014-15 school year. The total percentage of students with disabilities secluded in the district for the 2015-16 school year was **0.55** percent, while the state average was **0.17** percent.
Recommendations	The district should continue to collaborate with SEDNET and CARD on strategies to reduce the need for seclusion and also offer new training to appropriate district staff on preventing seclusion and restraint for students with disabilities.

Required Actions	The district must provide evidence of a districtwide review of compliance with FDOE's policies and procedures on seclusion to the district's BEESS liaison **by November 10, 2016**.
	In addition, seclusion data must be reviewed by the district and a summary of related problem-solving activities must be developed. This summary must be provided by the following dates: • **November 10, 2016** • **February 13, 2017** • **April 17, 2017**
	The district must also provide evidence of collaboration, meeting notes and timelines for the following activities to the district's BEESS liaison **by November 10, 2016**: • Participation in the districtwide PBIS Seclusion Workgroup • Participation in districtwide trauma-informed care training with SEDNET • Participation in districtwide training with CARD to strengthen evidence-based interventions for students with disabilities
	For each activity listed above, the agenda and a copy of the sign-in sheets, which includes participants' names and titles, must be provided to the district's BEESS liaison **by April 17, 2017**.
Data Quality Concern for Least Restrictive Environment	
Summary	The district was requested to review LRE data for regular class, resource class, separate class and other separate environment, and provide verification to BEESS of the data's accuracy **by November 16, 2015**. The district indicated data were continuing to be reported incorrectly. In addition, the district indicated that meetings are being scheduled with the district's information technology department until a solution is reached that will guarantee the data will be reported correctly for the 2016-17 school year.
Recommendations	The district should continue to meet to determine a solution that will guarantee LRE data are being reported correctly.
Required Actions	The district must consult with their management information systems contact to ensure that placement data for regular class, resource class, separate class, and other separate environment are reported correctly for survey 2 (October 2016).
	The district must work with FIN to confirm the correct LRE rate for survey 2 (October 2016). Documentation of accuracy of data submission must be verifiable as of the end of state processing, when it is available to BEESS.
	Additional actions may be required following BEESS' review of the data.

Phases 4 of the ESE Monitoring and Assistance Process	
Summary	**By April 17, 2017**, the SST, ESE director and designated district staff will evaluate the effectiveness of the district's action plan and determine additional next steps, as appropriate, via a scheduled telephone call. The district will provide documentation to their BEESS liaison prior to the scheduled call.

Technical Assistance

1. **Implementing a Multi-Tiered System of Support for Behavior: Recommended Practices for School and District Leaders** (Florida's PBIS 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 of 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 catalog state laws and regulations related to school discipline.

5. **The Project 10: Transition Education Network** (http://project10.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. 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, the

project supports dropout prevention strategies for students with disabilities; school-based enterprise, service learning, and an early warning system.

6. **FDLRS Associate Centers Support** may be accessed at 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/access points, differentiated instruction, access to the general curriculum, Strategic Instruction Model, behavior/discipline, Standing up for Me, self-advocacy, responsive classroom, and district specific supports. Professional development related to dropout include differentiated instruction, accommodations, 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. **PS:RtI Technology** may be accessed at http://www.floridarti.usf.edu/index.html. One function of this project provides regional technology coordinators and technology specialists the support 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.

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