



BTG / Quarterly Update

Pinellas County Schools created the Bridging the Gap strategic plan to guide its work in closing the achievement gaps between black students and their non-black peers. The district garnered input from teachers, parents, and community members in developing a plan in 2016-17 that includes ambitious data targets and action steps as part of its aspirational goal of eliminating or greatly narrowing the gaps between black and non-black learners within 10 years.

The plan outlines gaps across six goal areas:

- **Goal 1:** Graduation Rate
- **Goal 2:** Student Achievement
- **Goal 3:** Advanced Coursework
- **Goal 4:** Student Discipline
- **Goal 5:** ESE Identification
- **Goal 6:** Minority Hiring

Equity with Excellence for All / Belief Statement

Pinellas County Schools is committed to ensuring equity and excellence for all learners with the ambitious goal of eliminating or greatly narrowing the achievement gap within 10 years between black and non-black learners. The district is fully committed to this work as a way of expressing its beliefs and commitment to diversity throughout the school system through fostering a growth mindset, ensuring culturally inclusive lessons and materials, celebrating all learners and families, and hiring a workforce that is representative of the students we serve. The District and School Board aspire to lead the state and nation in closing the achievement gap and are dedicating all the necessary resources to support innovative solutions in meeting the aspirational targets outlined in this plan.

Bridging the Gap Plan / Purpose

The Bridging the Gap (BTG) Plan will continue to be revised to include bold initiatives to affect substantive changes in the way we engage, enrich, and empower our teachers, children, and families to meet high expectations for all learners. The plan will be reviewed annually and updated accordingly. It is important to note that the data utilized for baseline measures are from the 2015-16 school year, with the 2016-17 school year considered a planning year, and the 2017-18 school year identified as the first year of implementation.

Summary Report to the Board and Community

- **Pinellas County Schools is committed to reporting its progress to the community each year by compiling an end-of-year report that addresses each of the six goal areas.** That report is posted to the district website.
- **This Quarterly Board Report is designed as a brief update to the community on the progress of the key BTG action steps across each of the six goal areas.**
 - Note: Data updates will be provided each quarter as data are available, though the summative data across all six goals and the district's key findings and recommendations for next steps will only be provided via the annual report.



Key Action Steps / Progress Update

Goals 1-3: Graduation Rate / Academic Achievement / Advanced Coursework



Implementing Culturally Relevant Instructional Practices in all Classrooms / Progress Update

The district’s Equity Task Force continues to monitor equity initiatives through its review of key benchmarks, progress measures, and stakeholder feedback to ensure quality of implementation.

PCS / Equity Task Force / Implementation Monitoring	Expectations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implementation Timelines 	Calendaring and aligning next step(s)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Key Benchmarks / Training Targets, Progress Outcomes 	Validating and evaluating key benchmarks
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fidelity Measures / Data Tools 	Measuring efficacy of initiatives
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cycles of Support / System Follow-Through and Growth 	Establishing systems in support of equitable outcomes

Each school is conducting an equity data walk this year to review academic and disciplinary gaps by race and increase dialogue among school staff about racial bias and strategies to move the needle for black learners. The data walk on each campus was organized by the district’s equity team as part of its Equity with Excellence training plan for the 2019-20 school year. The training aligns the district strategies that are key to improving teacher practice and classroom community.

- **Equity Champions / Mindset:** Developing cultural competence by recognizing the historical, cultural, social, and racial barriers that can influence beliefs and biases and impact learning.
- **AVID’s Culturally Relevant Teaching:** Developing curriculum, lessons, and activities that include specific, intentional, and practical strategies to engage, challenge, and support diverse learners.
- **PBIS / Restorative Practices:** Developing equity-centered practices that impact school climate and culture to intentionally build classroom community and a stronger sense of belonging for all learners.

The new Equity with Excellence training was introduced to all schools and teachers during pre-school and includes specific steps for all school leaders, faculty, and staff in putting equity theory into action to impact student outcomes throughout the school year. Those actions include:

- Establishing an Equity Team at each school to conduct ongoing trainings, lead Professional Learning Communities (PLCs), and problem-solve around equity gaps;
- Developing an Equity Team Resource Site with lessons specific to improving classroom culture and equity mindsets;
- Ensuring that each school’s Site-Based Leadership Team (SBLT) is meeting to review equity data, discuss barriers, and develop solutions;
- Conducting classroom “self-audits” to determine strengths and growth steps for each teacher specific to improving their skills in culturally relevant instruction.



Equity Champions / Mindset

- The district now has 380 teachers and leaders trained and credentialed as Equity Champions.
 - **During Quarter 1**, the Equity Champions conducted 172 trainings across district schools.
 - **During Quarter 2**, an additional 36 trainings were conducted.
 - Additionally, 649 district faculty and staff took part in a variety of optional equity trainings such as after-school or online offerings and equity book studies.
- The district equity team offers a variety of trainings to deepen faculty and staff understanding of inequality, prejudice, and racism. Those include: *Courageous Conversations: Beyond Diversity* training, and a local Heritage Hike in partnership with the African American Heritage Association.
 - **During Quarter 1**, 40 teachers, as well as the entire staffs of Disston Academy, St. Petersburg High School, and Melrose Elementary, took part in the hike.

AVID's Culturally Relevant Teaching training:

- The district adopted the AVID training protocol in the Spring of the 2017-18 school year with the ambitious goal of training all teachers (approx. 7,500) over 3-5 years.
 - **As of Quarter 1**, the district had trained 1,620 teachers (23% of all teachers in the district). As a matter of comparison, the district had trained only 9% of its teachers at that point last year. More than 600 teachers were trained this summer.
 - **As of Quarter 2**, additional AVID-CRT trainings were offered and more than 2,000 teachers have now been trained.
- **In partnership with AVID's national headquarters**, the district has secured two additional trainers this fall (2019-20) to continue to increase its capacity to train and re-train teachers.



Implementing Culturally Relevant Instructional Practices in all Classrooms / Progress Update

- **The district closely monitors classroom instruction via its ongoing visits to schools by the Teaching and Learning Division staff.**
- **The district uses an observation tool design to capture the use of culturally relevant strategies.**
 - **As of Quarter 2:** 2,772 classrooms were observed.
 - **As of Quarter 2**, 73% of classrooms across the district were observed as having strategies in place to build teacher-student and student-student relationships, 52% showed evidence of strategies to empower student voice and lessons unique to each student's "lived experiences," and 51% of classrooms observed showed use of culturally relevant strategies that differentiate and support equitable outcomes for all learners.



PCS / Classroom Visitation Data / Semester 1 Totals / 2019-20							
% of responses # of responses		Culturally Relevant Teaching					
		Building Relational Capacity via class meetings, restorative practices, etc.		Honoring Student Experience and Voice via use of relevant materials, local examples, etc.		Holding High Expectations via inclusion of various learning styles, use of models, etc.	
Level	Classroom Visited (N)	Evident	Not Evident	Evident	Not Evident	Evident	Not Evident
District	2,772	73%	27%	52%	48%	51%	49%
		2020	749	1429	1338	1405	1366
High	779	65%	35%	45%	55%	50%	50%
		506	273	351	428	389	390
Middle	893	67%	33%	43%	57%	38%	62%
		596	297	383	510	337	556
Elem	1,100	84%	16%	63%	37%	62%	38%
		918	179	695	400	679	420

*Note: "N/A" or blank responses not tabulated; sections may not add up to 100% of Sessions (N)



Early Warning System / Personalized Learning Plans / Progress Update

- **As outlined in the BTG Plan**, quarterly assessment and student grade data were provided to schools, disaggregated by race.
- **This includes a robust, new reporting system** that is managed by the Teaching and Learning Division specific to students earning Ds and Fs so that schools can intervene and support teachers and students as early as possible.
 - **As of Quarter 2**, the district had trained 619 teachers on equitable approaches to grading practices and competency-based learning.
- **The data shared with schools include trend data by race specific to reading and math standards** via district cycle assessments and the nationally normed NWEA MAP (Measure of Academic Progress) and iReady assessments.
 - **As of Quarter 1**, student performance trends in both ELA and math were promising. Fall MAP projections in elementary show a 31.9% proficiency for black students in reading, which is up from 24.9% at the same time last year. In math, MAP projections show proficiency at 41.7% for black students this fall, up from 36.7% last year.
 - **As of Quarter 2**, student performance metrics for the Winter MAP showed the fall trends holding steady for ELA at 32.0% for black learners across all elementary schools, while math performance dropped slightly to 36.6% for students projected to be proficient.



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- **The district's commitment to sharing data and resources directly with students is evidenced by the Personalized Learner Pathway (PLP), which was developed a year ago and is now available to all students as an online resource for reading and math.** A student-led project team developed this digital platform that allows students in grades 3-12 to see key pieces of their academic life and create a profile with their hobbies, achievements, volunteer and work experiences and goals.
 - Students can view their performance on assessments, access targeted lessons, view their progress toward graduation, and keep track of their advanced coursework, industry certifications and performance on college entrance exams.
 - Pinellas County Schools was recognized this summer as a "District of Distinction" by *District Administration* magazine for its development of the new site. Pinellas was one of 34 school districts to receive the honor, which highlights districts that are leading the way with new ideas that solve challenges in schools.
- **Schools are also provided online access to a new Personalized Learning Plan (PMP) tool** that allows schools to track the exact supports in place for each student who is off track academically. Per the BTG Plan, this is a required tool for schools to use in supporting any black student who is off track.



Advanced Coursework / Open Access to College Readiness Testing / Gifted / Progress Update

- **This fall, the district again provided the PSAT** to all 8th graders and to all high school students in 9th and 10th grades. The district also provided free, on-campus ACT and SAT testing to students who needed a higher score.
- **In partnership with the Education Foundation, the district continued its expansion of the Elevating Excellence campaign.** This fall (2019-20), two English and two math teachers at each high school were trained by Applerouth, a test prep company, in strategies to support higher SAT and ACT scores for minority students and those from low-income families. The new, on-site trainers at each campus will provide professional development to other teachers and direct support to students of color to improve college readiness scores.
- **The district's Minority Achievement Officer offered this summer** a college-readiness workshop for juniors and seniors at Lakewood High School (The College Planning Cohort) facilitated by Rising Sun Publishing. The team also facilitates monthly meetings with juniors and seniors and provides them with individualized assistance with the college application process. They are also monitoring 50 black middle school students who have expressed an interest in attending college. The team will meet with them each semester to review their grades, attendance, and discipline and make recommendations for future scheduling of academic courses.
- **As outlined in the BTG Plan, the district is continuing its annual process of universal gifted screening across all elementary schools. The district is also continuing its implementation of "Plan B" for gifted eligibility,** which has been paired with universal screening to provide alternative eligibility criteria for students from underrepresented groups such as English Language Learners (ELL) and students on Free and Reduced Lunch (FRL).

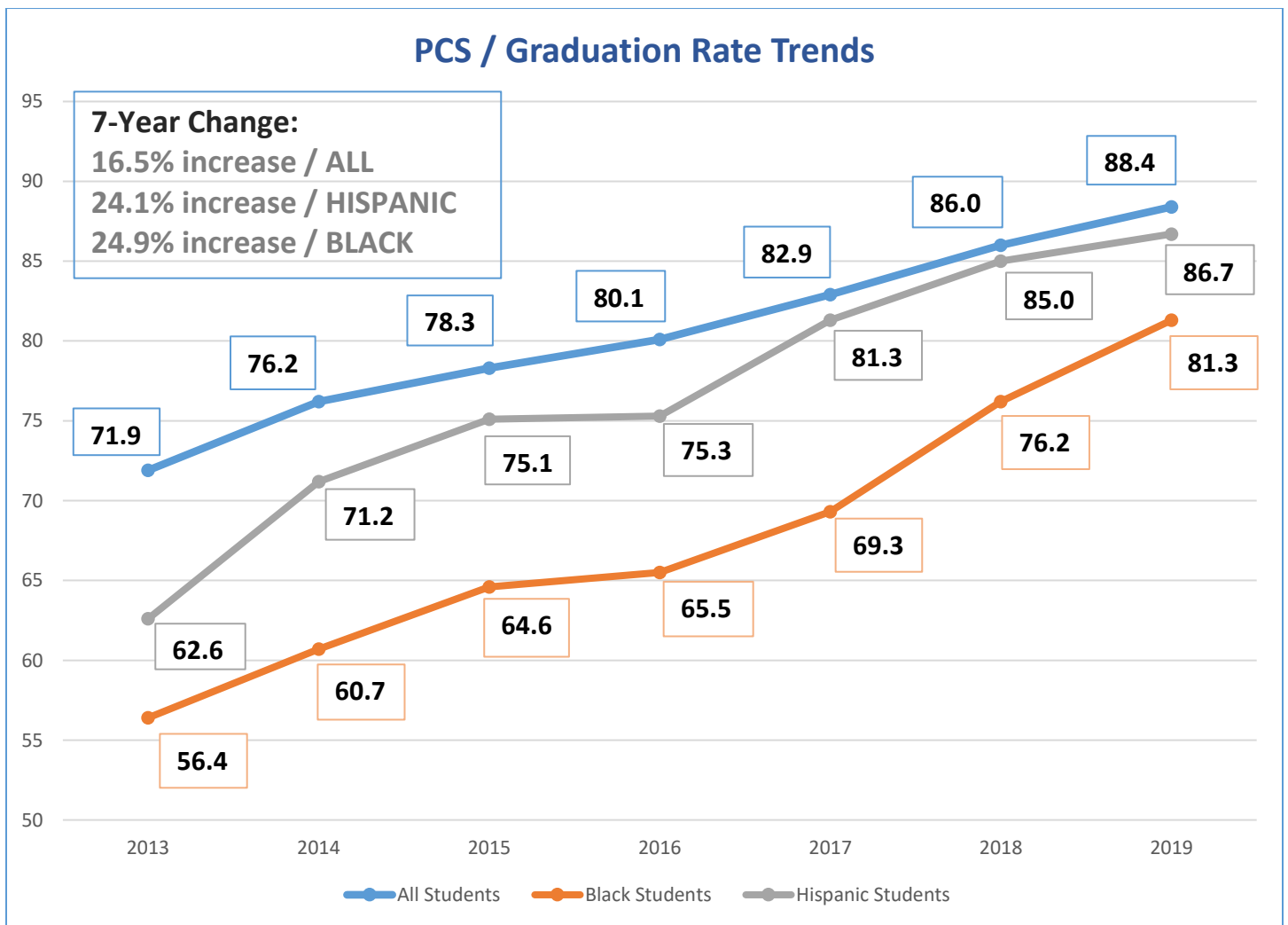


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Goal 1: Data Update: / Graduation Rates

- **New data for Quarter 2:**
 - Graduation rates for 2018-19 were released by the state in January.
 - The district continues to see a steady improvement in its graduation rate. The district reached a record-high graduation rate for the 2018-2019 school year (88.4%). This is the highest graduation rate among the state’s ten largest districts.
 - The district also continues to see a steady improvement in its black graduation rate (81.3%) and saw a strong decrease in the achievement gap (down to 8.7 percentage points from a previous gap of 11.9 percentage points the previous year). The gap is measured by comparing the non-black graduation rate (90.0%) to the black graduation rate (81.3%).
 - The district’s black graduation rate is the highest in the district’s history. It has increased 16.7 percentage points over the past five years and 24.9 percentage points in the past seven years (see table below).





Key Action Steps / Brief Update

Goal 4: Student Behavior / Discipline Disparity



Behavior policies, practices / Training on Restorative Practices / Progress Update

PBIS

- **In Quarter 2, an assistant principal from each school was trained as the lead coordinator of schoolwide discipline structures aligned to the key elements of Positive Behavioral Support and Intervention (PBIS).** A new PBIS training with a culturally responsive, restorative focus is under development and a districtwide re-fresh of PBIS is planned for this summer. The designated assistant principals will lead school teams through a revision of schoolwide behavior plans and protocols aligned to each school's unique school community.
- **This fall, district staff reviewed each school's School Wide Behavior Plan** to ensure that the plans align to the tenets of PBIS. The district continues to implement PBIS as its primary framework for maintaining positive school climates and reducing disciplinary behaviors.
- **23 district schools were named this summer as PBIS Model Schools** for demonstrating a commitment to positive and equitable outcomes for all students.

Restorative Practices

- **The district continued its investment in trainers, training materials, and timelines for implementing restorative practices.** The district has entered its second full year of implementation. Each school has developed a team that is dedicated to this work. The teams began their work in the Summer of 2017 as part of a three-day workshop titled Introduction to Restorative Practices.
 - In addition to school teams, the district's Executive Leadership Team, Transportation Department managers, district PCTA members, and some community members attended those trainings. The third day of the training was designed to show teams how to incorporate restorative strategies into their School Wide Behavior Plans and existing processes and procedures. The 2017-18 school year was an exploratory year for all schools.
- **In 2018-19,** the district began its first year of full implementation of restorative practices and began the process of training every teacher in the district in cooperation with the International Institute for Restorative Practices (IIRP). By the end of the school, nearly every teacher in the district had been trained. A district survey issued to all teachers showed that nearly 70% of teachers had embraced the use of restorative practices and believe they were adequately trained.
- **As of 2019-20,** every school has a certified restorative practices trainer on site. As turnover in schools occurs, ongoing training sessions are scheduled for schools to prepare additional certified trainers. A complete resource site is also available for schools around restorative practices, including materials that schools can use to set goals, reflect on best practices, and engage staff and students in these new strategies.



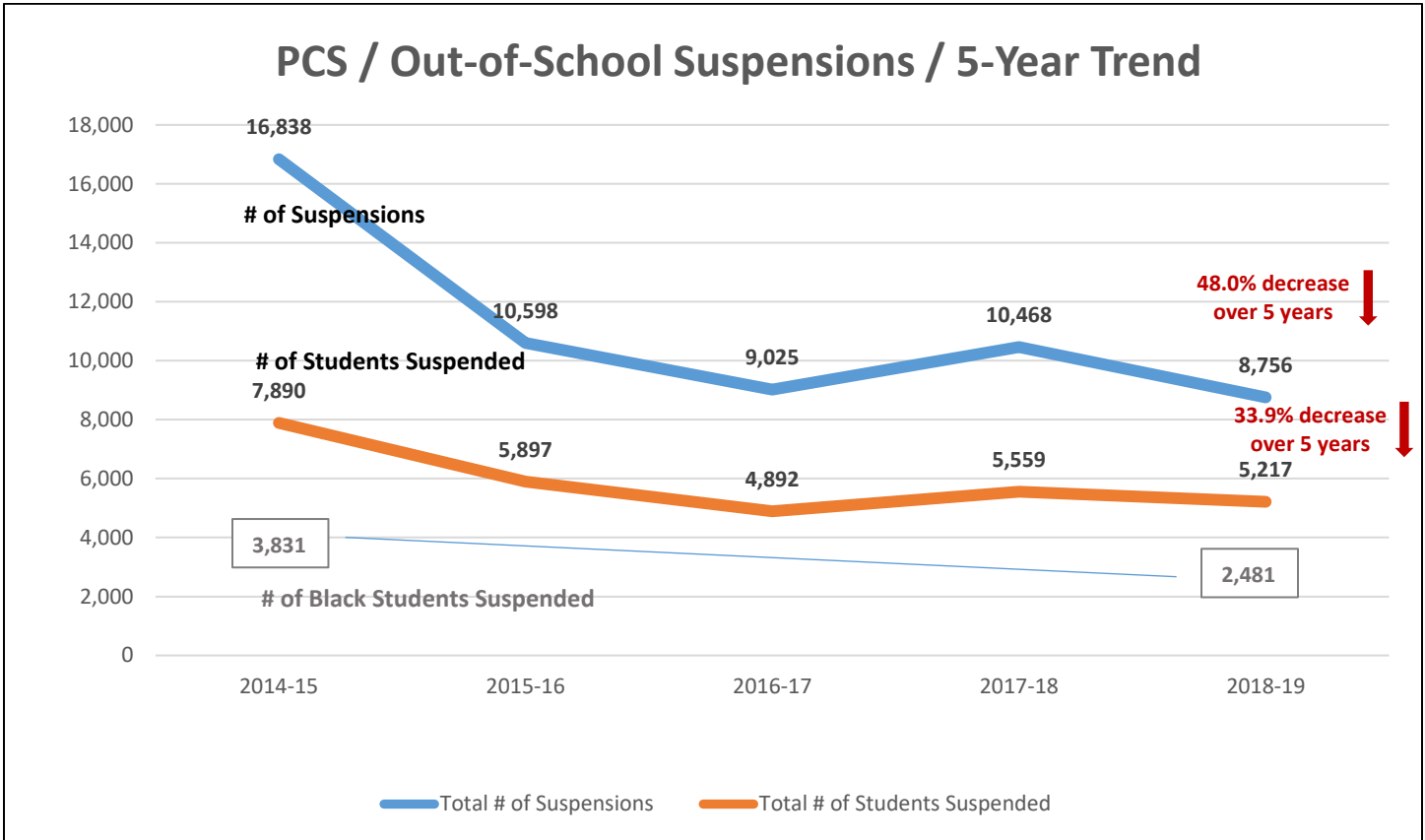
Goal 4: Data Update: / Out of School Suspensions (OSS)

- **The district's Equity Task Force is working with the district's research division to garner feedback from teachers, staff, and administrators on school discipline processes, alternatives to suspension, and new ideas to support students who are off-task.** Focus groups are being conducted at 6 district middle schools and feedback will be used to develop alternative consequences and interventions in keeping students on task and social-emotionally supported. The focus groups are in alignment with the district's continued efforts to consider restorative approaches to discipline and to seek input from teachers and staff as to what strategies might be most effective.
- **The district continues to monitor out-of-school suspensions for black students to meet its goal of eliminating OSS for non-violent infractions such as skipping, missed detention, tardies, and minor bus infractions.**
 - **In both Quarter 1 and Quarter 2**, only 11 suspensions (less than 1%) were given to black students for those non-violent infractions. The district's Area Superintendents continue to evaluate each of these occurrences to ensure that the school's handling and coding of each infraction is correct. The district's monitoring of discipline trends by school and the involvement and support of the Area Superintendents has created an ongoing focus on reducing disparate discipline rates.
- **The district also monitors out-of-school suspensions for black students to meet its goal of reducing OSS for defiance and classroom disruption.**
 - **In Quarter 1**, a total of 195 suspensions (27.5% of all suspensions) were given to black students for those infractions.
 - **In Quarter 2**, a total of 276 suspensions (24.7% of all suspensions) were given to black students for those infractions. This continues to be an area of focus.



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PCS / OSS / 5-Year Trend by Race										
	Total # of Suspensions WHITE	Total # of Students Suspended WHITE	Total # of Suspensions BLACK	Total # of Students Suspended BLACK	Total # of Suspensions HISPANIC	Total # of Students Suspended HISPANIC	Total # of Suspensions ASIAN	Total # of Students Suspended ASIAN	Total # of Suspensions MULTI	Total # of Students Suspended MULTI
2014-15	5,458	2,747	8,896	3,831	1,584	873	112	75	766	351
2015-16	3,338	2,000	5,603	2,918	1,060	648	84	58	505	266
2016-17	2,723	1,621	4,666	2,374	1,046	587	106	69	481	238
2017-18	3,182	1,888	5,369	2,625	1,308	715	95	66	487	249
2018-19	2,736	1,751	4,489	2,481	1,037	677	105	75	371	221
	-49.9%	-36.3%	-49.5%	-35.2%	-34.5%	-22.5%	-6.3%	0%	-51.6%	-37.0%

PCS / OSS / Quarter 2 Update / 2019-20										
thru Q2	Total # of Suspensions WHITE	Total # of Students Suspended WHITE	Total # of Suspensions BLACK	Total # of Students Suspended BLACK	Total # of Suspensions HISPANIC	Total # of Students Suspended HISPANIC	Total # of Suspensions ASIAN	Total # of Students Suspended ASIAN	Total # of Suspensions MULTI	Total # of Students Suspended MULTI
2018-19	1,415	1,038	2,317	1,486	550	402	51	42	185	124
2019-20	934	688	1,864	1,244	406	306	33	27	198	130
Change	-481	-350	-453	-242	-144	-96	-18	-15	13	6



Key Action Steps / Progress Update

Goal 5: ESE Identification (EBD)



EBD Data review / Early Intervening Services / Progress Update

- **The Exceptional Student Education (ESE) Department continues to work collaboratively with the district data departments in creating improved eligibility data reports.** The reports are reviewed and compared to ensure accuracy of the data and coding.
- **The district also added an academic screening tool** to address academic deficits for students being referred for consideration of eligibility in the area of EBD.
- **The district reviewed every student with a primary eligibility of EBD** at the student’s annual IEP meeting.
 - **As of Quarter 1,** 12 new black students transferred into Pinellas County Schools who already had an EBD designation. Those students are being re-evaluated per the process outlined in the BTG Plan.
 - **As of Quarter 2,** only one additional student transferred into PCS with an EBD designation.
- **Intensive problem solving on behavioral intervention** is occurring consistently with district behavior specialists in support of early intervention.
- **As of 2019-20, the district has assigned four additional district intervention specialists to specifically support early intervening services at high minority schools.** Additional support and training for schools from behavior specialists is also available as needed. This new way of work emphasizes the critical need to establish high-quality general education intervention procedures. The goal is to reduce identification of students found eligible.
 - **As of Quarter 1,** 20 black students were being served in high minority schools and 43 black students are being provided intensive behavior support districtwide.
 - **As of Quarter 2,** 10 black students were being served in high minority schools and 59 black students are being provided intensive behavior support districtwide.
- **As outlined in the BTG Plan, schools are accessing district support earlier this year and focusing on problem solving** in order to ensure fidelity of intervention implementation.
- **The district ESE Department has also firmed up its fidelity processes prior to ESE eligibility meetings.** The updated process documents have been shared with principals.

2019-20 / Q1	2019-20 / Q2
<p>New EBD Eligibilities / Quarter 1 Identified by PCS = 10 Black=2, Non-Black=8 Black = 20%</p>	<p>New EBD Eligibilities / Quarter 2 Identified by PCS = 0 Black=0 Non-Black=0</p>



Key Action Steps / Progress Update

Goal 6: Minority Hiring



Improved Processes / Hiring of a Minority Recruitment Team / Progress Update

- **The Human Resources Division has completed its semi-annual review of its hiring practices and procedures** to identify inefficiencies and any barriers in hiring minority candidates. This internal review, coupled with feedback from the Urban Schools Human Capital Academy, led to several substantive changes in personnel supports for schools. This includes the hiring new HR specialists (called “partners”) to assist schools in finding qualified staff. HR has also streamlined the processes for certification verification and fingerprinting in an effort to expedite hiring timelines.
- **The district continued its aggressive plan to implement a Teacher Cadet program as outlined in the BTG Plan.** The program will identify future black educators among current PCS students in high school.
- **As outlined in the BTG Plan, the district continues to employ a Manager of Talent Acquisition and two additional hiring specialists to focus on minority hiring and filling critical shortage areas.** The team has taken critical steps to support recruitment and retention of minority candidates. Those include:
 - Building strong relationships with current minority candidates in keeping the candidate pool “warm.”
 - Reducing the hiring manager’s time by recommending the most qualified candidates for an interview and facilitating recommendations for hire.
 - Rebranding PCS marketing materials to reflect the diversity of the Pinellas County community.
 - Providing frequent “check ins” with 1st year teachers in support of improved retention.

PCS / Human Resources / Minority Hiring / Goal 6					
Minority Hiring / 2019-20 Fall (Quarter 1) TOTALS	# and % of TOTAL instructional staff / TEACHERS		# and % of TOTAL instructional staff / TEACHERS		% Change from Q1 last year
	2019-20		2018-19		
Hispanic	444	6.0%	429	5.9%	+0.1%
Black	651	8.9%	643	8.9%	same
White	6,058	83.1%	6,035	83.2%	-0.1%
Asian	100	1.4%	93	1.3%	+0.1%
American Indian	*	*	*	*	*
Pacific Islander	*	*	*	*	*
DISTRICT TOTALS	7,293		7,251	100%	

Note: The data represent the total number of instructional staff as of the date listed. In this example, the end of Quarter 1. This does not represent only new hires as changes to staff occur throughout the year as employees leave and enter the district. Administrators are not represented. The change column represents the differences in percentages in comparison to the same time period last year.