Student Support Services Welcomes...

Heather Diamond!

The Student Support Services Project announces the passing of the baton from Bettye Hyle (retired) to Heather Diamond as the Student Support Services Coordinator.

Heather has been in education for 18 years, during which she was a Leon County teacher and assessment trainer, a case manager for the Multidisciplinary Diagnostic and Training Program (MDTP) at the University of Florida, and an independent consultant presenting at local and national conferences and providing training, coaching, and districtwide support related to direct instruction reading implementations.

Heather joined the Bureau of Exceptional Education and Student Services (BEESS) in 2005 to serve as the program specialist for Specific Learning Disability and coordinator of Response to Intervention at the onset of implementing the reauthorization of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) of 2004.

She has most recently been coordinating and facilitating statewide efforts for implementing a unified, integrated, data-based multi-tiered system of supports for Florida’s Problem-Solving and Response to Intervention Project at the University of South Florida and the Florida Department of Education (FDOE).

We are all excited as she makes the transition to the Student Support Services Project and know that she will be a great asset.

We welcome you to introduce yourself to Heather, if you have not already been working with her. She may be reached at hdiamond@usf.edu or (850) 245-7851. Heather is looking forward to active partnerships with Florida’s Student Services community.

Thank you,
Student Services Team
Student Services Week—February 4–8, 2013!

Celebrate! We are pleased to announce that February 4–8, 2013 is established as Student Services Week in the State of Florida. This provides an opportunity for school personnel to focus attention on the support services that are provided by school counselors, school nurses, school social workers, school psychologists, and career education staff.

Student Services programs are an integral part of the total public education system and support the State Board of Education’s multi-tiered system of support. Student Services professionals work together to assist students in acquiring the knowledge, skills, and competencies needed to master the state standards and make well-reasoned and healthy lifelong decisions. It is important to recognize that academic performance is impacted by developmental factors (i.e., readiness and parental involvement) and school and community factors (i.e., safe school environment, learning environment, teachers, and staff).

An extensive and growing body of research demonstrates the value of providing supportive programs and services in order to increase student achievement. In turn, addressing the mental and physical health needs of students enhances school attendance, reduces behavior problems, and improves interpersonal skills. This enables students to learn and teachers to teach, and strengthens the bond between families and schools, thus maximizing student achievement.

Student Services professionals have the necessary knowledge, skills, and abilities to reduce barriers to learning and assist classroom teachers, parents, and community agencies in providing a safe and positive learning environment for all children. School improvement teams can use Student Services resources to facilitate the school and/or district improvement plans.
To foster recognition and appreciation of the contributions of Student Services professionals, we encourage your district to support the role of Student Services by developing local activities to inform citizens of the many ways that these services contribute to the educational success and personal development of all students. The national professional associations for Student Services offer information relative to their services.

- Florida School Counselor Association [http://www.fla-schoolcounselor.org/]
- Florida Association of School Nurses [http://fasn.nursingnetwork.com/]
- Florida Association of School Psychologists [http://www.fasp.org/]
- Florida Association of School Social Workers [http://www.fassw.org/]

Thank you for the leadership that you are providing to strengthen the roles of Student Services professionals with teachers, students, and families in your district. If you have questions related to Student Services Week, please contact Heather Diamond at hdiamond@usf.edu

504 Tip

When determining whether a student has a disability under §504, ensure that the 504 Committee does not limit its analysis to how an impairment affects the student’s ability to learn.

Restricting the analysis of impact to learning is one of the most common errors made by 504 committees. Learning is just one of a number of life activities or major bodily functions that should be considered; nothing in §504 limits protection to students whose impairments concern learning. The committee must consider how the impairment affects any major life activity (or bodily function) and what is needed to ensure equal access to educational programs.

For more information, refer to the Office for Civil Rights [Frequently Asked Questions](http://sss.usf.edu/resources/topic/section504/index.html) document addressing Section 504 or visit [http://sss.usf.edu/resources/topic/section504/index.html](http://sss.usf.edu/resources/topic/section504/index.html), for additional resources.

The DSM-5

The APA Board of Trustees approved the final diagnostic criteria for the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-5) in December. The DSM-5 Manual will be published in May. Although special education eligibility is not based on DSM criteria, some familiarity with the DSM-5 is important for Student Services personnel as the DSM-5 establishes diagnostic standards for psychiatric and mental health professionals in other settings and is often used by Student Services professionals to communicate with other mental health and medical professionals, as well as to inform diagnostic decisions and establish the mental impairment under §504.

The DSM-5 introduces a number of notable changes for mental disorders identified in school-age children and adolescents. The changes in diagnostic criteria are generally consistent with IDEA and align with State Board of Education Rules and FDOE policies and procedures related to exceptional education eligibility. The changes in the DSM-5 should help facilitate communication with medical and mental health professionals and greater diagnostic agreement between student services and community mental health professionals. New or modified diagnostic criteria for mental disorders identified in school-age children and adolescents
have implications for Student Services professionals related to Specific Learning Disorder, Autism Spectrum Disorder, Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder, and Intellectual Developmental Disorder. A brief description of the revisions for each area follows.

**Specific Learning Disorder**

A Specific Learning Disorder refers to persistent difficulties in the acquisition of reading, writing, arithmetic, or mathematical reasoning skills during the formal years of schooling. Current academic skills well below the average range as measured by “individually-administered, standardized, culturally and linguistically appropriate tests of academic achievement”. The DSM-5 requires the administration of an individual achievement test but does not depend on comparisons with overall IQ (rendering the administration of an IQ test no longer necessary or relevant to the determination of a Specific Learning Disorder). Like the IDEA, the DSM-5 diagnostic criteria require the inclusion of the individual’s response to intervention as part of the clinical synthesis. The DSM-5 diagnostic criteria, which were written to be consistent with a specific learning disability in IDEA, align with Florida’s SLD rule.

**Attention–Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder**

The DSM-5 made significant modifications to ADHD diagnostic criteria, which include raising the maximum age of onset to 12, reducing the current impairment requirement, and expanding the hyperactivity-impulsivity symptoms. These changes are expected to increase the diagnostic prevalence rates of this disorder. The DSM-5 also requires that information on Inattention or Hyperactivity-Impulsivity be obtained from both teacher and parent, whenever possible, which is likely to result in greater school involvement in independent evaluations. In Florida, students with ADHD, not eligible under other classifications, may be eligible for services through the Other Health Impairment (OHI) or Section 504.

**Autism Spectrum Disorder**

The autism spectrum disorder (ASD) reflects a new name that incorporates autism, Asperger’s disorder, and pervasive developmental disorder. The three domains in DSM-IV are collapsed into two: Social/communication deficits and Fixated interests and repetitive behaviors. Florida incorporated autism, Asperger’s disorder, and pervasive developmental disorder into an autism spectrum disorder in 2007; however, Florida maintains the distinction between impairments in social interaction and impairments in verbal/nonverbal language or social communication skills.

For more information on the DSM-5, visit the American Psychological Association’s DSM-5 Development web page at [http://www.dsm5.org](http://www.dsm5.org) or the January/February 2013 Issue of the Journal of Learning Disabilities, a special issue which addresses implications of the proposed DSM-5 changes for the identification and treatment of students with a Learning Disorder and/or ADHD.
Rule 6A-6.0253 Diabetes Management


The National Diabetes Education Program (NDEP)

The NDEP has developed Helping the Student with Diabetes Succeed: A Guide for School Personnel to educate school personnel about effective diabetes management and to share a set of practices that enable schools to ensure a safe learning environment for students with diabetes.


Child Abuse Reporting Web Based Training Course

The Florida legislature revised section 1012.98, Florida Statutes (F.S.) to require teachers in grades 1-12 to participate in continuing education training provided by the Department of Children and Families (DCF) on identifying and reporting child abuse and neglect.

Student Services staff worked with DCF to develop the content for the course, which follows the FDOE’s Child Abuse Prevention Sourcebook for Florida School Personnel: A Tool for Reporting Abuse and Supporting the Child.
Since the implementation of this law, several districts have raised questions regarding local implementation issues. A summary of this content appears below in Q & A format:

**Questions & Answers**

1. **Is the web-based course mandated or may districts use their own training?**
   
   Per the new law, training provided by DCF is required.

2. **How often should the training occur?**
   
   The law is silent on this.

3. **How much time do districts have to train and document completion?**
   
   The law is silent on this.

4. **Does this require that school staff (i.e., aides, bus drivers, counselors, office staff) other than teachers receive the training?**
   
   The law only specifies that this training is required for teachers in grades 1-12.

5. **Are districts required to track the training of school staff (other than teachers)?**
   
   This law does not require tracking of other school staff. However, school districts track staff professional development in compliance with other sections of law.

6. **What is the district’s liability if a teacher does not complete the training?**
   
   The law is silent on this.

7. **Are school districts required to use the tracking tool developed by DCF?**
   
   The law is silent regarding tracking systems; however, since one is provided with the web-based course, districts may want to consider using this tool for documentation purposes.

We will continue to work with the FDOE, Office of Educator Quality to develop and distribute technical assistance related to local implementation of this requirement. For questions regarding this subject, please contact Gria Davison at (850) 245-7837 or gdavison@usf.edu.
Online Course Graduation Requirement

Governor Rick Scott signed House Bill 7063, Digital Learning, into law with an effective date of July 1, 2012. One of its provisions amends s. 1003.428(2)(c), F.S., relating to the online graduation requirement for the 24-credit high school graduation option, to do the following:

♦ Prohibit a school district from requiring a student to take an online course to meet graduation requirements outside of the school day or in addition to a student’s full schedule of courses for a given semester.

♦ Provide exemptions for meeting the online course graduation requirement for students who have individual educational plans (IEPs) that indicate an online course would not be appropriate or for students who have been enrolled in a Florida high school for one year or less.

Updated Frequently Asked Questions were sent out via the Paperless Communications System dated December 7, 2012. (DPS 2012-179 Memorandum)

State Uniform Transfer of High School Credit

The State Board of Education Rule 6A-1.09941, F.A.C., was revised last year and impacts students who transfer from home education, private schools, and out-of-state schools. The memorandum may be viewed at http://info.fldoe.org/docushare/dsweb/Get/Document-6420/dps-2012-78.pdf.

End-of-course (EOC) assessment requirements for transfer students are dependent on the aforementioned rule and other factors. When evaluating a transfer student’s transcript that indicates a 1.0 credit was earned in Algebra 1, Geometry, or Biology 1, it is important to consider the following:

♦ The school year in which the student entered ninth grade for the first time (ninth grade cohort)

♦ The school year in which the student took the course

The transfer student is required to take:

♦ The Algebra 1 EOC Assessment if the student entered grade 9 in 2011–2012 and thereafter and the transcript does not indicate a passing/proficient score on a statewide, standardized EOC assessment in Algebra 1 or on the high school statewide assessment in mathematics required by the state from which the student transferred for purposes of satisfying the requirements of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act.

♦ The Geometry EOC Assessment and the Biology 1 EOC Assessment if the student entered grade 9 in 2012–2013 and thereafter and the transcript does not indicate a passing/proficient score on a statewide, standardized EOC assessment in that course.
The High School State Assessments by State chart lists statewide standardized mathematics tests and EOCs by state to assist with the implementation of these requirements.

New Online Module: Florida Graduation Requirements

Project 10: Transition Education Network and the Florida Center on Interactive Media are pleased to announce that their new online module on graduation requirements is now available at http://transition.florida-ese.org/.

The module is intended to familiarize regular and exceptional student education (ESE) teachers, transition staff, and other educators with current diploma options and course requirements for standard high school diplomas in Florida, including the 24-credit standard diploma, 18-credit accelerated career and college diplomas, the Florida Performance-Based Diploma, and the International Baccalaureate (IB) and Advanced International Certificate of Education (AICE). Also described are the Certificate of Completion as well as assessments, courses, and grades required for graduation. Five case studies illustrate course and graduation options.

Schools and Medicaid: A Dynamic Partnership

SSS sponsored the annual Medicaid & Schools Conference November 8 and 9, 2012, at the Renaissance World Golf Village Resort in St. Augustine, FL. Fifty-six school districts sent representatives to the successful event that covered topics from the Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) to updates on Florida’s Medicaid Certified School Match and School District Administrative Claiming Programs.

Presentations included tips from specific districts on best practices, guidance from the Agency for Health Care Administration (AHCA), news on the upcoming pilot for the state-sponsored Electronic Medicaid Administrative Claiming System, and information about Medicaid fraud in our state.
Graduation Requirements for Florida’s Students

Statewide Assessments

The FCAT 2.0 and Florida EOC passing score requirements provides detailed information regarding statewide assessments for high school graduation.

Updates for 2012-2013:

♦ For students who entered 9th grade in 2010-2011 (current 11th) the passing score for the FCAT 2.0 Reading is 245 or above (Level 3) for high school graduation. We anticipate that the new concordant passing scores (ACT/SAT) will be released in the late summer 2013.

♦ Effective for all students in the 2012-2013 school year and thereafter, if enrolled in U.S. History or U.S. History Honors, the final course grade must include a minimum 30 percent of the U.S. History EOC Assessment.

♦ Middle grades students who take high school level courses in Algebra 1, Geometry, and Biology 1 must pass the EOC in order for course credit to be posted upon entry into 9th grade. However, an EOC passing score is not required for middle grades progression purposes.

Graduation Requirements Web Page

This site, http://www.fldoe.org/bii/studentpro/grad-require.asp, provides an abundance of information on the graduation requirements for students. Examples of the information found are:

♦ State Graduation Requirements Charts, by entering ninth grade cohort year

♦ Florida’s Guide to Public High School Graduation brochure

♦ Transfer students

♦ Pathways to Success: College and Career Readiness—Middle and High School Planning Guide.

Everything is available in a printable format in English. Pathways to Success is available in Spanish. These may be linked to a parent resource section of a school website.

For more information related to academic advisement and student progression, please contact Helen Lancashire, School Counseling Consultant, at (850) 245-7840 or hlancash@usf.edu.