



# Williamsburg County School District

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Dr. Kelvin Wymbs, Superintendent

**IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **WILLIAMSBURG COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT'S SPECIAL SERVICES DEPARTMENT ADDRESSES CCEIS DEFICIENCIES**

The Williamsburg County School District (WCS D) Office of Special Services received its performance review from the S.C. State Department of Education WCS D and it states:

*"The Office of Special Education Services (OSES) has deemed that the Williamsburg County School District has completed all actions required to address the significant disproportionality identified for the 2022-23 school year under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). The OSES's programmatic team has reviewed the district's action plan and expenditures and determined that the district has completed the actions necessary to address the identified significant disproportionality for the 2022-23 term."*

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) requires states and local education agencies (LEAs) to take steps to address disproportionate representation. Disproportionality refers to the overrepresentation of a particular racial or ethnic group in one of four areas: 1. Race or ethnicity in relation to identification of disabilities 2. The identification of children in specific disability categories 3. The placement of children with disabilities 4. Disciplinary actions.

Williamsburg County School District was identified as Significantly Disproportionate due to overrepresentation in the following area: Risk Ratio for Black/African American students with disabilities for discipline. The racial disproportionality policy established by IDEA aims to protect the educational opportunities and rights of youths with disabilities who have historically been marginalized. It seeks to change local special education and school disciplinary practices that have racial impacts. Within this framework, early intervening services are recognized as preventive measures that can help reduce the likelihood of significant disproportionality in local educational agencies (LEAs).

A Root Causes Analysis (RCA) completed by district stakeholders identified: cultural dissonance, lack of fidelity of discipline policies, procedures, and practices, inconsistencies in the MTSS processes, and lack of consistent interventions and practices for students impacted by trauma. Based on the RCA, WCS D determined the desired outcomes were: increase attendance, improve authentic family partnerships, reduce discipline/suspension, build literacy skills, and increase the fidelity of policies and procedures for MTSS to increase Trauma-Informed Practices.

The district made key community partnerships with Transformative Education Solutions, and David Hodgins, esquire of Thompson and Horton, LLP. Transformative Education Solutions provided social-emotional practices for students as well as staff members. Attorney Hodgins provided professional development detailing special education legal practices and addressing best practices for policies, procedures, and practices for disciplining scholars with disabilities. The WCSD Special Education Department also worked on increasing attendance by actively tracking students and supporting families before making a referral for court-ordered truancy. An Elementary Literacy Coach was hired to address building literacy skills by supporting elementary teachers in best-practice approaches to teaching ELA. The district hired 3 district-level Student Intervention Facilitators to regularly review implementation practices of the MTSS process at the elementary, middle, and high school levels. The Special Education department also utilized a Primary Literacy Interventionist to implement the Lexia Core 5 reading programs to support building early skills in the targeted grades of 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup>.

*“With the support of a strong Special Education Administrative Team, teacher cooperation, as well as support from our Superintendent Kelvin Wymbbs, and our school-level administrators I am super excited and happy that we were able to meet this challenge head-on and to be able to clear this action in a timely manner.”*

*Thelvanesa Murphy Greene, WCSD Executive Director of Special Services*