



School Districts' Progress in Reducing the Use of Restrictive Procedures in Minnesota Schools

Report to the Legislature

As required by Minnesota Statutes 2025, section 125A.0942

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As requested by Minnesota Statutes, section 3.197: This report cost approximately \$15,000 to prepare, including staff time, printing, and mailing expenses.

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Legislative Charge

In accordance with Minnesota Statute 2025, section 125A.0942, subdivision 3(b):

By February 2015, and annually thereafter, stakeholders may, as necessary, recommend to the commissioner specific and measurable implementation and outcome goals for reducing the use of restrictive procedures, and the commissioner must submit to the Legislature a report on districts' progress in reducing the use of restrictive procedures that recommends how to further reduce these procedures and eliminate the use of seclusion. The statewide plan includes the following components: measurable goals; the resources, training, technical assistance, mental health services, and collaborative efforts needed to significantly reduce districts' use of seclusion; and recommendations to clarify and improve the law governing districts' use of restrictive procedures. The commissioner must consult with interested stakeholders when preparing the report, including representatives of advocacy organizations, special education directors, teachers, paraprofessionals, intermediate school districts, school boards, day treatment providers, county social services, state human services department staff, mental health professionals, and autism experts. Beginning with the 2016-17 school year, in a form and manner determined by the commissioner, districts must report data quarterly to the Minnesota Department of Education (MDE) by January 15, April 15, July 15, and October 15 about individual students who have been secluded. By July 15 each year, districts must report summary data on their use of restrictive procedures to MDE for the prior school year, July 1 through June 30, in a form and manner determined by the commissioner. The summary data must include information about the use of restrictive procedures, including use of reasonable force under section 121A.582.

Executive Summary

This report provides the required annual analysis of school districts' progress in reducing the use of restrictive procedures. Data from the 2024-25 school year shows mixed results. Compared to the previous school year, there has been an increase in the use of restrictive procedures and a decrease in the number of students with disabilities experiencing restrictive procedures, a decrease in seclusions and the number of students experiencing seclusion, an increase in physical holds and the number of students with disabilities experiencing physical holds, and continued disproportionalities in seclusions and physical holds for students with disabilities who identified as Black or African American, two or more races, and American Indian or Alaskan Native (physical holding only).

The report also highlights efforts used in Minnesota districts to reduce the use of restrictive procedures and eliminate seclusion and describes progress under the Minnesota Department of Education's (MDE's) current statewide plan.

MDE recommends that the legislature revise Minnesota Statutes, section 125A.0942, subdivision 4, to prohibit the use of seclusion on all children by September 1, 2027, and that the Legislature consider allocating additional funding to local school districts and charter schools to support their efforts in reducing the use of restrictive procedures, efforts that include training staff on effective de-escalation and other research-based behavior intervention programs and providing increased access to mental health services in schools for students. MDE will continue to engage in other promising practices to support districts.

Introduction

Reduction in the use of restrictive procedures in Minnesota schools has been a long-standing goal of the Minnesota legislature and MDE. Minnesota initially passed legislation governing the use of restrictive procedures on students with disabilities in 2009, with amendments passing in 2013, 2016, and 2023. Minnesota Statutes, section 125A.0941(f) defines restrictive procedures as “the use of physical holding or seclusion in an emergency.” . The definition also notes “[r]estrictive procedures must not be used to punish or otherwise discipline a child.”

This report includes data trends and analysis on the use physical holding and seclusion in Minnesota. Physical holding is defined in Minnesota as:

[P]hysical intervention intended to hold a child immobile or limit a child’s movement, where body contact is the only source of physical restraint, and where immobilization is used to effectively gain control of a child in order to protect a child or other individual from physical injury. The term physical holding does not mean physical contact that:

- (1) helps a child respond or complete a task;
- (2) assists a child without restricting the child’s movement;
- (3) is needed to administer an authorized health-related service or procedure; or
- (4) is needed to physically escort a child when the child does not resist or the child’s resistance is minimal.

Minnesota Statutes 2025, section 125A.0941(c).

Seclusion is defined in Minnesota as:

[C]onfining a child alone in a room from which egress is barred. Egress may be barred by an adult locking or closing the door in the room or preventing the child from leaving the room. Removing a child from an activity to a location where the child cannot participate in or observe the activity is not seclusion.

Minnesota Statutes 2025, section 125A.0941(g).

The goal of eliminating the use of seclusion in Minnesota schools was added to the legislative charge described in Minnesota Statutes 2016, sections 125A.0942, subdivision 3(b). Additionally, in 2023, the Minnesota legislature made many revisions to the standards for the use of restrictive procedures, including a prohibition of the use of seclusion on children from birth through grade three by September 1, 2024, and a requirement that MDE make recommendations to the legislature, after consulting with interested stakeholders, for urgently ending seclusion in Minnesota schools. MDE sent recommendations to the legislature during the 2023 legislative session, which included a recommendation to prohibit the use of seclusion on all children by September 1, 2026.

Additionally, MDE's restrictive procedures work is part of the Minnesota Olmstead Plan (Olmstead Plan).¹ MDE uses the Olmstead Plan for the restrictive procedures work under Minnesota Statutes 2025, sections 125A.091 and 125A.0942 because the Olmstead Plan is intentionally designed by [Executive Order 19-13](#) to be publicly visible and accessible in its structure, content, and implementation.²

This report analyzes quarterly and annual quantitative restrictive procedures data received from Minnesota school districts during the 2024-25 school year, as well as qualitative data received during the 2023-24 and 2024-25 school years. The findings are intended to inform ongoing legislative decisions and policy development related to the use of restrictive procedures in Minnesota schools.³

Analysis

Overview

The next sections of this report provide summary analyses of key data points; statewide goals; the resources, training, technical assistance, mental health services, and collaborative efforts needed to significantly reduce districts' use of seclusion; and recommendations to clarify and improve the law governing districts' use of restrictive procedures. Appendices contain further information and analyses. In brief:

- Key data points from the 2024-25 school year show:
- An increase in the total use of restrictive procedures and a decrease in the number of students with disabilities experiencing restrictive procedures as compared to the 2023-24 school year;

¹ An Olmstead Plan is a "public entity's plan for implementing its obligation to provide individuals with disabilities opportunities to live, work, and be served in integrated settings." Statement of the DOJ on Enforcement of the Integration Mandate of Title II of the ADA and *Olmstead v. L.C.*, U.S. DOJ, Civil Rights Division, June 22, 2011, Question 12, page 4 (DOJ Statement), last visited January 3, 2023. It is named after a United States Supreme Court decision: *Olmstead v. L.C.*, 527 U.S. 581 (1999).

² See [Putting the Promise of Olmstead into Practice: Minnesota's Olmstead Plan](#) for the 2022 Minnesota Olmstead Plan Revision (goals 4 and 5 pertaining to restrictive procedures in school settings).

³ MDE notes the Minnesota legislature has held Seclusion Working Group meetings from August 2025 through January 2026, pursuant to <https://www.revisor.mn.gov/laws/2025/1/Session+Law/Chapter/10/> [Laws of Minnesota 2025, 1st Spec. Sess. chapter 10, article 7, section 10](#), to "evaluate the use of seclusion as an emergency procedure and not as discipline, as required under Minnesota Statutes, section 125A.0942, subdivision 3." The working group's legislative charge has been to: (1) evaluate the effectiveness of seclusion compared to other methods of restrictive procedures used in emergency situations on different age groups and in different educational settings; (2) analyze how the lack of alternatives to seclusion forces children and their families to interact with the criminal justice system; (3) evaluate workable alternatives to seclusion; (4) consider the effects of seclusion on children's mental health, access to a free and appropriate public education, academic outcomes, and overall well-being; (5) identify new and existing resources necessary for staff capacity and training, children's supports, child mental health services, and schoolwide collaborative efforts; (6) visit school sites that currently use seclusion; (7) review applicable laws defining and regulating seclusion in schools; (8) report its findings and recommendations regarding the use of seclusion to the chairs and ranking minority members of the legislative committees with jurisdiction over kindergarten through grade 12 education no later than January 30, 2026.

- A decrease in seclusions and the number of students experiencing seclusion as compared to the 2023-24 school year; a continued decline in both measurements as compared to the 2018-19 school year (pre-COVID-19 baseline);
 - An increase in physical holds and the number of students with disabilities experiencing physical holds as compared to the 2023-24 school year; an increase in the number of physical holds but a decrease in the number of students experiencing physical holds as compared to the 2018-19 school year (pre-COVID-19 baseline);
- Continued disproportionalities in seclusions and physical holds for students with disabilities who identified as Black or African American, two or more races, and American Indian or Alaskan Native (physical holding only).
 - Progress on statewide goals;
- MDE reports on the progress made on the goals outlined in the February 2025 Two-Year Statewide Plan, including MDE actions taken to meet the goals.
- Resources, training, technical assistance, mental health services, and collaborative efforts
 - Through the annual submission of restrictive procedures data, school districts continued to report strategies used to reduce the use of restrictive procedures in their districts. Staff training and professional development was frequently mentioned, with many school districts providing specific information about the training programs used. MDE has compiled information about the trainings and other resources recommended by school districts on page 14 and into Appendix B.
 - Other resources recommended by school districts included the use of positive behavioral interventions and supports (PBIS); social-emotional learning (SEL); behavior support teams and specialists; and collaborations, partnerships, and debriefing with staff.
 - Recommendations to clarify and improve the law governing districts' use of restrictive procedures;
- MDE continues to recommend prohibiting the use of seclusion on all students and providing additional funding to support local school districts' efforts to reduce the use of restrictive procedures in schools, including funding for staff training and expanded mental health services in schools.

Key Data Points from the 2024-25 School Year

Statewide, during the 2024-25 school year, districts reported a total of 20,968 restrictive procedures, including 1,871 seclusions and 19,097 physical holds. Overall, the use of restrictive procedures increased during the 2024-25 school year from the 2023-24 school year. As shown in Table 1, the use of physical holds represents a 36% increase. However, the use of seclusion decreased from the 2023-24 school year to the 2024-25 school year, representing a 46% decrease.

Table 1. Annual Physical Holds, Seclusion, and Total Restrictive Procedure Totals, 2018-19 through 2024-25 school years⁴

Year	Physical Holds	Seclusion	Total Restrictive Procedures
2014-15	15,511	6,547	22,058
2015-16	15,600	6,425	22,025
2016-17	17,120	7,085	24,205
2017-18	18,834	6,164	24,998
2018-19	17,157	5,596	22,753
2019-20 ⁵	12,679	3,983	16,662
2020-21*	6,666	1,850	8,516
2021-22*	12,784	4,702	17,486
2022-23	12,405	3,990	16,395
2023-24	14,013	3,451	17,464
2024-25	19,097	1,871	20,968

Fewer students with disabilities experienced restrictive procedures during the 2024-25 school year than in 2023-24. Districts reported that 2,904 students with disabilities experienced one or more restrictive procedure during the 2024-25 school year, a decrease from 2,932 during the 2023-24 school year.

Figure A shows the trend in the overall number of restrictive procedures, as well as seclusion and physical holds, reported by school districts since the 2014-15 school year. Although the 2024-25 school year data indicate an increase in the use of restrictive procedures over the previous year, rates of total restrictive procedure use continue to remain below the 2018-19 school year, or the pre-COVID-19 baseline.

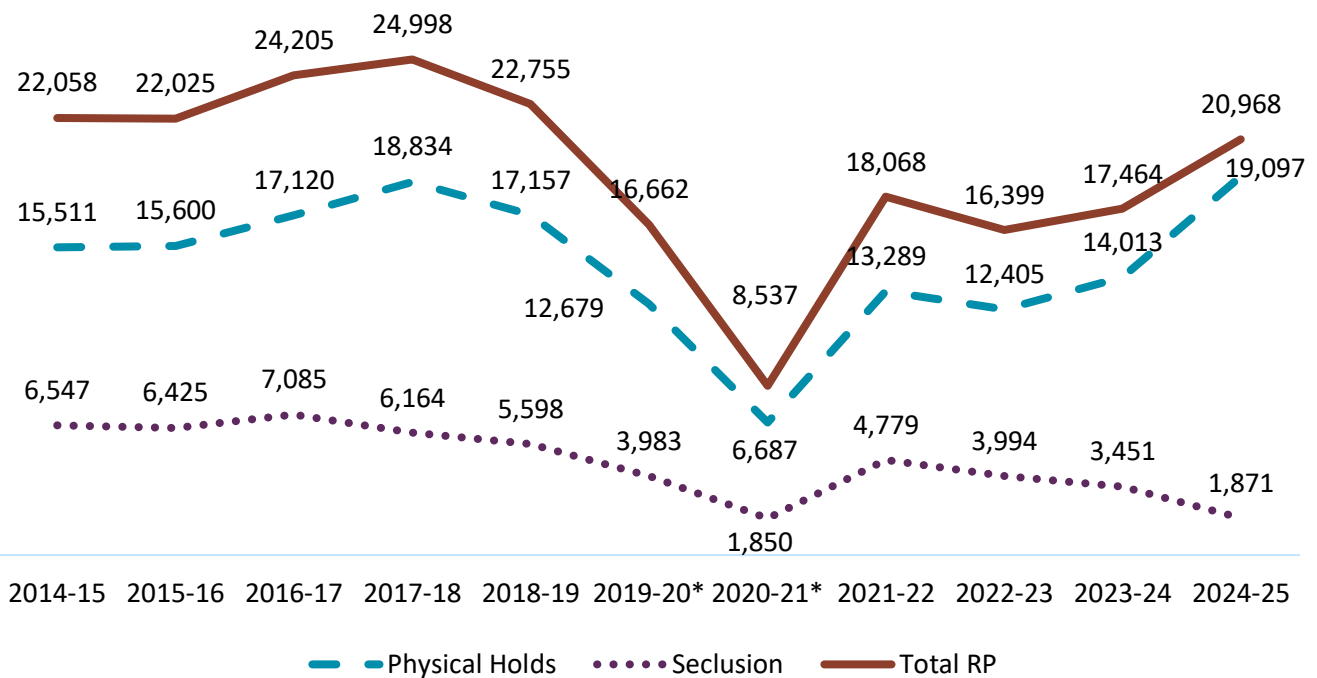
Figure A. Annual Physical Holds, Seclusions, and Total Restrictive Procedure Totals, 2014-15 through 2024-25 school years

⁴ Due to ongoing correction of data errors and an analysis with updated software, total counts of restrictive procedures reported in previous legislative reports has been revised and updated in this report.

⁵ Please note: given the 2019-20 and 2020-21 school years were heavily impacted by school closures and variations in learning models, contributing to a significant decline in the overall use of restrictive procedures as compared to the 2018-19 school year, MDE uses the 2018-19 school year as the pre-COVID-19 baseline. In tables and charts throughout this report, asterisks have been used to identify school years heavily affected by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Physical Holds, Seclusions and Total Restrictive Procedures

2014-15 to 2024-25 school years



Annual data reflect an overall decrease in the number of seclusions and the number of students experiencing seclusion from the 2023-24 school year to the 2024-25 school year. Specifically, the number of seclusions decreased by 46% (from 3,451 in 2023-24 to 1,871 in 2024-25), and the number of students experiencing seclusion decreased by 35 percent (from 553 in 2023-24 to 359 in 2024-25). As compared to the pre-COVID-19 baseline of 2018-19, the 2024-25 school year indicates a 67% decrease in seclusions.

Annual data indicate an overall increase in the number of physical holds and the number of students experiencing physical holds from the 2023-24 school year to the 2024-25 school year. Specifically, the number of physical holds increased by 36 percent (from 14,013 in 2023-24 to 19,097 in 2024-25) and the number of students experiencing physical holds increased by 1 percent (from 2,777 in 2023-24 to 2,810 in 2024-25). Additionally, the number of physical holds increased from the pre-COVID-19 baseline to 2024-25 by 11 percent (17,157 in 2018-19 to 19,097 in 2024-25).

Data from the last several years has shown a pattern of disproportionalities in the use of restrictive procedures. Typically, students with disabilities who identify as Black or African American, two or more races, or American Indian or Alaskan Native experienced a disproportionate number of restrictive procedures, with slight variation from year to year. In the 2024-25 school year, American Indian or Alaskan Native students experienced a disproportionate number of physical holds, but not seclusions.

Disproportionality continued to be present during the 2024-25 school year in other areas as well, with little change in the trends from year to year. Restrictive procedures continued to be most prevalent in elementary

grades, with 47% of all seclusions and 60.5% of all physical holds in Minnesota during the 2024-25 occurring for students ages 6 through 10.

As in previous years, students identified as eligible for special education and related services under the Emotional or Behavioral Disorders (EBD) and Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD) categories were more likely to experience seclusion and physical holds. Specifically, 37% and 31.5% of all physical holds were used on students eligible under the EBD and ASD categories, respectively, and 39% and 37% of seclusions were used with students eligible under the EBD and ASD categories, respectively.⁶

In addition, students with disabilities who receive special education and related services in special classes 60% or more of the day (commonly known as “federal setting three” or “setting 3”) and special schools with no access to nondisabled peers (commonly known as “federal setting four” or “setting 4”), make up a disproportionate share of the students who experience restrictive procedures in Minnesota. Specifically, students in federal settings three and four accounted for approximately 11.8% of statewide special education enrollment but experienced 63.5% of physical holds and 86% of seclusions during the 2024-25 school year.

Finally, while the special education population in 2024-25 was predominately male (approximately 65%), male students also experienced a disproportionate share of physical holds and seclusions at 82% and 81%, respectively.

Additional data on Minnesota school districts’ progress on reducing the use of restrictive procedures and eliminating seclusion during the 2024-25 school year may be found in Appendix A of this report.

February 2025 Two-Year Statewide Plan Progress

The February 2025 Two-Year Statewide Plan includes three measurable goals and five MDE action items to support the goals. The goals and progress outlined in the plan are:

Goal 1: By February 1, 2026, and annually thereafter, MDE will submit a report to the Minnesota legislature summarizing school districts’ progress on reducing the use of restrictive procedures, working toward the elimination of seclusion, and compiling strategies and resources to assist school districts in reducing the use of restrictive procedures.

Goal 1 Progress: MDE submits this version of its report, School Districts’ Progress in Reducing the Use of Restrictive Procedures in Minnesota Schools to the Minnesota legislature, to address the requirements of Goal 1.

Goal 2: MDE will review the Statewide Plan annually, seek consultation with interested stakeholders, and revise the Statewide Plan as necessary.

⁶ Minnesota has 13 possible eligibility categories for identification of students with disabilities who may be eligible to receive special education and related services.

Goal 2 Progress: MDE receives quarterly seclusion data reporting and annual physical holding data reporting from Minnesota school districts regarding their uses of restrictive procedures. As part of these data collection efforts, MDE requests narrative information regarding the strategies districts tried that year to reduce the number of restrictive procedures in their district, and which strategies they would recommend to other districts. A summary of these answers can be found in the Resources, Training, Technical Assistance, Mental Health Services, and Collaborative Efforts Needed to Significantly Reduce Districts' Use of Restrictive Procedures section and Appendix B.

MDE consulted with, or attempted to consult with, interested stakeholders in preparation of this report. Specifically, MDE sent email communications to 16 entities, including those described in Minnesota Statutes, section 125A.0942, subdivision 3(b), with a copy of the FY 25 School Districts' Progress in Reducing the Use of Restrictive Procedures in Minnesota Schools and requested feedback about its format, additional resources for Appendix B (formerly known as Appendix D), and overall usefulness.

Email correspondence was received from 13 entities in response, which included the following comments or requests:

- Make the Statewide plan and this report shorter, clearer, and more visual
- Add an executive summary
- Ensure emphasis disproportionality, particularly for Black or African American male students who have been identified as eligible for special education services under the category of EBD
- Request targeted funding for school districts to train and implement de-escalation strategies
- Provide robust technical assistance to school districts
 - Refine Strategies and Resources section (formerly Appendix D) to include more specific strategies schools can implement efficiently and effectively
 - Increase engagement of families and students in developing ways to reduce the use of restrictive procedures
 - Conduct additional research and analysis on district performance and what works to reduce restrictive procedures

MDE incorporated suggestions and feedback where possible in this report and will continue to review ideas for potential implementation in the future.

Goal 3: Additional measurable goals regarding school districts' progress in reducing the use of restrictive procedures are incorporated in Minnesota's Olmstead Plan.

Olmstead Positive Supports Goal Four: By June 30, 2025, the number of students receiving special education services who experience an emergency use of restrictive procedures at school will decrease by 882 students or decrease to 1.8% of the total number of students receiving special education services.

Olmstead Positive Supports Goal Five: By June 30, 2025, the number of incidents of emergency use of restrictive procedures occurring in schools will decrease by 3,615, or by 1.0 incidents per student who experience the use of restrictive procedures in the school setting.

Goal 3 Progress:

Students: In the 2024-25 school year, there were a total of 2,904 students who experienced use of restrictive procedures, compared to 2,932 in 2023-24: a decrease of 28 students and a decrease to 1.7% of the number of students receiving special education services.

Uses: In the 2024-25 school year, there were a total of 20,968 uses of restrictive procedures, compared to 17,464 in 2023-24, or an increase of 3,504 uses. This represents an increase of 1.3 incidents per student who experience the use of restrictive procedures in the school setting.

MDE's Actions in Support of the Goals

MDE Action Item 1: MDE will collect, analyze, and report school districts' use of quarterly seclusion data and physical holding summary data, including data on disproportionalities and trends identified through qualitative analysis of school districts' reported strategies for reducing the use of restrictive procedures.

MDE Action Item 1 Progress: MDE collected, analyzed, and reported school district quarterly seclusion data and physical holding summary data, including data on disproportionalities, for the 2024-25 school year.

A total of 42 school districts reported using seclusion during the 2024-25 school year, a decrease of eight school districts from the 50 school districts who reported using seclusion during the 2023-24 school year and a decrease of 24 from the 2018-19 pre-COVID-19 baseline. During 2024-25 school year, school districts reported 1,871 seclusions and 359 students who experienced seclusion, a decrease of 1,580 seclusions and 553 students who experienced seclusion from the 2023-24 school year.

Restrictive procedures data continues to demonstrate disproportionalities. Students with disabilities who typically experience a disproportionate number of restrictive procedures in Minnesota school districts identify as Black or African American, two or more races, and American Indian or Alaskan Native; EBD and ASD students; students ages 6 to 10; students who are educated in separate schools for students with disabilities; and male students.

MDE Action Item 2: MDE will report on the measurable goals relating to school districts' progress on reducing the use of restrictive procedures found in Minnesota's Olmstead Plan.

MDE Action Item 2 Progress: MDE submits this report for fiscal year 2025 to meet this responsibility.

MDE Action Item 3: MDE will offer training sessions to school districts and other interested stakeholder groups throughout the state. The training will include an overview of Minnesota Statutes and the legal standards for using restrictive procedures in emergency situations and recommended strategies for reducing the use of restrictive procedures and eliminating seclusion.

MDE Action Item 3 Progress: MDE regularly provides training to school district administrators, teachers, and paraprofessionals on the legal framework underpinning the use of restrictive procedures in Minnesota. During these training sessions, participants provided feedback to MDE, which overall included descriptions of extremely escalated student behavior, occurring more often than previously seen. Staff described current student needs as incredibly high and complex, particularly with respect to their mental health. Staff further reported seeing an increased level of stressors on families and consistently viewed this as a large

contributing factor in the students' increased complex needs. Staff further described frustration at a lack of resources and coordination with outside services, such as mental health therapy or social services, particularly in rural areas.

MDE Action Item 4: MDE, in consultation with interested stakeholders, will update the list of MDE resources and federal resources that align with effective strategies to reduce the use of restrictive procedures, eliminate seclusion, and address disproportionalities in the use of restrictive procedures.

MDE Action Item 4 Progress: MDE has included the content contained in Appendix B to meet this responsibility.

MDE Action Item 5: MDE, in collaboration with Minnesota's Olmstead Implementation Office (OIO), will ensure consultation with interested stakeholders regarding reducing restrictive procedures and eliminating seclusion, by ensuring information is available on MDE's website, forming ad hoc restrictive procedure groups regarding emerging issues, and forming implementation group(s) working on alternatives to seclusion.

MDE Action Item 5 Progress: The Minnesota Olmstead Plan is undergoing revision in the 2025-26 school year under the direction of the OIO and Executive Order 19-13. As part of this process, a team of three MDE staff and two OIO inclusion consultants with lived experience collaborated in a five-month process to develop a new set of goals for the Minnesota Olmstead Plan, including a goal for statewide reduction in the use of restrictive procedures in public schools, as part of improved general education classroom inclusion of students with disabilities. The combined MDE and consultancy process included identifying:

- Problems and root causes in statewide inclusion of students with disabilities in more integrated general education and special education settings, including removal of students from instruction during restrictive procedure use in public schools;
- Goals and improvement opportunities in statewide inclusion of students with disabilities in more integrated general education and special education settings, including goals and opportunities for prevention and alternatives to restrictive procedure use in public schools;
- Potential state agency and community organization partners, including the Minnesota Department of Human Services (DHS) and PACER Center, which is the state's special education parent training and information center (PTIC), for implementing goal-directed improvement in prevention of restrictive procedure use and use of alternatives to restrictive procedures in public schools.

As part of the Minnesota Olmstead Plan revision during 2025, the OIO conducted the statewide *Disability Inclusion and Choice Survey*, numerous small community conversations, the statewide *Quality of Life Survey*, and a focus group with the Governor's Council on Developmental Disabilities. MDE partnered with the OIO to review and respond to the findings across these public engagement activities that relate to education of students with disabilities in the state's public schools.

In April and May of 2026, there will be a public comment period for the new Minnesota Olmstead Plan draft, including the statewide goal for reduction in restrictive procedure use in public schools. Additional feedback opportunities for the draft plan and restrictive procedure goal will include virtual community meetings and

an online survey. The OIO and the Special Education division of MDE will share information for public input in their respective newsletter and bulletins in the coming months.

Resources, Training, Technical Assistance, Mental Health Services, and Collaborative Efforts Needed to Significantly Reduce Districts' Use of Restrictive Procedures

MDE and interested stakeholders continue to compile strategies and resources to assist school districts in reducing the use of restrictive procedures, eliminating seclusion, and addressing disproportionalities in the use of restrictive procedures. These strategies and resources include the increased use of positive behavior interventions and supports (PBIS) and other positive strategies to address behaviors, the distribution of the "Education in the Most Integrated Setting" (formerly known as Olmstead Local Improvement) grant funding for districts to reduce the rates of restrictive procedures, and MDE training and other technical assistance sessions to enhance school districts' understanding of restrictive procedures laws and strategies to reduce the use of restrictive procedures.

Further recommendations include federal resources discussing civil rights, potential discrimination, and disproportionalities in the use of restrictive procedures on students with disabilities and students of color with disabilities. These federal resources urge districts to focus on preventing the need for restrictive procedures, using only behavioral interventions that are consistent with a student's rights to be treated with dignity and free from abuse, and ensuring that all schools are safe for all students and staff. Further, the resources warn districts that the use of restrictive procedures may result in discrimination against students with disabilities and reiterate that there is no evidence that using restrictive procedures is effective in reducing problem behaviors. Finally, these resources highlight disproportional use of restrictive procedures on students with disabilities and students of color with disabilities. Federal guidance has long emphasized that individualized education programs (IEPs) should support educational, social, emotional, behavioral, and related needs with high-quality and evidence-based support and utilize functional behavioral assessments (FBAs) to develop individualized behavioral intervention plans (BIPs) for students whose behaviors interfere with their ability to access and benefit from the education program.

In recent years, in an effort to combat the improper use of seclusion, the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) conducted investigations to determine whether school districts engaged in improper seclusion and restraint practices that deny students with disabilities access to the school districts' programs and services in violation of Title II of the ADA. In recent investigations, the DOJ determined that the school districts discriminated against students on the basis of disability by denying them equal opportunity to participate in or benefit from the school districts' education program and improperly isolated and restrained students with disabilities and failed to use appropriate behavior interventions. The DOJ reached a series of settlement agreements in which school districts agreed to remedy the improper use of seclusion by discontinuing their use of seclusion districtwide and instead put in place appropriate interventions and supports for students with disabilities.

Based on information collected by MDE, school districts continue to recommend staff training on de-escalation techniques; using strategic supports to meet student needs (e.g., FBAs, proactive and positive behavioral supports, addressing sensory needs, adjusting programming and/or special education services, social-emotional learning, and trauma-informed practices); staff collaboration and/or team meetings to troubleshoot student

needs and providing a consistent process for staff to debrief together following behavioral incidents; and strategically using staff by creating specific positions to address behaviors or maintain particular expertise on their staff. In the 2024-25 school year, most districts reported a reliance on staff training regarding de-escalation strategies and the legal standards relating to the emergency use of restrictive procedures, using a variety of different training programs, as reported in Appendix B. Many districts also indicated the important role of social-emotional learning, trauma-informed classrooms, PBIS, restorative practices, board-certified behavior analysts, and mental health supports on their use of restrictive procedures.

A compilation of strategies and resources for school districts to reduce the use of restrictive procedures, eliminate seclusion, and address disproportionalities in the use of restrictive procedures (from the 2023-24 and 2024-25 school years) may be found in Appendix B of this report and on MDE's [Restrictive Procedures](#) website.

Recommendations to Clarify and Improve the Law Governing Districts' Use of Restrictive Procedures

In 2024, MDE issued recommendations to the Minnesota legislature for urgently ending seclusion in Minnesota schools, as required by Minnesota Statutes, section 125A.0942, subdivision 6(c) and consistent with subdivision 3(b). MDE's recommendations were based on: Minnesota's cumulative efforts working to end the use of seclusion since 2016; the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) findings that seclusion and restraint practices discriminate against students on the basis of disability by denying them equal opportunity to participate in or benefit from school district education programs, using eligibility criteria that effectively subject students with disabilities to discrimination, and failing to make reasonable modifications to avoid discrimination in school programs; the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990's (ADA's) integration mandate, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act's (IDEA's) least restrictive environment mandate; and stakeholder engagement.

MDE's current recommendations, as required by Minnesota Statutes, section 125A.0942, subdivision 3(b), are based on interpretations of available data, statutory framework, and guidance as follows:

- MDE recommends prohibiting the use of seclusion on all children by September 1, 2026. MDE recommends revising Minnesota Statutes, section 125A.0942, subdivision 4, by adding the following prohibition: (12) the use of seclusion on all children by September 1, 2026.
- MDE recommends the Minnesota legislature consider allocating additional funding to local school districts to support their efforts in reducing the use of restrictive procedures in schools, including training of staff on effective de-escalation and other research-based behavior intervention programs and providing increased access to mental health services in schools for students.
- In addition to the strategies and resources outlined in Appendix B, MDE will continue efforts, based on future resources and staffing capacity, to consider the following:
 - Training for general education staff consistent with Minnesota Statutes, section 125A.0942, subdivision 5.
 - MDE collaborating with higher education to develop coursework for students preparing to become teachers consistent Minnesota Statutes, section 125A.0942, subdivision 5.

- MDE working with the professional educators licensing and standards board (PELSB) to refine the positive behavior intervention requirement for professional licensure to include elements outlined in Minnesota Statutes, section 125A.0942, subdivision 5.
- Developing a process where MDE staff are available to consult with school districts on specific students that exhibit extreme behaviors.
- Expanding school districts' access to PBIS and other research-based behavior intervention programs.
- Expanding mental health services.
- MDE producing an online training course on the legal framework for using restrictive procedures in schools to increase availability of the training session currently offered by MDE.
- MDE advocating for resources to support special education workforce needs.

Conclusion

The report details school districts' progress on reducing the use of restrictive procedures and eliminating seclusion along with strategies and resources for school districts to reduce the use of restrictive procedures, eliminate seclusion, and address disproportionalities in the use of restrictive procedures. During the 2024-25 school year, the data reported by school districts, although an increase from previous COVID-19-impacted school years in some measures, continued a downward departure in the use of seclusions and an increase in physical holds from the 2018-19 school year, the pre-COVID-19 baseline. Programs and interventions such as training on de-escalation techniques and the legal standards relating to the emergency use of restrictive procedures, positive behavioral strategies, trauma-informed training and practices, restorative practices, social-emotional learning, and extended grant opportunities continue to be recommended to assist school districts in reducing the use of restrictive procedures.

MDE anticipates this report will result in informed decision-making, promoting safe educational environments. MDE appreciates the opportunity to inform the Legislature about this important issue and commends the Legislature for its continued commitment to this task.

Appendix A: Data on School Districts' Progress on Reducing the Use of Restrictive Procedures and Eliminating Seclusion During the 2024-25 School Year

Background on Data Collection

School districts, including intermediate school districts and charter schools, are required to submit annual data regarding the overall use of restrictive procedures and physical holds and quarterly data regarding seclusion use. This section of the legislative report provides a summary of all restrictive procedures use and demographic information about students with disabilities who experienced a restrictive procedure.⁷

Between March and December 2021, MDE developed a new data collection and analysis tool, Stepwell MN. Stepwell MN is a web-based tool that allows districts to enter restrictive procedures data based on each student's Minnesota Automated Reporting Student System (MARSS) data, which is compared, in real time, to pre-loaded MARSS numbers for students within that district. This process reduces errors in the reporting of MARSS numbers and demographic information, making it easier for districts to report accurate data and easier for MDE to collect and analyze this data. Physical holding data was first collected via Stepwell MN in July 2021 (for data from the 2020-21 school year), and quarterly seclusion data collection began at the start of the 2021-22 school year.⁸

During the 2020-21 school year, MDE began collecting information from districts about: 1) What strategies did your district try this year to reduce the number of restrictive procedures in your district, including addressing

⁷ The data elements, tools, and strategies to measure the progress on reducing the use of restrictive procedures and eliminating the use of seclusion, as statutorily mandated, have evolved over time. As all public school districts are required to complete restrictive procedures reporting, whether or not they have used seclusion or physical holding, data collection efforts must consider the reporting burden to districts and the integrity of the data reported. The data collection system in place prior to July 2021 presented significant challenges for districts in reporting data, as well as for MDE staff in collecting and analyzing the data. Seclusion data, which was recorded on a spreadsheet and uploaded to MDE via a secure server, was particularly challenging for districts, and the spreadsheet provided to MDE often contained substantial errors. Identifying and correcting errors in the data was particularly challenging and required extensive staffing resources and time.

⁸ The Stepwell MN data collection system has reduced reporting errors and minimized the limitations inherent to MDE's previous data collection system. However, some limitations persist. Most notable is the challenge of moving between systems and reconciling new data collection processes with historic data collected using previous processes. Although MDE now has several school years of both physical holding and seclusion data, variations between how this data was collected, analyzed and reported over time suggests that care should be taken when examining longitudinal data. Another limitation is that demographic data in Stepwell MN is based on student data that is provided by districts, via MARSS, and verified by MDE on an annual schedule, and then uploaded into the Stepwell MN system on a quarterly basis. The nature of this process, and the legislatively mandated seclusion reporting periods, means that up-to-date student data is not always available via Stepwell MN, and can lead to some inaccuracies in the restrictive procedures data. This limitation is particularly evident with regard to age and grade data reported via seclusion.

disproportionalities?; and 2) Of the strategies your district tried this past year, what strategies would you recommend to other districts to reduce the use of restrictive procedures in their schools?

In general, caution should be used when comparing 2019-20, 2020-21, and 2021-22 data to similar data from other years, due to the effect of the COVID-19 pandemic and the subsequent closure of schools and move to distance learning. As the last full school year prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, the 2018-19 school year is considered the pre-COVID-19 baseline.

Total Restrictive Procedures

Overall, the use of restrictive procedures increased by 20% from the 2023-24 school year to the 2024-25 school year, as outlined in Table 1 (below). This overall measure includes a 36% increase in the use of physical holds and a 46% decrease in the use of seclusion, statewide, in the past year. Total uses of restrictive procedures during the 2024-25 school year continues to be below the total uses during the 2018-19 school year, or the pre-COVID-19 baseline.

Statewide, during the 2024-25 school year, districts reported a total of 20,968 restrictive procedures, including 1,871 seclusions and 19,097 physical holds.

Table 1. Annual Physical Holds, Seclusion, and Total Restrictive Procedures, 2014-15 through 2024-25 school years.⁹

Year	Physical Holds	Seclusion	Total Restrictive Procedures
2014-15	15,511	6,547	22,058
2015-16	15,600	6,425	22,025
2016-17	17,120	7,085	24,205
2017-18	18,834	6,164	24,998
2018-19	17,157	5,596	22,753
2019-20* ¹⁰	12,679	3,983	16,662
2020-21*	6,666	1,850	8,516
2021-22*	12,784	4,702	17,486
2022-23	12,405	3,990	16,395
2023-24	14,013	3,451	17,464
2024-25	19,097	1,871	20,968

⁹ Due to ongoing correction of data errors and an analysis with updated software, total counts of restrictive procedures reported in previous legislative reports has been revised and updated in this report.

¹⁰ Please note: given the 2019-20 and 2020-21 school years were heavily impacted by school closures and variations in learning models, contributing to a significant decline in the overall use of restrictive procedures as compared to the 2018-19 school year, MDE uses the 2018-19 school year as the pre-COVID-19 baseline. In tables and charts throughout this report, asterisks have been used to identify school years heavily affected by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Table 2. Percentage Change in the Number of Restrictive Procedures 2023-24 to 2024-25 school years.

Year	Physical Holds	Percent Change	Seclusions	Percent Change	Total Restrictive Procedures	Percent Change
2023-24	14,013	N/A	3,451	N/A	17,464	N/A
2024-25	19,097	+36%	1,871	-46%	20,968	+20%

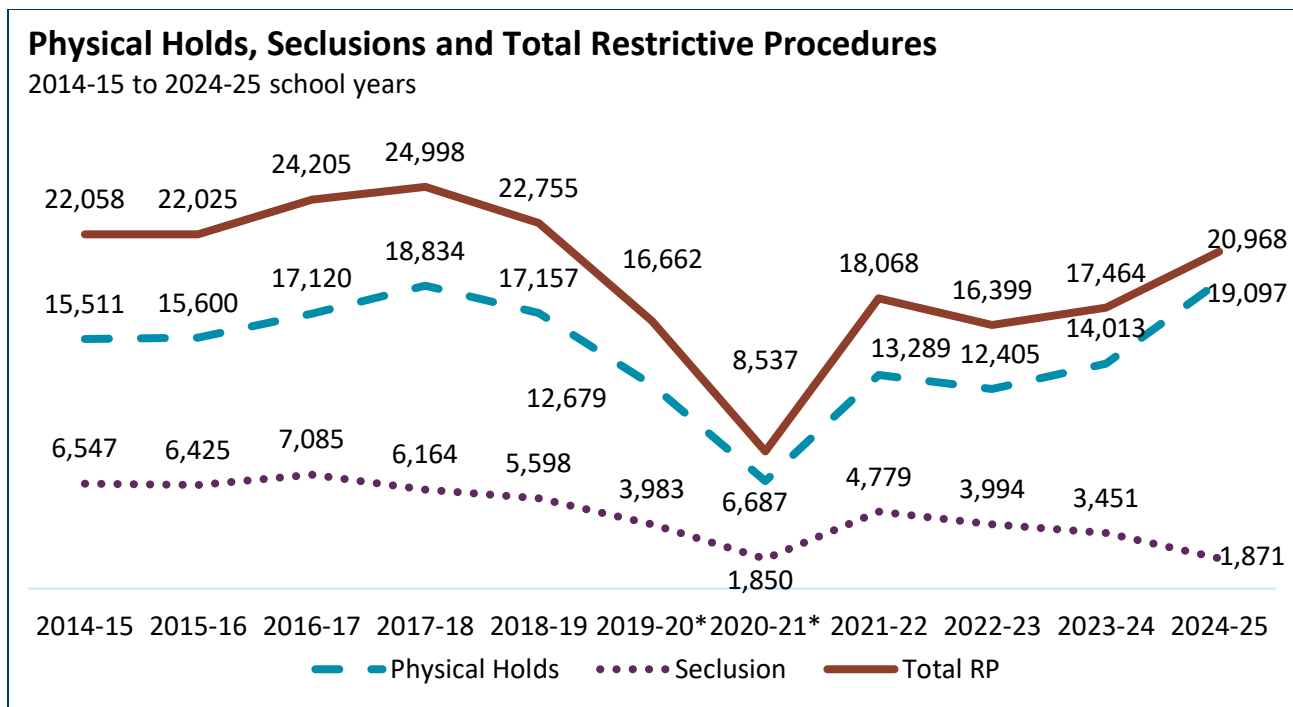
During the 2024-25 school year, total restrictive procedures continued to decrease as compared to the 2018-19 school year, the pre-COVID-19 baseline, as outlined in Table 3. As further described in Table 3, below, school districts reported 1,871 seclusions during the 2024-25 school year, a 67% decrease from the 2018-19 school year, the pre-COVID-19 baseline. School districts also reported 19,097 physical holds during the 2024-25 school year, an increase of 11% from the 2018-19 school year, the pre-COVID-19 baseline.

Table 3. Percentage Change in the Number of Restrictive Procedures, 2018-19, the pre-COVID-19 baseline, to 2024-25 school years.

Year	Physical Holds	Percent Change	Seclusions	Percent Change	Total Restrictive Procedures	Percent Change
2018-19	17,157	N/A	5,596	N/A	22,753	N/A
2024-25	19,097	+11%	1,871	-67%	20,968	-8%

Figure B (below) shows the trends in the number of total restrictive procedures, seclusions, and physical holds reported by Minnesota school districts from the 2014-15 school year through the 2024-25 school year. As shown in Figure B, the number of seclusions started decreasing during the 2016-17 school year, with an accelerated decline during the 2019-20 and 2020-21 school years affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. Similarly, the number of physical holds began to decrease during the 2017-18 school year, with an accelerated decline during the 2019-20 and 2020-21 school years affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. Minnesota school districts and students have experienced an increase in the numbers of physical holds and seclusions after schools reopened in the 2021-22 school year but have since experienced a continued decrease in the use of seclusions and an increase in the use of physical holds from the 2022-23 school year to the 2023-24 and 2024-25 school years.

Figure B. Annual Physical Holds, Seclusions, and Total Restrictive Procedures, 2014-15 through 2024-25 school years.



Fewer students with disabilities experienced restrictive procedures during the 2024-25 school year than the 2023-24 school year, as shown in Table 4 (below). Districts reported that 2,904 students with disabilities experienced one or more restrictive procedures during the 2024-25 school year, a 1% decrease from the 2,932 students with disabilities experienced restrictive procedures in 2023-24 and a 19% decrease from the 2018-19 school year, the pre-COVID-19 baseline.

Table 4. Annual Number of Students with Disabilities Experiencing Restrictive Procedures 2016-17 through 2024-25 school years.

Year	Number of Students with Disabilities Experiencing Restrictive Procedures
2016-17	3,476
2017-18	3,546
2018-19	3,603
2019-20*	3,052
2020-21*	1,685
2021-22	2,569
2022-23	2,958
2023-24	2,932
2024-25	2,904

Seclusion

This section provides data, including seclusion numbers and trends, as reported by Minnesota school districts annually.

Overall Seclusions

Annual data collection indicates a decrease in the number of seclusions during the 2024-25 school year from the previous school year. During the 2024-25 school year, school districts reported a total of 1,871 seclusions and 359 students with disabilities experiencing seclusion, a decrease of 46% and 35%, respectively, compared with the previous school year. Data from the 2024-25 school year continues to remain well below the 2018-19 school year, the pre-COVID-19 baseline, with a 67% reduction in seclusions and a 58% reduction in students with disabilities experiencing seclusion. Data regarding the change in the number of students with disabilities experiencing seclusion is presented below in Table 5.

Table 5. Annual Number of Students with Disabilities Experiencing Seclusion, 2016-17 through 2024-25 school years.

Year	Number of Students with Disabilities Experiencing Seclusion
2016-17	1,044
2017-18	855
2018-19	860
2019-20*	710
2020-21*	463
2021-22	724
2022-23	737
2023-24	553
2024-25	359

Figure C (below) highlights the overall trend in the number of seclusions since the 2018-19 school year. In typical years, variation is seen from quarter to quarter. Fewer seclusions are typically seen in quarter one each year, likely due, at least in part, to the fact that quarter 1 (July 1 through September 30) typically includes fewer school days. Higher rates of seclusion are reported for quarters two, three, and four (typically with a peak in quarters two and three).

Consistent with previous years, quarterly data for the 2024-25 school year closely represent the pattern in 2018-19, 2022-23, and 2023-24; a relatively low number of seclusions in quarter one, increased numbers of seclusions in quarters two and three, and a decline in quarter four relative to the year’s peak. The continued decrease in the number of seclusions, both quarterly and annually, suggests the effectiveness of the strategies and resources used in Minnesota schools to reduce the use of seclusions and the change to Minnesota Statutes, chapter 125A.0942, prohibiting the use of seclusion on children from birth through grade three. However, given the recency of the statute change and data collected since the COVID-19 pandemic, it is likely that additional time and data will be needed before the patterns in this data can be fully understood.

Figure C. Seclusions by School Year and Quarter, 2018-19 through 2024-25 school years.

Seclusions by School Year and Quarter

2018-19 to 2025-26 school years. **Purple denotes quarters heavily affected by COVID-19 (Q3 of 2019-20 through Q4 of 2021-22).**

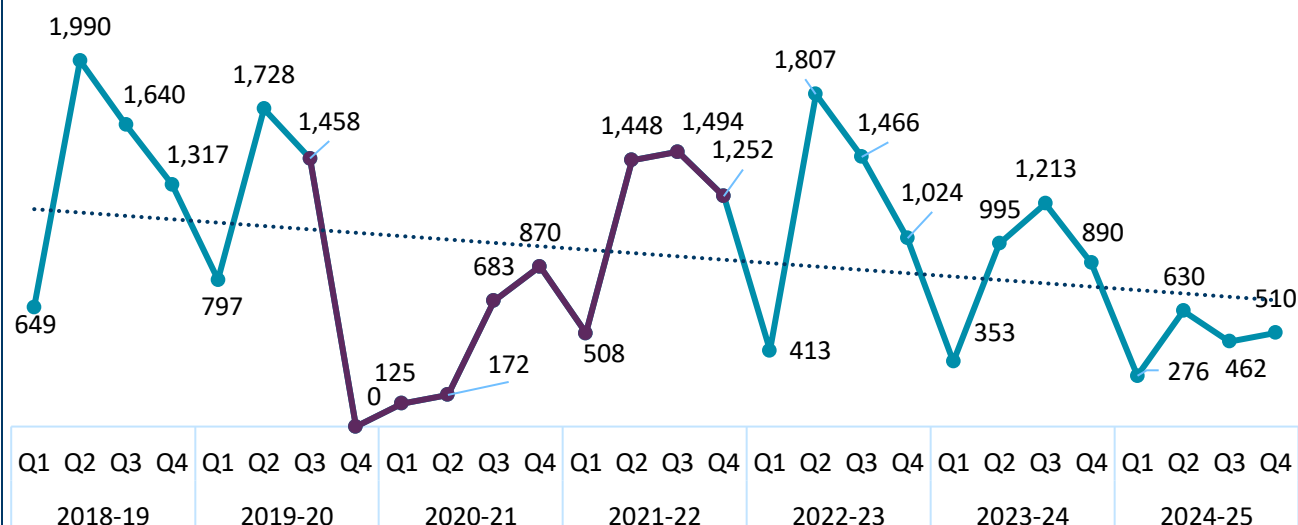


Table 6. Seclusions by School Year and Quarter, 2018-19 through 2024-25 school years.

School Year	Seclusions Q1	Seclusions Q2	Seclusions Q3	Seclusions Q4
2018-19	649	1,990	1,640	1,317
2019-20*	797	1,728	1,458	0
2020-21*	125	172	683	870
2021-22	508	1,448	1,494	1,252
2022-23	413	1,807	1,466	1,024
2023-24	353	995	1,213	890
2024-25	276	630	462	510

Similar to the pattern shown in total seclusions, quarterly data for the number of students who experienced seclusions during the 2024-25 school year demonstrates fewer students secluded in quarter one, increased numbers in quarters two and three, and a decline in quarter four.

Figure D and Table 7 (below) highlights the overall trends in the number of students with disabilities experiencing seclusion since the 2018-19 school year, or the pre-COVID-19 baseline. Across all quarters, the number of students with disabilities experiencing seclusions during the 2024-25 school year remain lower than the corresponding quarter in the 2018-19 school year. The continued decrease in the number of students experiencing seclusions, both quarterly and annually, may suggest the effectiveness of the strategies and resources used in Minnesota schools to reduce the use of seclusions. However, the change to Minnesota Statutes, section 125A.0942, prohibiting the use of seclusion on children from birth through grade three, would likely also be at least partially responsible for the decline in the number of students experiencing seclusion in 2024-25, as compared to previous years. However, given the recency of the statute change and the data

collected since the COVID-19 pandemic, it is likely that additional time and data will be needed before the patterns in this data can be fully understood.

Figure D. Students with Disabilities Secluded by School Year and Quarter, 2018-19 through 2024-25 school years.

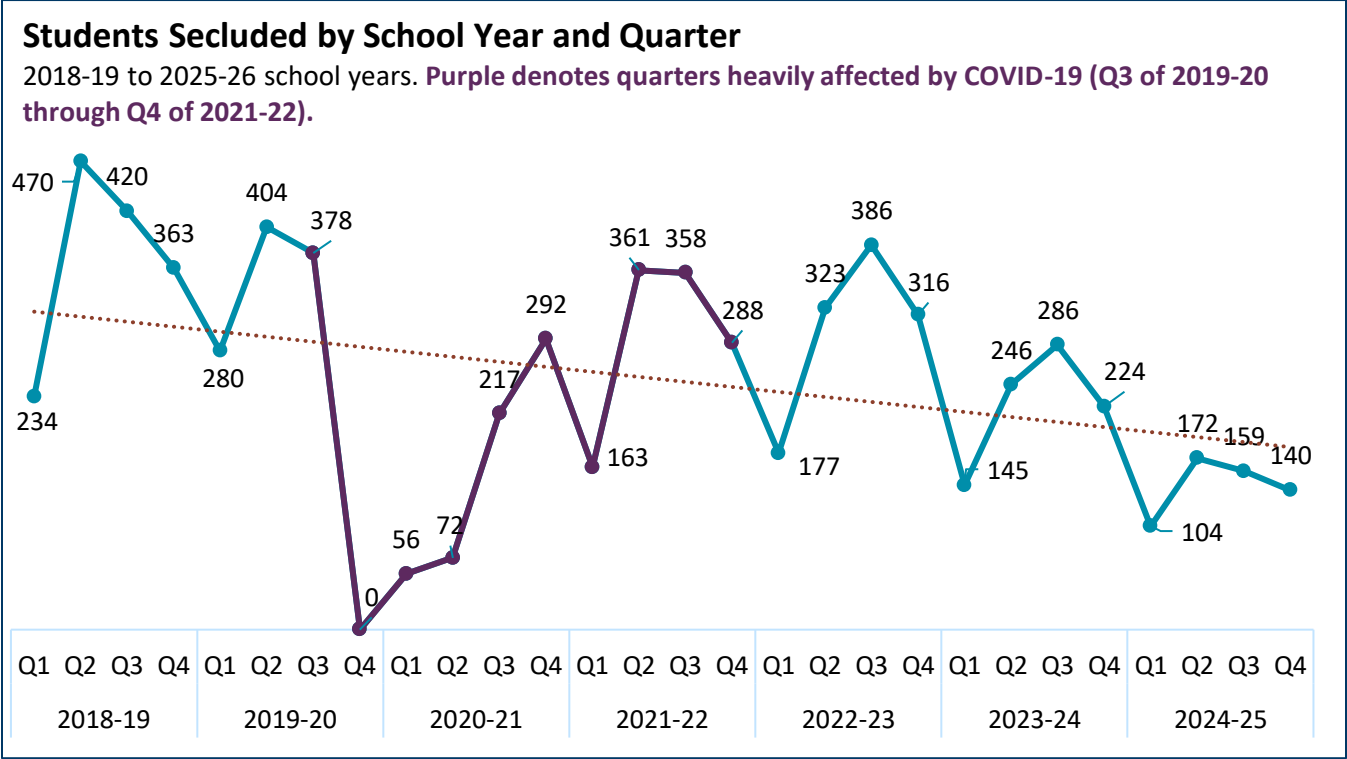


Table 7. Students Secluded by School Year and Quarter, 2018-19 through 2024-25 school years.

School Year	Students Q1	Students Q2	Students Q3	Students Q4
2018-19	234	470	420	363
2019-20*	280	404	378	0
2020-21*	56	72	217	292
2021-22	163	361	358	288
2022-23	177	323	386	316
2023-24	145	246	286	224
2024-25	104	172	159	140

Student Demographics

Race/Ethnicity

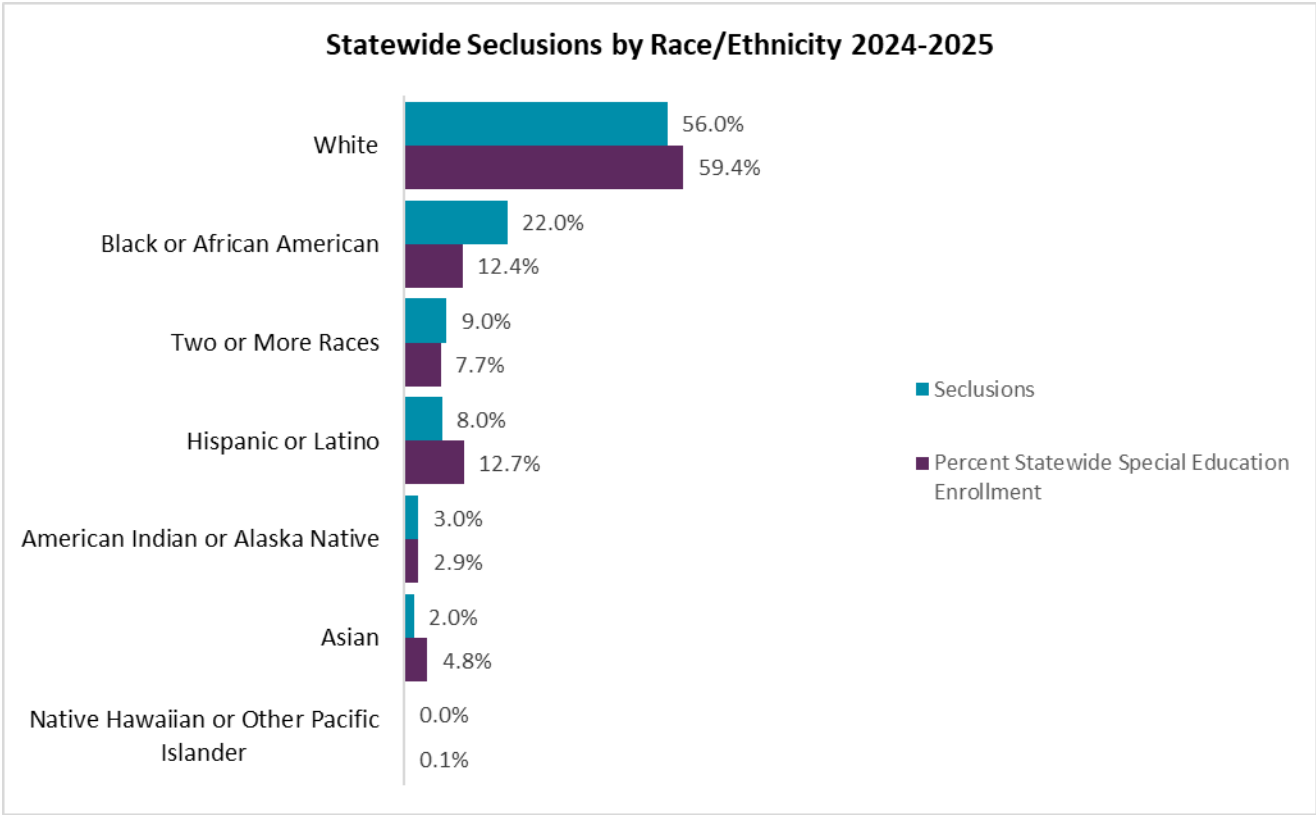
Since at least the 2016-17 school year, students with disabilities identified as Black or African American or two or more races, and, in some years, American Indian or Alaska Native students, tend to be overrepresented in the

total number of students with disabilities secluded. This pattern is consistent with physical holding data. In contrast, students with disabilities identified as Hispanic or Latino and Asian students are underrepresented with regard to seclusions. White students with disabilities experience seclusion at a generally proportional rate in most years. In the 2024-25 school year, 56% of students with disabilities experiencing seclusion were white, and white students with disabilities comprised 59.4% of the special education population.

In the 2024-25 school year, 22% of students with disabilities who experienced seclusion were Black or African American, while comprising approximately 12% of the special education population in Minnesota. Also in the 2024-25 school year, students with disabilities identified as two or more races accounted for approximately 9% of secluded students and approximately 8% of the total special education population.

Figure E (below) compares the percentages of students with disabilities who experienced seclusion in each racial/ethnic category to the percentage of students enrolled in special education and related services in each racial/ethnic category during the 2024-25 school year.

Figure E. Students with Disabilities Secluded by Race/Ethnicity, as compared to Special Education Enrollment, 2024-25 school year.



Age

Legislative reports prior to 2021 reported the age of students who were secluded, rather than the grade level, due to the reporting system in place at that time. Starting in 2021, MDE began including information regarding the grade level of secluded students in the legislative report, and in the 2022 legislative report, data was

provided with regard to both the age and grade of students with disabilities experiencing seclusion. Although data consistently shows similar trends with regard to both age and grade from year to year, MDE has identified inaccuracies in grade data reported through the current Stepwell MN system. In the 2023 legislative report, MDE notified the Legislature that future legislative reports would include data regarding the age, but not the grade, of students with disabilities experiencing seclusion.¹¹

During the 2024-25 school year, the largest share of students with disabilities experiencing seclusion were in the six through 10-year age range at 47%. Students with disabilities in this age range are approximately 34% of the total special education population. This discrepancy is notable, given that a portion of this age range is subject to the prohibition on the use of seclusion on children from birth through grade three.

Thirty-eight percent of students with disabilities experiencing seclusion were in the 11-15-year age range, while comprising 30.6% of the special education population. This pattern is consistent with both age and grade data from previous years. As in previous years, a relatively small percentage of students with disabilities under 5 or over the age of 16 experienced seclusion.

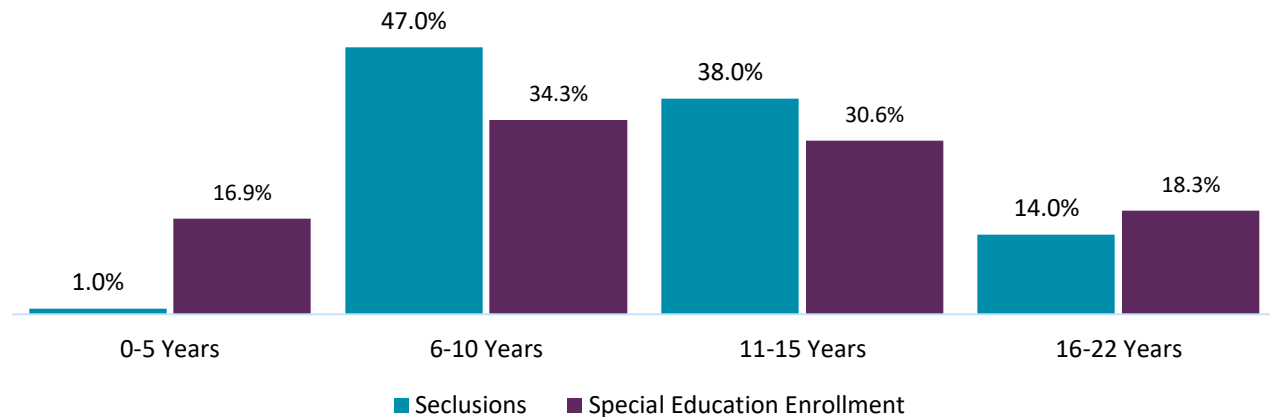
Notably, after the prohibition on the use of seclusion on students from birth through third grade went into effect on July 1, 2024, school districts in Minnesota reported four uses of seclusion on children in the birth through five age range.

Figure F (below) compares the ages of students with disabilities who experienced seclusion to the percentage of students in the total special education population for the 2024-25 school year.

Figure F. Students with Disabilities Secluded by Age, as compared to Special Education Enrollment, 2024-25 school year.

¹¹ At this time, MDE is not able to collect, or report, accurate quarterly data regarding the grade of students with disabilities experiencing seclusion, particularly for the first two quarters of each school year. Minnesota statute requires that MDE collect quarter one seclusion data by October 15 annually, which is before most Minnesota school districts have provided updated, complete fall student data. Given this conflict, the grade reported for most students through Stepwell MN is inaccurate for the first quarter of each school year under MDE's current legislative mandate. MDE is considering options to improve the accuracy of grade data for future reporting. In the meantime, as age and grade data do show similar trends from year to year, information regarding the age of students provides similar information.

Statewide Seclusion by Age 2024-2025



Setting

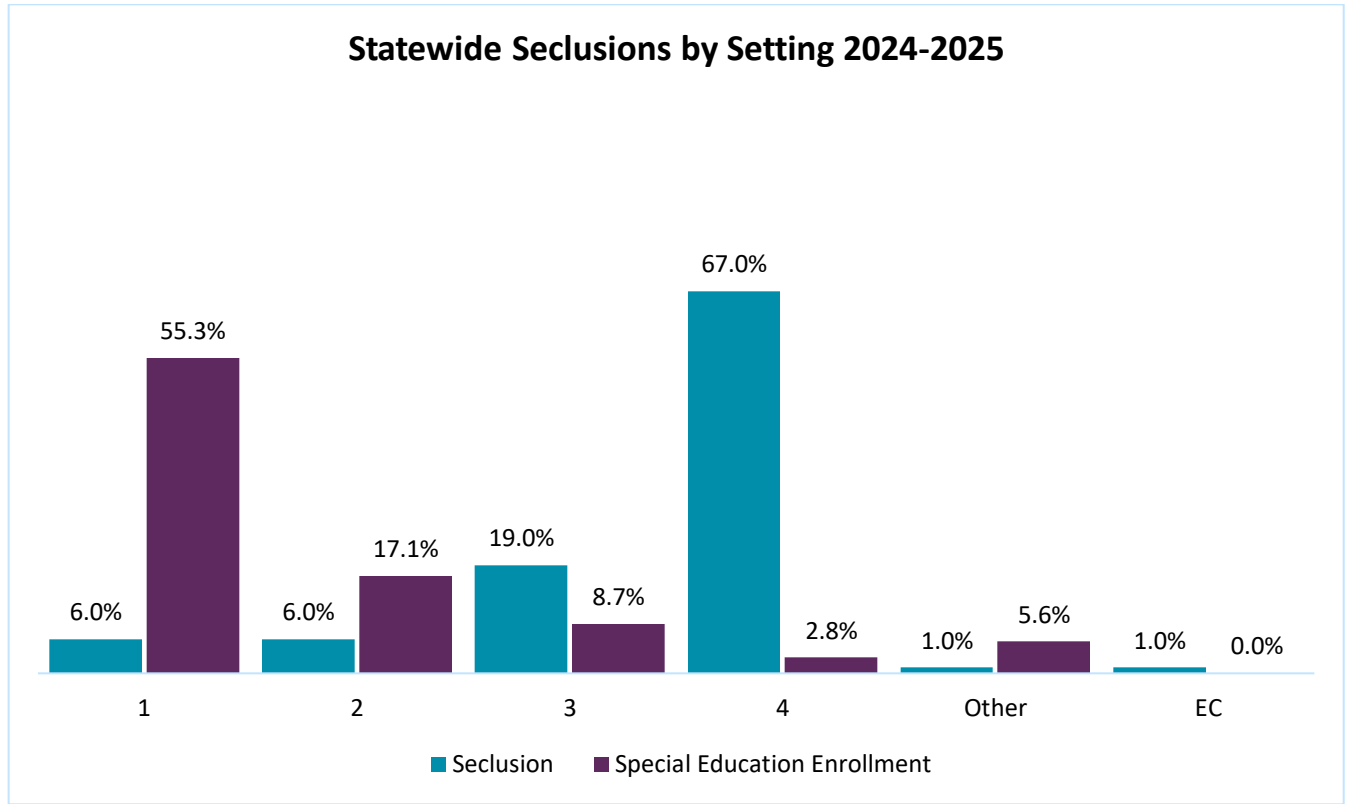
Minnesota school districts, during the 2024-25 school year, reported using seclusion most often for students with disabilities receiving services in federal setting four (setting 4), meaning the student receives special education and related services at a separate school facility for more than 50% of the school day. This includes setting 4 programs operated by independent school districts, intermediate school districts, and special education cooperatives. In contrast, the majority of students with disabilities in Minnesota spend at least 79% of their school day in the general education environment, which is also known as federal setting one (setting 1).

During the 2024-25 school year, 2.8% of the special education population received services in setting 4 programs. However, students with disabilities receiving services in setting 4 programs comprised 67% of the students with disabilities experiencing seclusion, as shown below in Figure G. This percentage showcases a large increase from the past three years, when 47% (2023-24), 46% (2022-23), and 47% (2021-22) of the students with disabilities experiencing seclusion were students receiving services in setting 4 programs. In previous years, 57% (2020-21) and 60% (2019-20) of the students with disabilities experiencing seclusion were students receiving services in setting 4 programs.

Setting 1 students with disabilities (who spend the majority of their day in the general education environment) make up 55.3% of the special education population and are much less likely to experience seclusion. During the 2024-25 school year, six percent of all students with disabilities who experienced seclusion were classified as receiving services in setting 1. This is a decrease from the 2023-24 school year, when nine percent of secluded students with disabilities were receiving services in setting 1.

Please note federal setting two (setting 2) programs are commonly understood to mean programming where students with disabilities receive special education and related services in special classrooms between 21% and 59% of the school day; federal setting 3 (setting 3) programs mean programming in special classrooms for 60% or more of the school day in a building with general education students; and early childhood (EC) refers to early childhood programs for children from birth through age five.

Figure G. Students with Disabilities Secluded by Setting, as compared to Special Education Enrollment, 2024-25 school year.

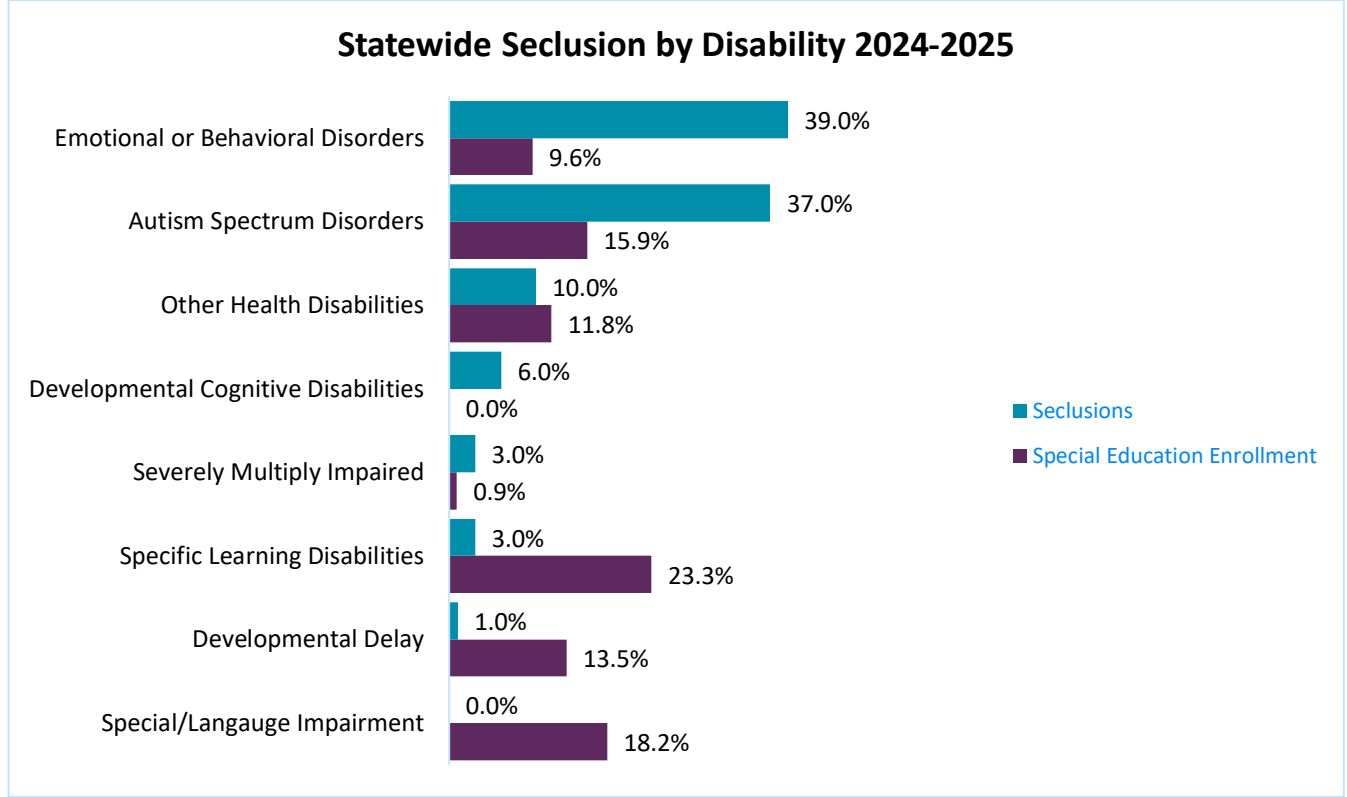


Disability Category

Figure H (below) provides information regarding the disability category of students with disabilities who experienced seclusion during the 2024-25 school year. Consistent with the previous school year, as well as physical holding data, the largest share of students with disabilities experiencing seclusion during the 2024-25 school year had been determined to be eligible to receive special education in Minnesota under the emotional and behavioral disorders (EBD) and autism spectrum disorders (ASD) categories. Although EBD students comprise 9.6% of the special education population, they comprised 39% of the students with disabilities that experienced seclusion during the 2024-25 school year. ASD students, who comprise 15.9% of the special education population, accounted for 37% of students with disabilities who experienced seclusion during the 2023-24 school year. Students who had been determined eligible for special education in Minnesota under the Other Health Disabilities (OHD) category account for 11.8% of the total statewide special education and 10% of students who experienced seclusion during the 2024-25 school year. Students in the other eligibility categories

experienced considerably fewer seclusions during the 2024-25 as compared to the proportion of their statewide special education enrollment.

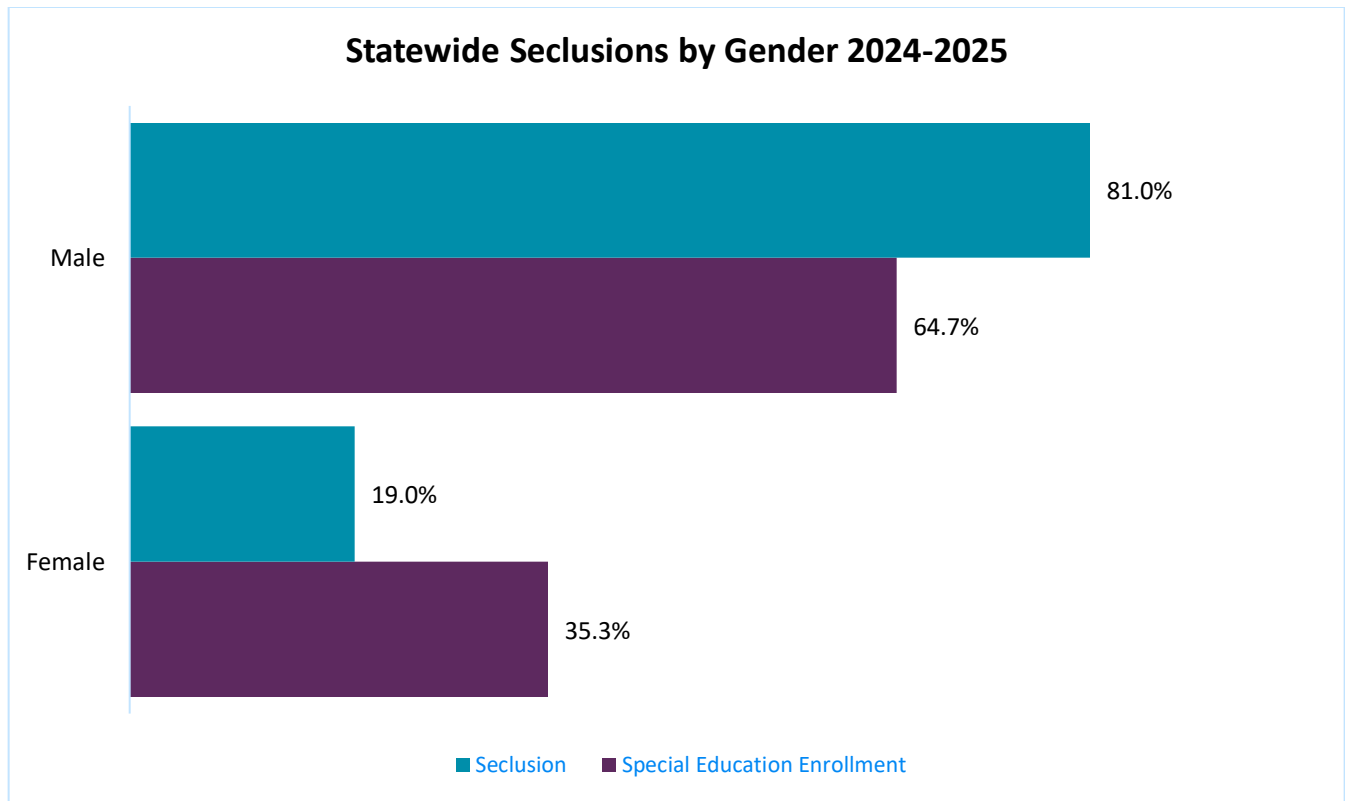
Figure H. Students with Disabilities Secluded by Disability Category, as compared to Special Education Enrollment, 2024-25 school year.



Gender

Male students have traditionally comprised a greater proportion of students receiving special education services and a greater proportion of students with disabilities experiencing seclusion since at least the 2011-12 school year. As in previous years, male students continue to be overrepresented in the special education population, at 64.7 percent, with female students comprising just 35.3 percent of the total special education population during the 2024-25 school year. Even considering this overrepresentation in the special education population, male students with disabilities are disproportionately secluded. As shown in Figure I (below), 81 percent of the students with disabilities who experienced seclusion in the 2024-25 school year were male. This is similar to the percentages reported in previous years: 81 percent of students with disabilities experiencing seclusion in 2023-24 were male; 84 percent in 2022-23; 85 percent in 2021-22, 88 percent in 2020-21, and 90 percent male in 2019-20.

Figure I. Students with Disabilities Secluded by Gender, as compared to Special Education Enrollment, 2024-25 school year.



Staff and Student Injuries Reported by Districts Resulting from Seclusions

As shown in Figure J (below) during the 2024-25 school year, Minnesota school districts reported 98 staff injuries related to seclusion, a decrease of 32 percent since the 2023-24 school year and an approximate rate of one staff injury for every 19 seclusions. During the same time period, school districts reported 36 student injuries directly related to seclusion, a decrease of 40 percent from the 2023-24 school year, and a rate of one student injury for every 51 seclusions.

Figure J. Student and Staff Injuries Resulting from Seclusions, 2020-21 through 2024-25 school years.

Injuries as the Result of Seclusions

Statewide: School Years 2020-21 - 2024-25



Physical Holding

This section provides data, including physical holding numbers and trends, as reported by Minnesota school districts annually.

Overall Physical Holds

Annual data indicates an overall increase in the number of physical holds during the 2024-25 school year. During the 2024-25 school year, districts reported a total of 19,097 physical holds and 2,810 students with disabilities experiencing physical holds, an increase of 36 percent in physical holds and an increase of 1 percent in the number of students with disabilities experiencing physical holds. However, as compared to the pre-COVID-19 baseline in 2018-19 of 17,157 physical holds on 3,347 students with disabilities, the number of physical holds has increased by 11 percent and the number of students with disabilities experiencing physical holds has decreased by 16 percent. During the 2024-25 school year, the average number of physical holds per physically held student was 6.8, an increase from 2023-24 (5.0), 2022-23 (4.5), and the pre-COVID-19-era years of 2018-19 (5.1) and 2017-18 (5.4).

Data regarding the change in the number of students with disabilities experiencing physical holds from the 2017-18 through 2024-25 school years is presented in Table 8.

Table 8. Annual Number of Students with Disabilities Experiencing Physical Holds, 2017-18 through 2024-25 school years.

Year	Number of Students with Disabilities Experiencing Physical Holds
2017-18	3,465
2018-19	3,347
2019-20*	2,828
2020-21*	1,571
2021-22	2,371
2022-23	2,750
2023-24	2,777
2024-25	2,810

Student Demographics

Race/Ethnicity

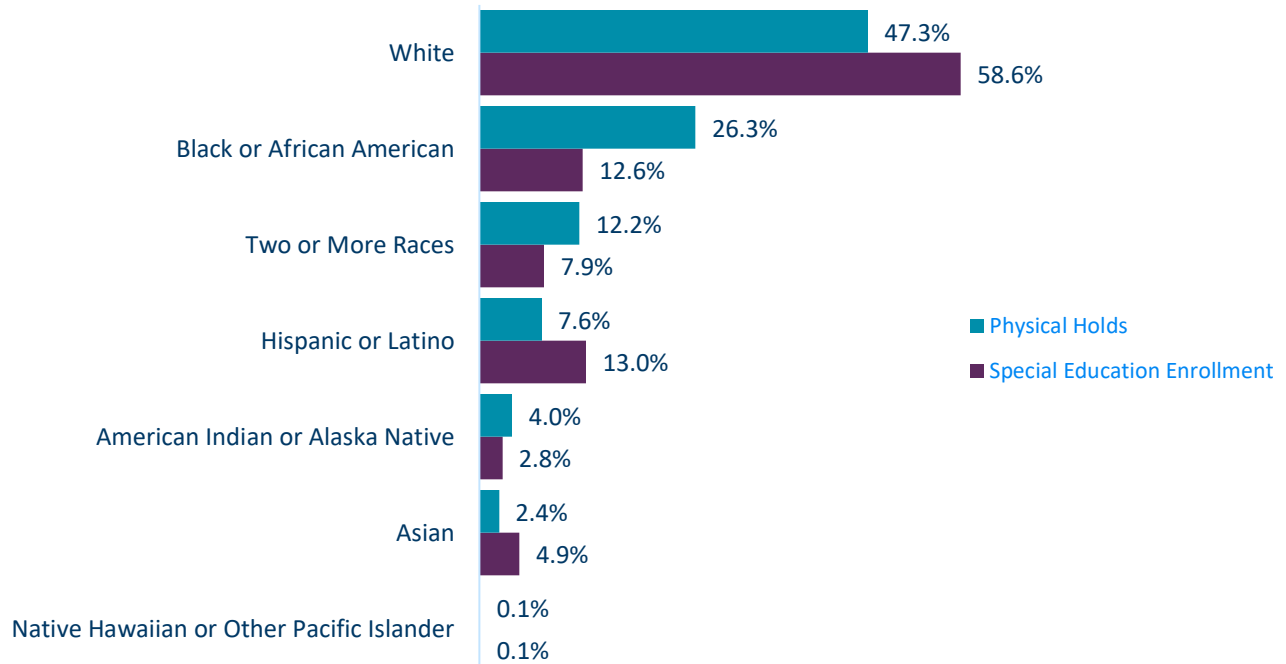
Students with disabilities identified as Black or African American students, American Indian or Alaska Native students, and students reported under the category of two or more races continue to be overrepresented in the use of physical holds. Conversely, categories of white, Hispanic or Latino, and Asian students with disabilities continue to be underrepresented.

In the 2024-25 school year, 26.3 percent of the physically held students with disabilities were Black or African American, although they comprise 12.6 percent of the special education population. Students with disabilities identified as two or more races accounted for 12.2 percent of physically held students with disabilities, although they comprise 7.9 percent of the special education population. American Indian or Alaska Native Students, at 2.8 percent of the special education population, were 4.0 percent of the physically held students with disabilities. Since the 2020-21 school year, this disproportionality has remained relatively consistent. The percentage of physically held students with disabilities in these race/ethnicity categories has stayed relatively similar—with minor fluctuations in the percentage of physically held students in these race/ethnicity groups—for a number of years.

Figure K (below) compares the race/ethnicity of students with disabilities who experienced physical holds during the 2024.25 school year to the race/ethnicity of the entire population of students receiving special education services.

Figure K. Students with Disabilities Physically Held by Race/Ethnicity, as Compared to Special Education Enrollment, 2024-25 school year.

Statewide Physical Holding by Race/Ethnicity 2024-2025



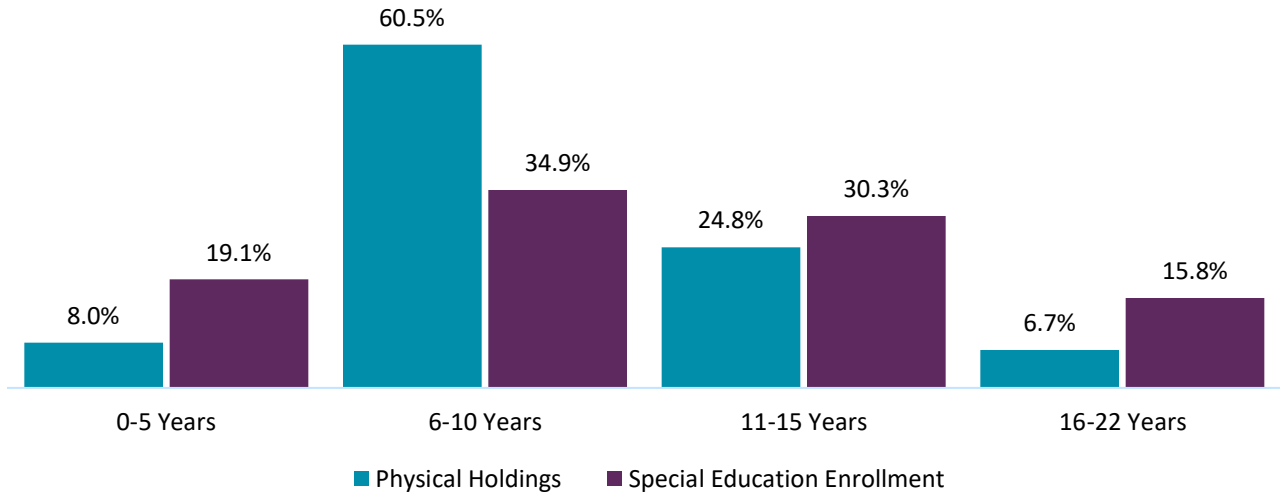
Age

During the 2024-25 school year, the majority of students with disabilities experiencing physical holds were in the 6-10 age range at 60.5 percent, despite accounting for only 34.9 percent of the special education population. This pattern is consistent with the age range data from previous years. In contrast, 24.8 percent of the physically held students with disabilities were in the 11-15-year age range, despite comprising 30.3 percent of the special education population. As in previous years, a relatively small percentage of physical holds were used on students with disabilities under 5 or older than the age of 16, just 8.0 percent and 6.7 percent, respectively.

Figure L (below) compares the age of students with disabilities who experienced physical holds in the 2024-25 school year to the age of students in the total special education population.

Figure L. Students with Disabilities Physically Held by Age, as Compared to Special Education Enrollment, 2024-25 school year.

Statewide Physical Holdings by Age 2024-2025



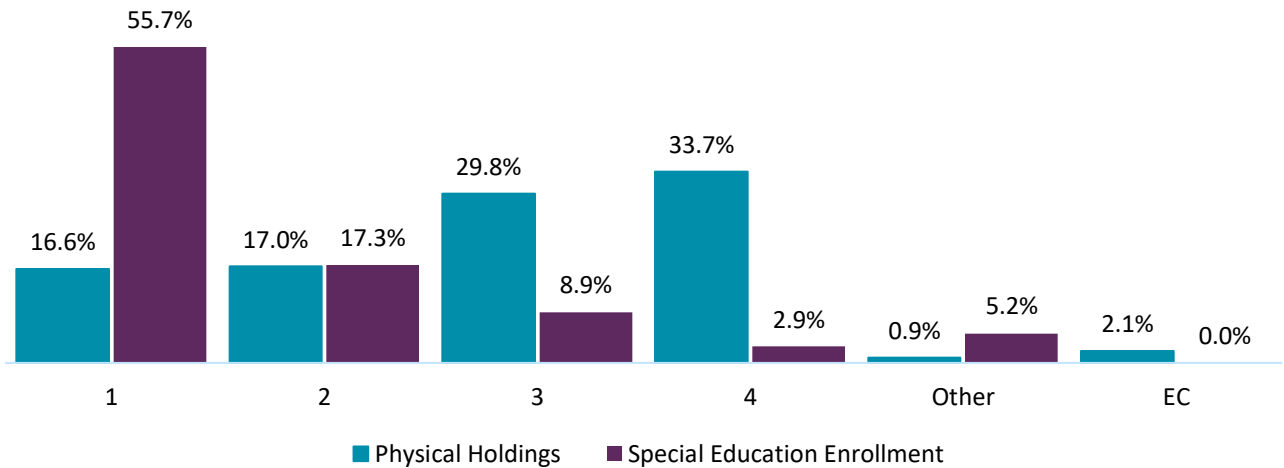
Setting

In 2014-15, MDE began collecting demographic data related to the federal setting of physically held students with disabilities. Since then, the pattern of physical holding use across students in different instructional settings has been generally consistent. Relative to the proportion of all students in setting 4 programs, a disproportionate number of students with disabilities experiencing physically holds are in setting 4 programs, a trend that is consistent with data from the past four school years and with seclusion data.

As shown in Figure M (below) most of the physically held students with disabilities in 2024-25 received services in setting 4 programs (33.7 percent) or setting 3 programs (29.8 percent), although these students comprise a relatively small percentage of the total special education population (2.9 percent and 8.9 percent, respectively). In contrast, only 33.6 percent of students who were physically held received services in settings 1 or 2, although these students comprised 73 percent of students with disabilities in the 2024-25 school year.

Figure M. Students with Disabilities Physically Held by Setting, as Compared to Special Education Enrollment, 2024-25 school year.

Statewide Physical Holdings by Setting 2024-2025



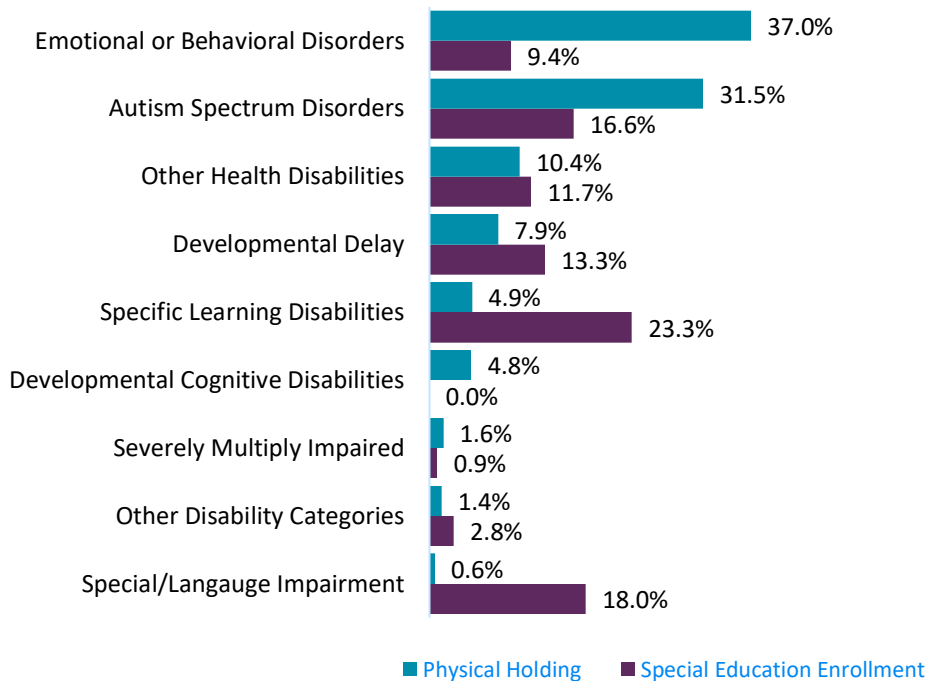
Disability Category

Consistent with previous years, as well as seclusion data, the majority of students with disabilities experiencing physical holds during the 2024-25 school year had been determined to be eligible to receive special education in Minnesota under disability categories of EBD or ASD. Together, students from those two categories comprised 68.5 percent of the students who experienced physical holds. Students in both categories experienced physical holds at a rate disproportionate to their representation in the special education population. EBD students, who were 37 percent of physically held students, comprised just 9.4 percent of the special education population. ASD students, who were 31.5 percent of physically held students, comprised 16.6 percent of the special education population.

Figure N (below) provides information regarding the disability of categories of students who experienced physical holding during the 2024-25 school year.

Figure N. Students Physically Held by Disability Category, as Compared to Special Education Enrollment, 2024-25 school year.

Statewide Physical Holdings by Disability 2024-2025

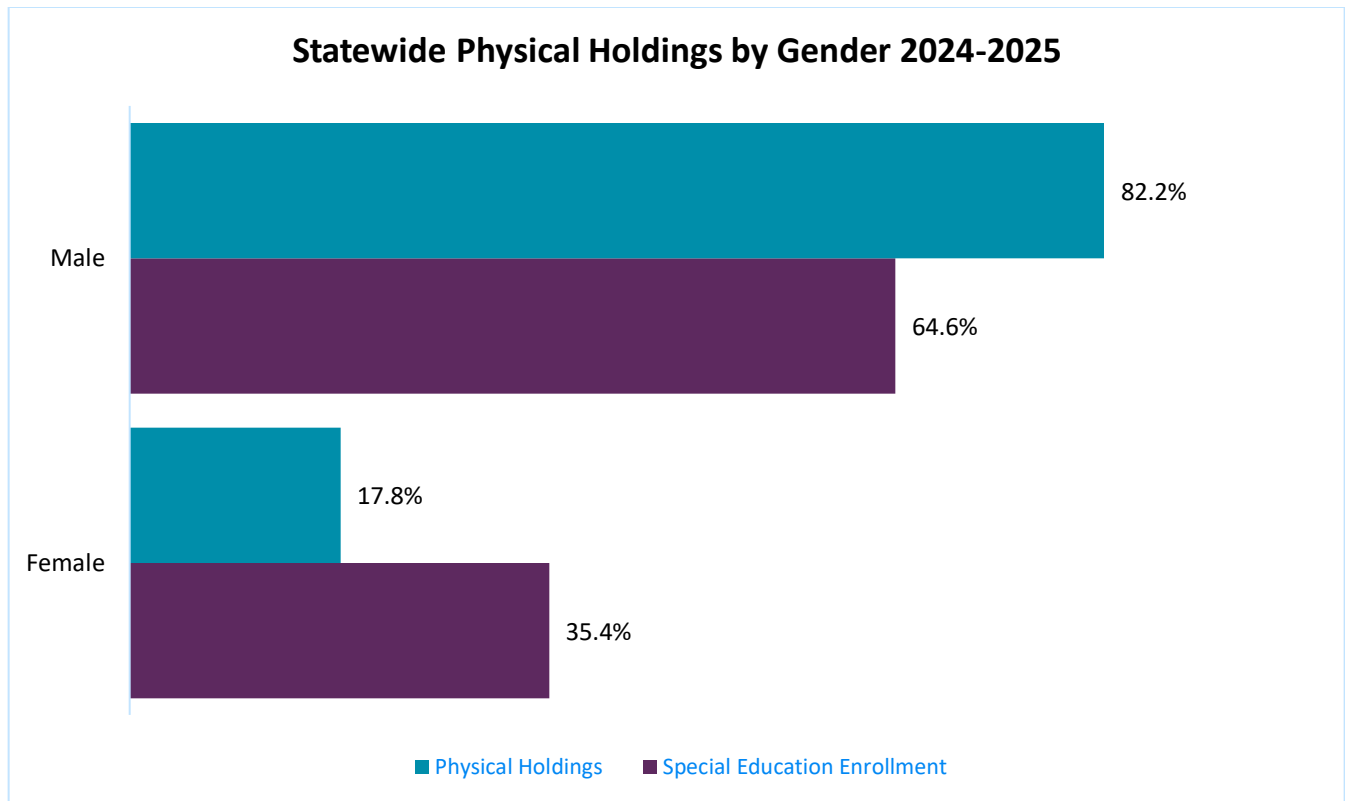


Gender

Consistent with previous years, male students comprised a greater percentage of students receiving special education services as well as a greater percentage of students with disabilities experiencing physical holding. This pattern is also consistent with seclusion data. During the 2024-25 school year, 64.6 percent of students receiving special education services identified as male and 35.4 percent of students identified as female, a ratio of approximately two male students to each female student. During the same time period, 82.2 percent of the students experiencing physical holds identified as male, and 17.8 percent identified as female.

Figure O (below) provides information regarding the gender of students with disabilities who experienced physical holds during the 2024-25 school year.

Figure O. Students with Disabilities Physically Held by Gender, as Compared to Special Education Enrollment, 2024-25 school year.



Staff and Student Injuries Reported by Districts Resulting from Physical Holding¹²

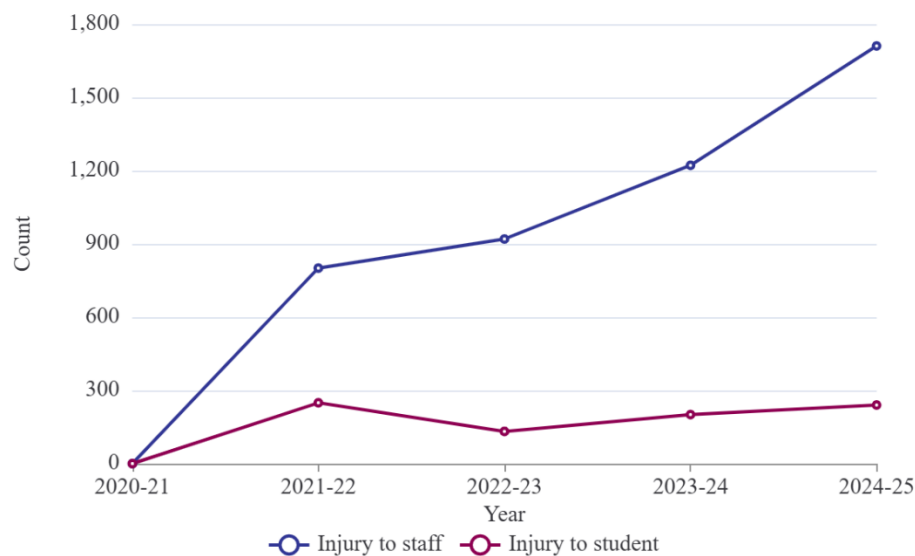
During the 2024-25 school year, districts reported 1,711 staff injuries directly related to physical holding, an increase of 33.3 percent since the 2023-24 school year and an approximate rate of one staff injury for every 11.2 physical holds. During the same time period, districts reported 240 student injuries directly related to physical holding, an increase of 17.7 percent since the 2023-24 school year, and a rate of one student injury for every 80 physical holds.

Figure P. Staff and Student Injuries Resulting from Physical Holding, 2020-21 through 2024-25 school years.

¹² It is important to note that there is no statutory definition of “injury” in Minnesota Statutes, section 125A.0941 or 125A.0942 and no statutory criteria to determine causality between an injury and a restrictive procedure. Given these variables, districts locally determine a threshold for the level of injury and how close in time it must occur to the physical hold when deciding whether to include an injury in their yearly counts.

Physical Holding: Injuries

Statewide: School Years 2020-21 - 2024-25



Appendix B – Strategies and Resources for School Districts to Reduce the Use of Restrictive Procedures, Eliminate Seclusion and Address Disproportionalities in the Use of Restrictive Procedures (2024-25 School Year)

This appendix includes a list of strategies and resources identified by Minnesota school districts in their efforts to reduce the use of restrictive procedures, eliminate seclusion, and address disproportionality in the use of restrictive procedures. For a more comprehensive list of federal and state research on implementation and disproportionality, guidance, and proposed legislation regarding the use of restrictive procedures, please visit MDE's [Restrictive Procedures](#) webpage.

Please note this Appendix was known as Appendix D in previous versions of this report and has been referred to as "Appendix D" colloquially. For future references, please refer to this section as "Strategies and Resources for School Districts."

State Resources on Restrictive Procedures Legal Standards

Restrictive Procedures Use in Schools: MDE provides training and model forms to assist Minnesota school districts in ensuring that restrictive procedures used in emergency situations are implemented safely and in accordance with the standards for using restrictive procedures found in Minnesota Statutes 2024, sections [125A.0941](#) and [125A.0942](#). You can find more information on the use of restrictive procedures, including data collection, recent legislation, and other resources on the [MDE Restrictive Procedures webpage](#).

- **MDE training sessions.** MDE offers interactive training sessions to school districts and other interested groups throughout the state. These sessions can be provided as online sessions or in person at no cost to participants. For more information or to request a training, please contact [MDE's Dispute Resolution team at MDE.Dispute-Resolution@state.mn.us](#).
- MDE's restrictive procedures training provides an overview of Minnesota Statutes and the legal standards for using restrictive procedures in emergency situations, along with strategies that support reducing the use of restrictive procedures, eliminating seclusion, and addressing disproportionality in the use of restrictive procedures.
 - MDE offers a variety of training sessions on special education due process and the legal standards outlining the use of discipline in schools that support the reduction in use of restrictive procedures and can be customized to meet the needs of participants.
 - **MDE model forms.** MDE posts [model forms](#) related to the use of restrictive procedures. The model forms outline the minimum compliance standards in a format that school districts can modify to meet their needs.
 - **Restrictive Procedures Case Studies.** MDE conducted case studies of five Minnesota school districts to gather further information about effective strategies to reduce the use of restrictive procedures. This report can be found on [MDE's website](#).

Strategies Reported by School Districts in Narrative Responses

As part of MDE’s annual restrictive procedures data collection efforts, school districts are asked to provide narrative information regarding the strategies their district tried that year to reduce the number of restrictive procedures in their district, and which strategies they would recommend to other districts. The resources most school districts described can be grouped into four categories: staff training and professional development; positive behavioral interventions and supports and social-emotional learning; behavior support teams and specialists; and collaboration, partnerships, and debriefing. The following list, gathered from narrative responses provided by school districts following the 2024-25 school year, is reflective of those responses and is meant to be a starting point for discussion and does not represent recommendations or guidance from MDE.

Staff Training and Professional Development

Continuing a trend described in compilations from previous years, districts overwhelmingly emphasized the importance of staff training as a foundational strategy. This included initial training, ongoing refreshers and building capacity through train the trainer activities. Programs commonly referenced included:

- [Crisis Prevention Institute](#) (CPI) – most commonly cited.
- [Ukeru](#) – cited by more districts this year than in previous years.
- [Handle With Care](#) (HWC).
- [Professional Crisis Management](#) (PCM)
- [Safety Care](#).
- [Life Space Crisis Intervention](#) (LSCI).
- [Teach to Heal](#).
- [Conscious Discipline](#).

Trainings described focused heavily on verbal de-escalation, trauma-informed practices, and alternatives to physical intervention. Some districts noted that successful implementation of de-escalation strategies from a training program was related to either a reduction or an elimination of restrictive procedures. A full listing of training can be found at the end of this section.

Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) and Social-Emotional Learning (SEL)

Many districts described schoolwide and tiered [PBIS](#) frameworks as important to reducing restrictive procedures. Additionally, many districts reported incorporating [SEL](#) techniques in their classrooms as part of their overall strategy to reduce restrictive procedures, including practices such as:

- Direct instruction in executive functioning.
- Mindfulness and regulation strategies.
- Trauma-informed curricula such as Character Strong.

Behavior Support Teams and Specialists

Several districts reported hiring or contracting with specialists in student behavior to provide direct support to students as well as to provide support and training to staff. Roles and specialties mentioned include:

- Board Certified Behavior Analysts (BCBAs).
- Registered Behavior Technicians (RBTs).
- Behavior Specialists and Strategists.
- Mental Health Professionals and Social Workers.

Collaboration, Partnerships and Debriefing

Many districts described utilizing team meetings and debriefing protocols. Districts often described these efforts as coinciding with increased reporting and use of real-time dashboards in these team environments. Specific efforts involving teams and collaborations included:

- Scheduled, ongoing reviews and discussion of restrictive procedure incidents.
- School-based behavior collaboration teams.
- Participation of administrators, families, and behavior experts in team meetings.
- Data review ahead of or between quarterly oversight meetings.

Additionally, many districts described partnerships with other districts and connections with external specialists and consultants to provide additional supports and resources.

Recommendations for Other Districts:

Common recommendations included:

- Investing in staff relationships and training – not just for special education staff, but general education staff and paraprofessionals.
- Emphasizing consistency and fidelity in plan implementation and staff language.
 - Using proactive, [person-centered](#) planning, including student preferences and strengths.
- Encouraging administrator involvement and leadership in behavior planning.
- Prioritizing teacher and paraprofessional well-being, including morale, coaching, and emotional support.

Other Trainings and Resources Described by Districts:

- [BARR Program](#)
- [Boys Town](#)
- [Brightworks](#)
- [Catalyst Training](#)
- [Character Strong](#)
- [Conscious Discipline](#)
- [Crisis Prevention Institute](#)
- [Handle With Care](#)
- [HuddLUP](#)
- [Larry Thompson/Innovative Schools](#)
- [Life Space Crisis Intervention - <https://lsci.org/>](#)
- [Move This World](#)

- [Multi-Tiered System of Supports Implementation Reviews](#)
- [Navigating Behavior](#)
- [Nurtured Heart](#)
- [PREPaRE Training](#)
- [Prevent-Teach-Reinforce/Pyramid Model Training](#)
- [Professional Crisis Management](#)
- [Reclaiming Youth at Risk](#) (book)
- [Registered Behavior Technician \(RBT\) Training](#)
- [Responsive classroom](#)
- [SafeSchools Platform](#)
- [Safety Care](#)
- [Teach To Heal](#)
- [Ukeru Systems](#)
- [Zones of Regulation](#)

For a more comprehensive list of resources, including information provided in previous versions of this report, and a copy of “Restrictive Procedures Case Studies” from the 2023-24 school year, please visit MDE’s [Restrictive Procedures](#) webpage.