Time-Out Practices: Guidance on the Implementation of Regulatory Amendments to 603 CMR 46.00 and 603 CMR 18.00

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Introduction

Key Information

- ✓ In June 2025, the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education (Board or BESE) voted to amend regulations regarding the use of time-out practices in Massachusetts public schools, approved special education schools, and collaboratives. The amended regulations will become effective on August 17, 2026 (the "2026 Regulations").
- ✓ The Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (Department) is issuing this guidance to support districts, approved special education schools, and collaboratives to assist in the implementation of the 2026 Regulations.

Purpose

The purpose of this document is to provide guidance to districts, approved special education schools, and collaboratives regarding the Board-approved amendments to 603 CMR 46.00—the regulations for the Prevention of Physical Restraint and Requirements If Used—and 603 CMR 18.00, which outlines Program and Safety Standards for Approved Public or Private Day and Residential Special Education School Programs. This guidance will assist districts, schools, and programs in building the necessary systems and structures to effectively implement the new regulations by the August 17, 2026 effective date.

These changes are designed to promote equitable access to safe learning environments that support both academic and social-emotional development for all students. The overuse or inappropriate use of time-out or seclusion can isolate students, hinder their connection to peers and staff, have a traumatic impact, and result in academic disruption.

This document summarizes the amended regulations, provides clear guidance and suggestions for implementation, addresses common questions about time-out, seclusion, and documentation, and offers tools and resources to support effective and appropriate use of time-out practices.

Background

Time-out is a behavioral support strategy in which a student temporarily separates from the learning environment for the purpose of calming. Time-out is different from seclusion, which is defined in the 2026 Regulations as the involuntary confinement of a student alone in a room or area, with or without adult supervision, from which the student is not permitted to leave. While time-out is a behavioral support strategy, seclusion is prohibited except in emergency circumstances, as defined in the regulations.

Both time-out and seclusion are referenced in the regulations currently in effect, 603 CMR 46.00 and 603 CMR 18.00, as they relate to approved public and private special education programs. Over the last several years, there has been growing attention to the use of seclusion, time-out, and time-out practices both nationally and in Massachusetts.

National Context

At the national level, several federal agencies have engaged in efforts related to time-out and seclusion practices in public schools. The U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights (OCR) issued a Dear Colleague Letter in 2016 that informed school districts that the use of seclusion or improper use of time-out could be considered discrimination against students with disabilities, in violation of Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990. The letter also provided guidance and resources for school districts to improve their practices.

In 2019, the U.S. Government Accountability Office (GAO) testified before Congress and reported on the use of seclusion in schools nationwide, the data OCR collects on the use of seclusion, how that data can be interpreted, and initiatives at the federal level to address the use of seclusion. Since 2021, the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) has brought enforcement actions against various school districts across the country related to time-out and seclusion practices and at least seven school districts have entered into settlement agreements.

Massachusetts Context

In September 2021, after engaging with numerous stakeholders, the Department issued new guidance entitled "Reducing or Eliminating the Use of Time-Out Rooms during the 2021-2022 School Year." The document replaced existing guidance and continues in effect today.

In spring 2024, the Department invested more than $1.5 million in competitive grants to school districts and educational collaboratives with the goal to reduce or eliminate the use of exclusionary time-out rooms and increase the amount of time that students spend learning with their peers. The funding was intended to expand alternative behavioral supports and strategies for students, enable positive educational environments, and improve communication and collaboration between schools, parents, guardians, and the community to establish holistic support systems.

More recently, in late summer and early fall 2024, the Department established a working group to provide input regarding potential regulatory changes. Members of the working group included representatives from the following organizations: American Federation of Teachers, Administrators of Special Education, Disability Law Center, Ed Law Project, Department of Early Education and Care, Massachusetts Association of Approved Private Schools, Massachusetts Advocates for Children, Massachusetts Association of School Superintendents, Massachusetts Charter Public School Association, Massachusetts Association of School Administrators, Massachusetts Organization of Educational Collaboratives, and the Massachusetts Teachers Association.

In June 2025, following a public comment period, the Board voted to amend the regulations governing these practices in Massachusetts, specifically 603 CMR 46.00 and 603 CMR 18.00.

Noteworthy Changes to the Amended Regulations

603 CMR. 46.00 Prevention of Physical Restraint and Requirements If Used

The amendments to 603 CMR 46.00, which take effect on August 17, 2026, include the following changes:

- Update the definition of seclusion in 603 CMR 46.02 to align more closely with the definition used by OCR for data collection purposes.
- Clarify the definition of the term “time-out” by updating the definition to specifically include "in an unlocked setting from which the student is permitted to leave."
- Add requirements for the use of time-out:
    - Any room or area that is used for time-out must be of appropriate size for the age and the needs of the student; appropriately lighted, ventilated, and heated or cooled, consistent with the remainder of the building; free of objects or fixtures that are inherently dangerous to the student; in compliance with any applicable local fire and building code requirements; and in compliance with any other standards listed by the Department in guidance.
- Clarify that seclusion is prohibited except in an emergency situation in which the following criteria, among others, must be met:
    - It is used as a last resort on an individual student basis, where a student’s behavior poses an imminent threat of assault or imminent risk of serious physical harm to self or others;
    - The student is not responsive to directives or other lawful and less intrusive behavior interventions, or such other interventions are deemed inappropriate under the circumstances;
    - Other interventions have failed to ensure the safety of the student and/or others;
    - The student has a documented history of repeatedly causing serious self-injuries and/or injuries to other students or staff;
    - There is documentation from a licensed mental health professional that there is psychological or behavioral justification for the use, and there are no psychological or behavioral contraindications;
    - There is documentation from a licensed physician that there are no medical contraindications;
    - There is consent from the student’s parent or guardian[1] and, if appropriate, the student, and such use has been approved in writing by the principal; and
    - At all times during the emergency, a staff member is continuously and actively monitoring and observing the student and is immediately available to the student.
- Clarify that the emergency use of seclusion must cease as soon as the student’s behavior no longer poses a threat of assault or immediate serious physical harm.
- Build in various safeguards when such an emergency intervention is used, such as parental notification of use, conducting weekly and monthly reviews of data relating to the use of such an emergency intervention, and documenting and reporting such use to the Department.

[1] All parent or guardian notifications should be translated into the parent or guardian’s native language.

- Require that any schools or programs that utilize such an emergency intervention must examine alternatives and strategies for reducing and eliminating its use no later than 3 years from the effective date of the proposed regulations.

603 CMR 18.00 Program and Safety Standards for Approved Public or Private Day and Residential Special Education School Programs

The amendments to 603 CMR 18.00 that take effect on August 17, 2026, include the following changes:

- Require approved special education day programs, including the day component of special education residential programs, to comply with the updated version of 603 CMR 46.00.
- More closely align documentation requirements that are applicable to special education programs to the updated and existing documentation requirements in 603 CMR 46.00.

Guidance on The Use of Time-Out and Seclusion Pursuant to the Amended Regulations

Time-Out

Time-out is defined as a behavioral support strategy in which a student temporarily separates from the learning activity or the classroom, either by choice or by direction from staff, for the purpose of calming. During time-out, a student must be continuously observed by a staff member in an unlocked setting from which the student is permitted to leave. Staff shall be with the student or immediately available to the student at all times.

A time-out shall cease as soon as the student has calmed. Staff supervising the student should support co-regulation and closely monitor the student's physical cues, tone of voice, and demeanor to determine whether the student has calmed. Students should not be required to complete a specific task to demonstrate that they have calmed if their physical body, tone, and demeanor demonstrate regulation.

Time-out is…	Time-out is NOT…
A behavioral intervention of separating a student by choice or staff direction in a non-locked setting, in which the student can leave, or a separate location in a classroom, from which a student is not physically prevented from leaving. Examples: • The student asks to take a break outside the classroom to use a self-regulation strategy. Staff sit with the student in the hallway while the student uses their regulation strategies. • A teacher calmly invites a student to move to a designated space in the classroom, away from other students, to co-regulate with a staff member after the student shows signs of dysregulation. • According to school or program procedures, staff ask a student to step into a nearby quiet area to help them de-escalate and regain control.	**Used as a punishment or consequence for a student who is dysregulated or unable to access the learning community.** Examples: • A student is not following directions during reading time. As a consequence, the teacher directs them to sit apart from the group, offering no support or opportunity to rejoin once they are ready. • The student requests a break in the sensory room after a conflict with a peer. Although the student is calm and asks to return to class, the paraprofessional prevents them from rejoining until a set time has passed or the current activity is over.

Seclusion

Seclusion is defined as the involuntary confinement of a student alone in a room or area, with or without adult supervision, from which the student is not permitted to leave. The term does not include: a classroom or school environment where, as a general rule, all students need permission to leave the room or area, such as to use the restroom; a behavior support

technique that is part of the district's, school's or program's designated procedures for behavior support which involves the monitored separation of a student in an unlocked setting, from which the student is allowed to leave and it is implemented for the purpose of calming; or placing a student in a separate location within a classroom with others or with an instructor, so long as the student has the same opportunity to receive and engage in instruction.

Seclusion is prohibited in a public education program except in an emergency situation as a last resort on an individual basis when student behavior poses an imminent threat of assault, or imminent serious physical harm to self or others, but only if safeguards are accounted for. The following safeguards are required prior to the use of seclusion:

1) The student has a documented history of repeatedly causing serious self-injuries and/or injuries to other students or staff.
2) The student is not responsive to directives or other lawful and less intrusive behavior interventions, or such interventions are deemed to be inappropriate under the circumstances.
3) Other forms of interventions have failed to ensure the safety of the student and/or the safety of others.
4) There are no medical contraindications as documented by a licensed physician.
5) There is a psychological or behavioral justification for the use, and there are no psychological or behavioral contraindications, as documented by a licensed mental health professional.
6) The program has obtained consent to use seclusion from the student's parent or guardian and, if appropriate, the student, and such use has been approved in writing by the principal.
7) Any individual using it has received training about alternative behavior interventions and management techniques.

The program has documented compliance with 1-7 above in advance of its use and maintains the documentation.

Emergency Seclusion is…	Emergency Seclusion is NOT…
A last resort intervention of involuntary confinement of a student when a student poses a serious and imminent threat to themselves or others Examples: • A student with a known history of elopement and aggression, including biting and assaulting peers and staff when highly dysregulated, becomes very escalated. Teaching staff have implemented multiple proactive strategies to support the student's regulation, but the student continues to escalate. The student exits the classroom and begins pacing the hallway. A teacher and paraprofessional follow and use co-regulation strategies to support the student. They direct the student toward the designated "safe room" as the student becomes increasingly agitated. Upon entering the room, the student attempts to bite and physically assault staff. Based on the student's prior behavior and current level of risk, staff determine that the criteria for seclusion are met, and all required prerequisites and safeguards have been followed. To ensure the safety of the student and others, staff close the door. The door is not locked, and staff maintain continuous visual observation of the student throughout the incident. After approximately six minutes, the student de-escalates and sits down. Staff open the door, support the student in rejoining the classroom, and help them transition back to learning when ready.	**A planned behavior intervention to punish a student's behaviors or dysregulation in the classroom environment.** Examples: • The student becomes upset during lunch and throws a milk container. In response, the paraprofessional escorts the student to a separate room, closes the door, and informs the student that they are there because of their behavior. The student is left alone, verbally escalated, but physically sitting in the middle of the room while the teacher monitors from outside. o This intervention is used as a consequence for the student's actions, not because the student posed an imminent threat to themselves or others. This is **not a permitted use of emergency seclusion.** • A student refuses to complete classwork and begins shouting at the teacher. After several verbal redirects, the teacher instructs the student to go to the "calm room" to "cool off" and reflect on their behavior. The student is escorted to the room, and the door is closed. The student is left alone inside the room for 10 minutes without direct staff engagement. o There is no evidence of imminent danger to self or others, the student is not demonstrating acute crisis, and the intervention is used as a consequence for noncompliance. This is **not a permitted use of emergency seclusion.**

Imminent Threat of Assault or Imminent Serious Physical Harm

Imminent Threat of Assault or Imminent Serious Physical Harm is an act placing another in reasonable apprehension of immediate bodily harm. Serious Physical Harm has the same meaning as serious bodily injury as used in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). It means bodily injury which involves: A substantial risk of death; Extreme physical pain; Protracted and obvious disfigurement; or Protracted loss or impairment of the function of a bodily member, organ, or mental faculty. *See* 34 C.F.R § 300.530(h)(i)(3); 18 U.S.C. § 1365(h)(3).

The threat of harm must be a reasonable apprehension of immediate harm, not a generalized apprehension, and should be based on observable actions and any statements made, not assumptions about students' diagnoses, histories, or emotional states alone.

Imminent Threat of Assault or Serious Physical Self-Harm is…	Imminent Threat of Assault or Serious Physical Self-Harm is NOT…
An imminent threat exists when a student's observable actions present a clear, immediate, risk of causing serious physical injury to themselves or another person. This determination must be based on specific, observable behaviors that indicate harm is about to occur and could result in substantial bodily injury, rather than on generalized fears, emotional distress, or prior history.	**An imminent threat is not a generalized concern that harm might occur at some point, nor is it behavior that is disruptive, noncompliant, or emotionally escalated without an immediate risk of serious physical injury. Behaviors such as yelling, swearing, or refusal to follow directions may be unsafe or disruptive, but do not constitute an imminent threat unless they involve actions that could immediately result in serious physical harm.**

Examples:
• A student picks up a heavy metal chair and raises it over their head, moving towards another student, while shouting threats.
  ○ This behavior presents a clear, immediate risk of causing serious physical injury to another person and may warrant protective intervention, including seclusion if all other strategies fail and all other required safeguards are met.
• A student who is agitated in class is invited to take a few minutes to calm down. The teacher accompanies the student outside the classroom; however, the student escalates, punching and kicking the teacher and making threats of additional violence.
  ○ This is a direct, observable risk of serious physical harm requiring immediate staff response.
	Examples:
	• A student is yelling, swearing, and knocking over classroom supplies but is not physically threatening anyone.
	  ○ This behavior is disruptive but does not pose an immediate risk of serious physical harm.
	• A student refuses to follow directions and angrily states, "I hate everyone here," while pacing the classroom.
	  ○ Although concerning, this behavior does not meet the threshold for imminent threat. It does not include specific actions or means that pose serious and immediate danger to self or others.

Using Behavior Intervention Plans (BIPs) to Address Challenging Behavior

In accordance with 603 CMR 18.05(5) and 603 CMR 46.00, when a student exhibits ongoing or escalating challenging behaviors that interfere with learning or the safety of the student or others, programs should develop and implement a Behavior Intervention Plan (BIP). If the student is a student with a disability, consistent with 34 C.F.R. § 300.324, their IEP Team should consider the use of positive behavioral interventions and supports, and other strategies to address such behavior in their IEP. A Functional Behavioral Assessment (FBA) should inform the BIP and is designed to identify the function of the behavior, reduce the occurrence of challenging behaviors and promote the acquisition of replacement skills. Interventions and supports outlined in the BIP should be proactive, skill-building, and rooted in positive behavioral supports rather than in punitive or exclusionary practices. The plan should utilize trauma-informed approaches and incorporate individualized, culturally and linguistically sensitive interventions. BIPs should include clear prevention strategies, reinforcement systems, de-escalation procedures, and progress-monitoring methods.

Staff responsible for the implementation should receive appropriate training and supervision to ensure consistency and fidelity. The BIP should be reviewed and revised as needed based on data, student progress, and input from the student's team to ensure it continues to support safe, effective, and educationally appropriate programming.

Example: For Externalizing Behavior

Student A frequently becomes physically aggressive during transitions when the environment is noisy and crowded. The FBA identifies sensory overstimulation and difficulty with impulse control. The BIP includes:

- Preparing the student for transitions with a two-minute warning and visual cue.
- Assigning the student a predictable role (line leader or door holder) to increase engagement.
- Providing access to a sensory tool during transitions.
- Reinforcing safe, calm movement through verbal praise and check-ins.
- Monitoring data daily and reviewing progress weekly with the student support team.

Implementation Timeline

Districts, approved special education schools, and collaboratives are required to fully implement the revised regulations by August 17, 2026. We recommend all districts, approved special education schools, and collaboratives carefully review these amendments as soon as possible to determine what practices and changes are needed and, if so, develop updated practices and policies in advance of August 17, 2026. DESE expects schools, districts, and programs will continue to implement the strategies delineated in the September 10, 2021, Memorandum entitled "**Reducing or Eliminating the Use of Time-Out Rooms During the 2021-2022 School Year."**

Required updated policies and procedures for August 17, 2026:

- **Districts:**
  - CR 17A Use of physical restraint on any student enrolled in a publicly-funded education program
  - SE 55 Special education facilities and classrooms
- **Approved Special Education Schools:**
  - 9.1 Policies and Procedures for Behavior Support
  - 9.4 Physical Restraint
- **Collaboratives:**
  - CCR 17 Use of physical restraint on any student enrolled in a publicly funded education program
- **Approved Public Day Collaboratives:**
  - 9.1 Policies and Procedures for Behavior Support
  - 9.4 Physical Restraint

Requirements, Reporting and Monitoring for Safeguards for the Emergency Intervention of Seclusion

Safeguards for Individual Use of Emergency Intervention of Seclusion

To promote student safety and uphold regulatory compliance, public education programs must follow strict safeguards when using seclusion as an emergency intervention. Seclusion may only be used in situations where a student poses an imminent threat of assault or serious physical harm, and only when all other less intrusive interventions have been deemed ineffective or inappropriate. The emergency use of seclusion must cease as soon as the student's behavior no longer poses an imminent threat of assault or imminent threat of serious physical harm. The following list outlines the required safeguards before, during, and after the use of emergency seclusion, as well as the administrative responsibilities for monitoring its use. These safeguards include documented student history, active monitoring, timely parent and principal notification, and ongoing data review at the school level to reduce and ultimately eliminate the use of seclusion in alignment with 603 CMR 46.00.

Preconditions for Use of Emergency Seclusion

- The student's behavior presents an imminent threat of assault or serious physical harm to self or others.
- The student has a documented history of repeatedly causing serious self-injuries and/or injuries to other students or staff
- The student is not responsive to directives or other lawful and less intrusive behavior interventions, or such interventions are deemed to be inappropriate under the circumstances
- Less intrusive interventions have failed or have failed to ensure the safety of the student and/or the safety of others.
- There are no medical contraindications, as documented by a licensed physician.

- There is psychological or behavioral justification and there are no psychological or behavioral contraindications, documented by a licensed mental health provider.
- The parent or guardian (and student, if appropriate) has provided consent for emergency use of seclusion.
- The principal has approved the use in writing.
- Staff implementing seclusion have documented participation in training in behavioral alternatives.
- Documentation demonstrating compliance with 603 CMR 46.07(2)(a) and (d)–(g) is maintained on file.

During Emergency Seclusion

- A staff member continuously observes and remains immediately available to the student.
- The student is observable in all areas of the room.
- Staff actively use calming and de-escalation strategies, unless unsafe or counterproductive to do so.
- Seclusion is not used for punishment or routine behavior management.
- Seclusion ends immediately once the imminent threat has subsided.
- If used for a period of longer than 30 minutes, obtain approval from the principal.
- The room or space meets all physical safety standards under 603 CMR 46.07(1).

Post-Intervention Procedures

- Parents are notified verbally and in writing in accordance with 603 CMR 46.06(3)–(4).
- The principal is notified as soon as possible and provided a written report by the next school day.

Administrative Oversight Responsibilities

- Weekly review of students with multiple uses of emergency seclusion.
- A review team is convened for repeated use, when applicable.
- Monthly review of school-wide seclusion data is conducted.
- Use of seclusion is reported to DESE[2] in the required format and frequency.

No Medical Contraindications

Before an emergency intervention of seclusion is used, a licensed physician must confirm that no medical conditions make its use unsafe. This includes considering respiratory, seizure, cardiac, or other physical health conditions. The physician must document that no medical contraindications exist.

[2] Further guidance on reporting requirements to DESE will be issued in the Spring of 2026.

Behavioral or Psychological Justification

Before an emergency intervention of seclusion is used, a licensed mental health professional must confirm that seclusion is psychologically appropriate for this student. The licensed mental health professional should review the student's trauma history, behavior patterns, and mental health needs to determine whether seclusion would be harmful. The clinician must provide written documentation affirming the justification and lack of psychological contraindications.

Physical Space Inspection

To provide for the safety and well-being of students, any room or space used for the purposes of emergency seclusion must meet the physical space requirements outlined in 603 CMR 46.07(1). In accordance with 603 CMR 46.07(2)(n), these spaces must be inspected by the public education program at least once per week during any period of use to verify ongoing compliance. The inspection must confirm that the environment is clean, safe, and sanitary; appropriately designed for student age and needs; properly lit and ventilated; free of dangerous objects; and compliant with all applicable fire and building codes. The checklist below supports programs in conducting and documenting these weekly inspections.

Inspection Checklist Definitions

- Clean, Safe, Sanitary: Free of spills, clutter, sharp objects, or contaminants.
- Age-Appropriate Design: Size, materials, and aesthetics suitable for students using the room.
- Lighting/Ventilation: Functional lights, windows or vents for airflow, appropriate heating or cooling.
- No Dangerous Objects: No furniture or equipment that poses a risk of harm (e.g., loose wires, electrical outlets, broken ceiling tiles, hard corners).
- Fire & Building Code Compliant: Exits, alarms, and structural components meet local laws, which may be demonstrated through up to date certificates from proper local authorities.

Appendix A: Sample Forms and Logs

Districts, Schools, and programs are encouraged to adapt these sample forms to align with their individual needs, provided that all required elements included in the samples are maintained.

Sample Physical Space Checklist

Date of inspection:
Location of room:
Name of individual completing inspection:

1. **Clean, Safe, and Sanitary**

   - ❑ Yes
   - ❑ No

Notes:

2. **Age- Appropriate Design**

   - ❑ Yes
   - ❑ No

Notes:

3. **Proper Lighting, Ventilation, Heating/Cooling**

   - ❑ Yes
   - ❑ No

Notes:

4. **No Dangerous Objects**

   - ❑ Yes
   - ❑ No

Notes:

5. **Fire and Building Code Compliant**

   - ❑ Yes
   - ❑ No

Notes:
Overall notes and required follow-up:

Sample Notification Form for Parents or Guardians for use of Emergency Intervention of Seclusion

Date

Parent's or Guardian's Name

Parent's or Guardian's Address

Dear [Parent's or Guardian's Name]:

As we discussed on [date], [Student's Name] engaged in the following behavior: [description of behavior triggering use of room/space] on [date]. We attempted the following behavior support strategies: [description of alternatives for use of Emergency Intervention of Seclusion]. When these attempts did not succeed, we directed [Student's Name] to the [room/space] for a period of [number] minutes. The student was accompanied by [name(s)], who helped the student calm. [Discuss any follow-up, de-brief, or other actions. For example, when there is repeated use of the time-out room for the same student, invite the parent or guardian to meet and discuss alternative strategies to help the student maximize the amount of time spent learning with peers].

Please contact [name and contact information] if you have any questions or need any additional information.

Sincerely,

Name

Title

Sample Weekly Review of Emergency Seclusion Use

This table is intended for print distribution only. Blank cells are intentionally included to support handwritten data entry following printing.

After reviewing weekly incident of Emergency Seclusion, the school principal can use this template to review students who have experienced multiple instances of emergency seclusion weekly, as required under 603 CMR 46.07(3)(d).

School Name:

Week of:

Student Name	Date(s) of Use	# of Instances This Week	Staff who participated in emergency seclusion	Reason(s) Cited for emergency seclusion	Date the Review Team Convened?	Notes / Next Steps

Sample Monthly School-Wide Review of Emergency Seclusion Use

This table is intended for print distribution only. Blank cells are intentionally included to support handwritten data entry following printing.

This template supports school-wide monthly reviews of emergency seclusion data, required under 603 CMR 46.07(3)(e). This form can be used to identify patterns, ensure compliance, and inform strategies to reduce the use of seclusion.

School Name:

Month Being Reviewed	Total # of Emergency Seclusion Instances	Total # of Staff involved in Emergency Seclusion Instances	Number of Students Requiring Emergency Seclusion Use	Repeat Students	Trends/ Patterns Identified	Recommendations/ Actions
August						
September						
October						
November						
December						
January						
February						
March						
April						
May						
June						
July						

Examples of Trends/Patterns Identified

• Increased use of seclusion on a particular day of the week

•Incidents occur at a particular time of the day

• Specific location (e.g., transition from recess or lunchroom)

• High frequency among a particular grade level or classroom

• Multiple students demonstrating difficulty with unstructured activities

• Seclusion use increases after staff absences or coverage changes

• Behavior escalations coincide with unmet sensory needs or fatigue

Examples of Recommendations/Actions

• Provide targeted de-escalation training to staff involved

• Adjust schedules or transitions to reduce environmental stressors

• Implement a school-wide calming strategy (e.g., mindfulness or sensory breaks)

• Conduct functional behavior assessments (FBAs) for repeat students

• Improve data tracking systems to support real-time decision-making

• Facilitate collaborative team problem-solving (e.g., PBIS or behavior support teams)

• Update individual student behavior plans

• Review room setup or sensory supports in high-incident locations