

Reporting Guidelines for December 1, 2002 Special Education Reporting

1. Which students should we report in the December 1, 2002 federal child count?

The districts should report all special education students for whom they are legally responsible according to the provisions of 603 CMR 28.03(4). (<http://www.doe.mass.edu/sped/laws.html>) These regulations specify programmatic and fiscal responsibility for students based on residency and enrollment. Please refer to the "Programmatic Chart" document for additional clarification.

- a. In the majority of cases, districts are both fiscally and programmatically responsible for the students in the district -- for this group, report all special education students.
- b. In the case of students for whom the district is either fiscally or programmatically responsible, but not both, report only those special education students for whom you are programmatically responsible. Programmatic responsibility, at a minimum, means that your district is responsible to ensure that the eligible student has an IEP and that the IEP is implemented. Programmatic responsibility may result in placing a student elsewhere to get services implemented but such placement does not relieve the district of the responsibility to ensure services.
- c. If programmatic responsibility is shared, only one district should report the student (you decide amongst yourselves who should do so).

Please be assured that there will be no loss, nor gain of entitled federal special education funds as a result of this report as funds are no longer distributed to districts based on this count (this has been true since FY 2000). This means there is NO advantage to over-reporting. However, the district must provide a completed report in order to qualify for receipt of any federal special education funds. Our goal is an unduplicated count. The use of SASIDs and the careful reporting of districts will help us to accomplish this goal.

2. Do we count students who are only receiving services according to a 504 plan?

No.

3. Do we report children under 3 to whom we are providing services?

No. Only report children ages 3 to 21. This count requirement only applies to ages 3-21. Districts are allowed to begin evaluating children at age 2 years nine months so that there is no delay to the start of special education services at age three, but that does not affect the age range for this count.

4. Do we count a student who is enrolled in a private school, but comes to our district for special education services? Do we give that child a SASID?

Yes. If the public school district has found a privately enrolled student eligible for special education, has developed an IEP, and the district is providing the IEP services, the student should receive a SASID and be counted for the December 1 special education count.

5. Do we count home-schooled students who have an IEP?

Yes. If the public school district has found a home-schooled student eligible for special education, has developed an IEP, and the district is providing the IEP services, the student should receive a SASID and be counted for the December 1 special education count.

- 6. Two districts share the programmatic responsibility and fiscal responsibility of a student's education 50-50 (because of divorced parents living in two different districts), which district should count the student?**

If both districts share responsibility equally, then the district where the student resides should report the student.

- 7. One district is responsible to write the IEP and provide the special education services for a student, however, two other districts equally share the fiscal responsibility to pay for the services, which district counts the student?**

The first district has programmatic responsibility and counts the student.

- 8. Should we count students who are in out-of-district special education placements?**

Absolutely. Public school districts should report students enrolled in private schools, collaboratives, and public institutional settings. If you have programmatic responsibility for the out-of-district student you must count the student for this December 1 count. Only public school districts submit counts.

- 9. Do we count students who were evaluated, but are not receiving special education services?**

No, only count those students who are receiving services according to an IEP.

- 10. Can a district report a student if an IEP has been written but is not yet signed by a parent or legal guardian?**

If the IEP is the result of a re-evaluation the district should report the student. If the IEP is the result of an initial evaluation the student should not be reported until the parent signs the IEP.

- 11. Should a district report a student if they are waiting for an LEA determination from Special Education Appeals?**

If the student is receiving services the district providing the services should report the student. If the student is not receiving services, then neither district will report the student until the appeals process is final.

- 12. If a student is on an extended evaluation should they be reported?**

Yes, if the district is providing services.

- 13. If a student is receiving services in another district and becomes homeless, who count the student?**

The district providing the services should report the student.

- 14. If an IEP has been developed for a child and the parents' decline services, does the district still report the student?**

No.

- 15. If a student transfers from out of state with an IEP does the new district report them?**

Yes.

- 16. What about students who were not identified as receiving special education services as of October 1? How do we account for them?**

The Excel file will have only those students identified as receiving special education services as of October 1 on your SIMS submission. If a student has entered your district on an IEP or has received a signed IEP since October 1, you will need to add all 40 data elements for those additional students.

17. How do we report primary disabilities?

Use the 13 disability categories on the PL2 form (Administrative Placement Information Form).

18. Multiple disabilities is not a state disability category, but a federal category—how do we determine if a child has multiple disabilities?

Please refer to the Office of Special Services document called “Is Special Education the Right Service: A Technical Assistance Guide” available on the web at <http://www.doe.mass.edu/sped/docs.html> for more information.

19. How do we report private special education school codes?

See Appendix E of the Data Standards Handbook, which can be found at: <http://www.doe.mass.edu/infoservices/data/sims/>.

15. When is the December 1 Special Education files due?

It is due January 10, 2003.

General Reporting Questions

1. Who submits the December 1 file?

The person with the Sped MDCS (Massachusetts Data Collection System) security role in Directory Administration submits the file. All current MDCS users will be given this role.

2. How can you save and make changes to the file before submitting the file?

The file that is posted to DropBox Central is a .csv file. It can be opened and edited in Excel, Notepad or Access. The file should be saved in a .csv file format. Once the file is validated using the SPED MDCS application it should not be opened in Excel. The file should be opened in Notepad or Access to do further edits. However, the file must be saved in a .csv file format before it is transmitted to the Department.

3. Is October 1 data different from December 1 data?

Yes, the October 1 data is a count of students enrolled in a district. This includes students for which a district holds fiscal responsibility. The goal of the December 1 report is an unduplicated count of students receiving special education services. The focus of the collection is programmatic responsibility.

4. What are the changes from last year’s data collection to this year’s collection?

The special education data elements are the same. This years file also includes all 35 SIMS data elements. The most significant change is the transmission of the file to the DOE. Districts must use the SPED MDCS application to validate and submit their file.

5. Will the December 1 file replace the October SIMS file.

No, the files are stored in 2 separate databases. The December 1 data will not overwrite the October files.

6. Should districts edit fields?

Yes, districts should update information as of December 1, 2002. A complete list of fields is attached.

7. Will students who were not included in the October data collection be included in the December file posted to DropBox Central?

No. Districts must add all 40 fields for students not in the October file.

8. Can students be deleted from the file?

No, students should be coded as a “Yes” value in the Withdrawn field.

9. If a student has transferred from another district since December 2002, will last year’s special education data fields be on the Department of Education file?

Yes, matching the SASID from the October 1 SIMS file to the SASID on all districts’ December 1, 2001 file creates the file.

10. Can the file name be changed?

Yes.

11. Will there be waves for Special Education reporting?

No. Districts will be able to log on at any time to report Special Education students.

12. Is this the last year for this type of reporting?

We are anticipating that the October 2003 SIMS collection will be modified to include required special education fields. This data would be reported for October and an updated version would be submitted for the December collection.

13. When will aggregate data reports for each district be available, and where?

Aggregate data will be available in DropBox Central as pdf files after all of the districts submit their data.