Massachusetts Part B
Annual Performance Report for
FFY 2007

Submitted to the
Office of Special Education Programs:
February 2, 2009

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Mitchell D. Chester, Ed.D.
Commissioner

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Part B Massachusetts Annual Performance Report (MA APR) for FFY 2007

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*Note: States are not required to report on Indicator 6 for FFY 2007. States are required to provide progress data and improvement activities for Indicator 7 on the SPP template. This information is being submitted as part of the revised MA SPP.
Dear Ms. Scire:

Enclosed is the Massachusetts Annual Performance Report for FFY 2007 (MA APR). The MA APR responds directly to the indicators identified by the Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) in Information Collection 1820-0624, Part B State Performance Plan (SPP) and Annual Performance Report (APR). The MA APR provides information on Indicators 1, 2, 3, 4A, 5, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, and 20, and addresses any areas identified in OSEP’s letter responding to the MA SPP/APR submitted February 1, 2008. The MA APR also contains clarifications and corrections responding to the Massachusetts Part B FFY 2007 SPP/APR Status Table provided by the Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) on March 30, 2009.

The Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (MASSDE) has engaged in a variety of activities to obtain broad input from stakeholders on the development of the MA APR. MASSDE convened the Massachusetts Statewide Special Education Steering Committee – which consists of state special education advisory council members, key MASSDE personnel, local education officials, parents, advocates, and representatives from higher education, charter schools, approved private special education schools, and adult service agencies – to review data, measure progress against the targets, examine methodologies, and identify key activities as appropriate for each of these indicators. Additionally, MASSDE has formed targeted interest groups focused on each indicator. These workgroups incorporate a wide variety of stakeholders who communicate throughout the year to help guide Massachusetts’ work in each area.

Regarding public dissemination, the completed MA APR will be made widely available for public discussion. This will be accomplished by broad discussion in interest groups (as previously mentioned) and at the Statewide Advisory Council meeting and other conference and group discussion opportunities. MASSDE will post the MA APR on the MASSDE website at http://www.doe.mass.edu/sped/spp/, and distribute hard copies of the report to key constituents and the media.

MASSDE has developed a resource titled “Special Education Results” that has been added to each district’s profile on the MASSDE website to meet the requirement that district indicator data be publicly reported (http://profiles.doe.mass.edu/special_ed.aspx). Data are currently presented in table format for Indicators 1, 2, 3, 4A, 5, 8, 9, 10, 11 12 and 13, and are also presented through thematic maps for Indicators 1, 2, and 5.

If questions or additional clarification is needed regarding the MA APR, please contact me at 781.338.3388 or mmmittnacht@doe.mass.edu.

Sincerely,

Marcia Mittnacht
State Director of Special Education
Special Education Planning and Policy Development Office
Massachusetts Department of Education

Cc: Mitchell D. Chester, Ed.D., Commissioner, Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education
Monitoring Priority: FAPE in the LRE

Indicator 1: Percent of youth with IEPs graduating from high school with a regular diploma compared to percent of all youth in the State graduating with a regular diploma.

(20 U.S.C. 1416 (a)(3)(A))

Measurement: The statewide Graduation Rate is the number of students in a cohort who graduate in four years or less, divided by the number of first-time entering 9th graders in that cohort. The denominator is adjusted so that students who transfer into Massachusetts’ public schools are added to the original cohort and students who transfer out, or who are now deceased, are subtracted from the original cohort. The quotient is multiplied by 100 to express the Graduation Rate as a percentage. The measurement for youth with an IEP is the same as the measurement for youth without an IEP.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FFY</th>
<th>Measurable and Rigorous Target</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2007 (2007-2008)</td>
<td>Students with IEPs Graduation Rate: 66.2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th># of Students in 2007-08 cohort</th>
<th># of Students in 2007-08 cohort who graduated in four years or less</th>
<th>2007-08 Graduation Rate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>IEP</td>
<td>14,629</td>
<td>9,376</td>
<td>64.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-IEP</td>
<td>62,755</td>
<td>53,496</td>
<td>85.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All Students</td>
<td>77,384</td>
<td>62,872</td>
<td>81.2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Discussion of Improvement Activities Completed and Explanation of Progress or Slippage that occurred for FFY 2007 (2007-2008):

Explanation of Progress or Slippage

From FFY 2006 to FFY 2007, the graduation rate for students with disabilities in Massachusetts increased from 62.8% to 64.1%. Likewise, the graduation rate for students without disabilities increased from 84.9% to 85.2%, and the overall state graduation rate increased from 80.9% to 81.2%. While the Measurable and Rigorous Target was not met, the improvement in the graduation rate of students with disabilities in Massachusetts may be related in part to a number of improvement activities that were completed in FFY 2007. These include further development of public reporting of Special Education data, a variety of professional development initiatives for educators, and certain initiatives and programs. These are detailed below in the section on improvement activities.
The following chart represents data for FFY 2005 – FFY 2007:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>FFY 2005</th>
<th>FFY 2006</th>
<th>FFY 2007</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>IEP</td>
<td>61.1%</td>
<td>62.8%</td>
<td>64.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-IEP</td>
<td>83.9%</td>
<td>84.9%</td>
<td>85.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All Students</td>
<td>79.9%</td>
<td>80.9%</td>
<td>81.2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In FFY 2007, in order to receive a diploma from a Massachusetts public high school, all students must earn a Competency Determination (earned by achieving a specified level of proficiency on the Grade 10 English Language Arts and Mathematics statewide assessments administered through the Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System – MCAS), and meet all local graduation requirements. (Note: Students who receive a diploma in four years or less are counted as graduates for purposes of reporting these data in the Massachusetts State Performance Plan (SPP) and Annual Performance Report (APR).

MASSDE also calculates five-year graduation rates for all students. The five-year graduation rate for students in the 2006-07 cohort is 68.3% for students with disabilities, 87.4% for non-disabled students, and 84.9% overall. This means that 1.1% of students with disabilities in the cohort, and 2.5% of students without disabilities, graduated in five years instead of four. MASSDE recognizes that it is appropriate for some students to take longer than four years to complete high school, and so Massachusetts will continue to calculate and publicly report the five-year rate for subsequent cohorts as an additional measure of year-to-year progress.

Improvement Activities

Over this past year, MASSDE further developed its public reporting of graduation rates and other special education data. Data for Indicator 1 are reported through tables, and thematic maps have been developed to display the graduation rate for students with disabilities for each district. The information can be viewed at [http://profiles.doe.mass.edu/state_report/special_ed.aspx](http://profiles.doe.mass.edu/state_report/special_ed.aspx). From this table, viewers can select a specific district to access more detailed data and the thematic maps for that district.
In FY 2007, MASSDE provided a number of professional development activities to support educators and administrators in helping students with disabilities achieve graduation. MASSDE recognizes that the issues related to increasing graduation rates and decreasing dropout rates are closely intertwined. Therefore, see also the improvement activities for Indicator 2. The following improvement activities had a direct impact on improving the graduation rate for students with disabilities.

- **Four-Year Graduation Project – Early Indicator Index** - Using data for the 2007 graduating cohort, leading indicators were identified that best predicted a student’s probability of graduating on time. Student-level information is currently provided to the 24 urban districts and includes the following for each student: enrollment, demographic and program data; and grade 8 MCAS mathematics and attendance; and grades 7 and 8 mobility data. Risk levels are color-coded and each student is assigned a risk level even if the available data for the student are incomplete. This information is currently being used by the urban districts, and specifically the participants in the Dropout Prevention and Recovery Work Group (see Indicator 2 for a description).

- **Massachusetts Special Education State Performance Plan (MA SPP) Indicator 1 Interest Group** meetings took place in April and October, 2008 with MASSDE staff facilitating discussion around graduation rates for students with IEPs. As a result of feedback from the interest group, MASSDE is reviewing new ways to analyze data and potential improvement activities. Group members suggested that the MASSDE compare these data to the graduation rates for students without IEPs, and suggested that we begin analyzing these data by primary disability category, similar to the analyses conducted for our dropout data. Information on the Education Proficiency Plan (EPP) was also a key topic. The group felt that MASSDE should continue to consider ways to connect the EPP to existing transition planning for students with disabilities, and consider how both documents (EPP and transition planning) could affect students as early as age 14.

- **Ready, Set, Go To College Initiative** – This college and career readiness webpage created by MASSDE is designed to help students in Massachusetts learn what steps to take to finish high school, go to college and get on track for a successful future [http://www.doe.mass.edu/hsreform/](http://www.doe.mass.edu/hsreform/). MASSDE staff is working to promote these resources to high school students, including students with disabilities. Massachusetts launched an aggressive outreach campaign through the THINK AGAIN campaign aimed at encouraging teens to stay in high school, take challenging courses and go on to college. MASSDE partnered with the Massachusetts Department of Higher Education to create [http://www.readysetgotocollege.com/](http://www.readysetgotocollege.com/), an informational website detailing what students need to do to complete high school, prepare for college, apply for financial aid, and find the school that is right for them.

In addition to the improvement activities described above, MASSDE engaged in two other improvement activities that affected multiple indicator areas and had components that directly impact the graduation rates for students with disabilities. Please note that only the components that directly relate to Indicator 1 are detailed below. For a fuller description of these activities, please see Appendix A.

- **Through its focus on high school reform in the areas of Universal Design for Learning (UDL), Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS), Secondary Transition Planning and Family Engagement, the technical assistance offered to nine high schools through Project FOCUS Academy** should improve the abilities of general and special educators to provide supportive school environments and high-quality classroom instruction to high school students with disabilities. By making the school a more supportive environment, and by providing instruction tailored to individual student needs,
these high schools will achieve improved graduation rates for students with disabilities.

- **Massachusetts FOCUS Academy** continues with the content areas offered in Project FOCUS Academy, and provides online, graduate level coursework to middle and high school educators across the state. Of the content areas being offered, UDL will have the greatest affect on the graduation rates of students with disabilities. The courses help educators gain a better understanding of how disability impacts student learning, and provides them with improved skills in the areas of curriculum design, instruction, and assistive technology. These skills should translate into improved student outcomes, which will lead to higher graduation rates. The UDL courses were developed during FFY2007, and the first course was offered in fall 2008. 59 educators from 20 districts participated in the first UDL course.

**Revisions, with Justification, to Proposed Targets / Improvement Activities / Timelines / Resources for FFY 2007 (2007-2008):**

MASSDE has revised the FFY 2005 baseline data for the graduation rate of students with IEPs to reflect more accurate data. The FFY 2005 baseline data have been revised to 61.1% (from the previously reported 61.7%), and this revision has been made in the MA SPP.

Improvement activities have been revised in the MA SPP to include updated activities. The format for presenting the improvement activities has been revised, including the addition of an appendix that describes selected activities in greater detail. See the MA SPP for the revised activities.

The proposed targets for FFY 2007 remain appropriate.
Monitoring Priority: FAPE in the LRE

Indicator 2: Percent of youth with IEPs dropping out of high school compared to the percent of all youth in the State dropping out of high school.

(20 U.S.C. 1416 (a)(3)(A))

Measurement:
The dropout rate is the number of students in grades 9-12 who drop out over a one-year period, from July 1 to June 30, who do not return to school by October 1st of the next school year, divided by the total enrollment of students, times 100. The measurement for youth with an IEP is the same as the measurement for youth without an IEP.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Students with IEPs Dropout Rate of 5.1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FFY 2007 (2007-2008)</th>
<th># of Students Enrolled (Grades 9-12)</th>
<th># of Dropouts (Grades 9-12)</th>
<th>FFY 2007 Dropout Rate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>IEP</td>
<td>44,448</td>
<td>2,429</td>
<td>5.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-IEP</td>
<td>251,489</td>
<td>7,530</td>
<td>3.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All Students</td>
<td>295,937</td>
<td>9,959</td>
<td>3.4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Discussion of Improvement Activities Completed and Explanation of Progress or Slippage that occurred for FFY 2007 (2007-2008):

Explanation of Progress or Slippage

In FFY 2007, the dropout rate for students with IEPs was 5.5%, a decrease from the FFY 2006 rate of 5.8%. Similarly, the dropout rate for non-IEP students decreased from 3.5% to 3.0%, and the overall dropout rate decreased from 3.8% to 3.4%.

As illustrated in the chart on the following page, dropout rates in Massachusetts for both IEP and non-IEP students have fluctuated since FFY 2004 (baseline year):
As indicated in previous submissions of the MA APR, the fluctuation in dropout rates can be attributed to several changes in the method of collecting data. Starting in FFY 2005, the state began to cross reference data from the Student Information Management System (SIMS) with the General Educational Development (GED) Testing Service Data. As a result MASSDE was able to track students who previously had been calculated as a dropout, therefore contributing to the decrease in dropout between FFY 2004 and FFY 2005. However, starting in FFY 2006 MASSDE implemented a wider range of codes and verification procedures in SIMS. In the past, students who dropped out without notifying their district were often incorrectly coded by districts as transfer students. The new SIMS codes require districts to verify the location of each transfer student, confirming whether or not students who were coded as transfers to other in-state districts actually showed up elsewhere in SIMS. These new codes may have contributed to the increase in dropout between FFY 2005 and FFY 2006 because fewer dropouts were incorrectly identified as transfers.

Through all of these refinements to the data collection process, MASSDE believes that the additional verification procedures have resulted in more accurate data. While MASSDE is pleased to see the decrease in dropout rates from FFY 2006 to FFY 2007, we recognize that there is a significant gap between the dropout rates of students with IEPs and non-IEP students (a difference of 2.5 percentage points). MASSDE will continue to focus improvement efforts on closing this gap in dropout rates.

**Improvement Activities**

In FFY 2007, MASSDE further developed its public reporting of dropout rates and other special education data. Data for Indicator 2 are reported through tables, and thematic maps have been developed to display the dropout rate for students with disabilities for each district. The information can be viewed at [http://profiles.doe.mass.edu/state_report/special_ed.aspx](http://profiles.doe.mass.edu/state_report/special_ed.aspx). From
In an effort to reduce the dropout rate and to close the gap between students with disabilities and students without disabilities, a number of improvement activities were completed in FFY 2007. These include professional development opportunities offered through various grant programs designed to support practitioners in supporting diverse student populations. In addition to professional development, MASSDE has partnered with stakeholders and combined efforts to design several dropout intervention initiatives. As stated in Indicator 1, MASSDE recognizes that the issues related to increasing graduation rates and decreasing dropout rates are closely intertwined. Therefore, also see the improvement activities for Indicator 1. The following improvement activities had a direct impact on reducing the dropout rate for students with disabilities.

Many of the factors that contribute to student dropout are consistent for both students with disabilities and their non-disabled peers. Thus, MASSDE has combined efforts within the agency and with other key stakeholders to develop a series of dropout initiatives targeted toward at-risk youth and the communities in which they reside. The following summarizes the activities that are underway as well as the subsequent projects planned for the future:

- **Dropout Prevention and Recovery Work Group** - MASSDE, in partnership with the New England Comprehensive Center, is organizing a Dropout Prevention and Recovery Work Group with 17 urban school districts that volunteered to be members of the Work Group. The Dropout Prevention and Recovery Work Group was created in response to needs expressed through the Urban Superintendents Network meetings. On January 15, 2009, the first full Work Group meeting took place, which was designed in consultation with representatives from the participating districts through two planning meetings and incorporated the responses to the District Team planning survey.

  Each participating district brought a team of six to eight (6-8) school and district staff to the meeting. Suggested members for the District Team include leadership from: middle and high schools, special education, English language learner programs, guidance or student support services, the superintendent’s office, data specialists, and alternative education programs.

- **Graduation and Dropout Prevention and Recovery Commission** - In August 2008 the Act to Improve Dropout Prevention and Reporting of Graduation Rates was passed, which established a Commission to make recommendation on 10 topic areas. The Commission includes representatives from a variety of youth-serving state agencies, legislators, and community organizations. The Commission first met on December 1, 2008 and is required to submit a final report with recommendation no later than May 15, 2009. The commission’s focus is on all students, and will include examination of issues related to students with disabilities.

- **Dropout Prevention, Intervention, and Recovery Website** - MASSDE is currently in the process of designing a Dropout Prevention, Intervention, and Recovery Website that will include an extensive collection of dropout prevention related news and trainings, articles/reports, and websites for students/parents/educators. The website is expected to be available in winter 2009. As part of the development process, MASSDE is researching appropriate resources and tools that are specifically designed for supporting schools and families to assist students with disabilities in staying in school and graduating.

In addition to the improvement activities described above, MASSDE engaged in other improvement activities that affected multiple indicator areas and had components that directly affect the dropout rates for students with disabilities. Please note that only the components that
directly relate to Indicator 2 are detailed below. For a fuller description of these activities, please see Appendix A.

- **The Massachusetts Special Education State Performance Plan (MA SPP) Indicator 2 Interest Group Meetings** took place in April and October. At both meetings, the group recommended additional data analysis activities, and discussed the important connections between dropout, graduation, and suspension/expulsion. In April, members of the Interest Group requested MASSDE to disaggregate the most recent collection of FFY 2006 dropout data for students with disabilities. Interest Group members recommended a number of areas to disaggregate the data, which included disability, grade, age, level of need, and educational placement. In October, MASSDE presented the group with data requested and facilitated a discussion of the analysis to identify potential trends and particular areas of concern, and discussed the fluctuation in data collection methods in SIMS as it relates to overall dropout trend. The group will continue to review and refine data analysis activities, and will continue to provide valued input on issues related to the dropout rates of students with disabilities.

- The technical assistance offered to nine high schools through **Project FOCUS Academy** was geared toward creating more responsive high school environments. Practitioners, administrators, and related service providers moved from theory to practice in the area of Universal Design for Learning (UDL), and Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS). MASSDE believes that onsite training in implementing and sustaining these types of programs is essential in reducing dropout rates. Additionally, the training provided on Secondary Transition Planning should help educators and parents more directly engage students with disabilities in planning for their futures. This type of engagement has the potential to keep students better connected to high school and lead to improved outcomes youth with disabilities.

- **Massachusetts FOCUS Academy** provides online coursework to middle and high school educators from across the state in the areas of UDL, PBIS, Secondary Transition Planning, and Family Involvement. Each of these content areas is focused on designing instruction, planning and supports to be responsive to the needs of students with disabilities. As with Project FOCUS Academy, these are all areas that – if implemented – will lead to improved student outcomes, including reduced dropout rates. Over 160 educators from across the state enrolled in these courses in fall 2008.

- In partnership with the **Central Massachusetts Communities of Care (CMCC) Project**, MASSDE provided grant funds to support districts in Worcester County with the development and implementation of PBIS and with developing “wrap-around” mental health services and supports for at-risk students with disabilities in grades 4-8, many of whom are involved in the juvenile justice system. Regarding dropout prevention, the access to mental health and counseling services for these youth and their families can play a key role in helping students stay in school and successfully transition into high school. While data is still being collected on the number of students who received the “wrap-around” services in FFY 2007, there were a total of four districts, six schools, and over 50 school personnel (including teachers, administrators, related service providers, paraprofessional, parents, and students) that participated.

**Revisions, with Justification, to Proposed Targets / Improvement Activities / Timelines / Resources for FFY 2007 (2007-2008):**

Improvement activities have been revised in the MA SPP to include updated activities. The format for presenting the improvement activities has been revised, including the addition of an appendix that describes selected activities in greater detail. See the MA SPP for the revised activities.

The proposed targets for FFY 2007 remain appropriate.
Monitoring Priority: FAPE in the LRE

Indicator 3: Participation and performance of children with disabilities on statewide assessments:

A. Percent of districts that have a disability subgroup that meets the State’s minimum “n” size meeting that State’s Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) objectives for progress for disability subgroups.

B. Participation rate for children with IEPs in a regular assessment with no accommodations; regular assessment with accommodations; alternate assessment against grade level standards; alternate assessment against alternate achievement standards.

C. Proficiency rate for children with IEPs against grade level standards and alternate achievement standards.


Measurement:

A. Percent = [(# of districts meeting the State’s AYP objectives for progress for the disability subgroup (children with IEPs)) divided by the (total # of districts that have a disability subgroup that meets the State’s minimum “n” size in the State)] times 100.

B. Participation rate =
   a. # of children with IEPs in grades assessed;
   b. # of children with IEPs in regular assessment with no accommodations (percent = [(b) divided by (a)] times 100);
   c. # of children with IEPs in regular assessment with accommodations (percent = [(c) divided by (a)] times 100);
   d. # of children with IEPs in alternate assessment against grade level achievement standards (percent = [(d) divided by (a)] times 100); and
   e. # of children with IEPs in alternate assessment against alternate achievement standards (percent = [(e) divided by (a)] times 100).

Account for any children included in a but not included in b, c, d, or e above.

Overall Percent = [(b + c + d + e) divided by (a)].

C. Proficiency rate =
   a. # of children with IEPs in grades assessed;
   b. # of children with IEPs in grades assessed who are proficient or above as measured by the regular assessment with no accommodations (percent = [(b) divided by (a)] times 100);
   c. # of children with IEPs in grades assessed who are proficient or above as measured by the regular assessment with accommodations (percent = [(c) divided by (a)] times 100);
   d. # of children with IEPs in grades assessed who are proficient or above as measured by the alternate assessment against grade level standards (percent = [(d) divided by (a)] times 100); and
   e. # of children with IEPs in grades assessed who are proficient or above as measured against alternate achievement standards (percent = [(e) divided by (a)] times 100).

Overall Percent = [(b + c + d + e) divided by (a)].
### Measurable and Rigorous Targets

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FFY 2007</th>
<th>Measurable and Rigorous Targets</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>% Districts Meeting AYP for Disability Subgroup (3A)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ELA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Targets for FFY 2007 (2007-2008)</td>
<td>46%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Actual Target Data for FFY 2007 (2007-2008)</td>
<td>55.5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Discussion of Improvement Activities Completed and Explanation of Progress or Slippage that occurred for FFY 2007 (2007-2008):

**Explanation for Progress or Slippage for 3A** – Percent of districts that have a disability subgroup that meets the State’s minimum “n” size meeting that State’s Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) objectives for progress for disability subgroups.

#### LEAs Meeting AYP for Disability Subgroup

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of LEAs with disability subgroup</th>
<th>Number of LEAs with disability subgroup meeting AYP</th>
<th>Percent of LEAs with disability subgroup meeting AYP</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ELA</td>
<td>Math</td>
<td>ELA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>290</td>
<td>289</td>
<td>161</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For FFY 2007, there were 290 LEAs with a disability subgroup for English Language Arts (ELA) and 289 LEAs with a disability subgroup for Mathematics in Massachusetts for whom AYP determinations were made. AYP determinations were calculated for the disability subgroup if the group consisted of:

- 40 students or more assessed in each year for which performance data were being analyzed and the number of subgroup members was at least 5% of the number of students whose assessment results were included in the school or district's aggregate AYP calculation; OR
- the number of subgroup members was 200 or more.

Of the 290 LEAs with a disability subgroup for ELA, 161 of the LEAs received a positive AYP determination. Of the 289 LEAs with a disability subgroup for Mathematics, 145 of the LEAs received a positive AYP determination. The percent of LEAs with a disability subgroup meeting AYP for FFY 2007 was 55.5% for ELA and 50.2% for Mathematics.
Analysis for Indicator 3A:

The targets set for FFY 2007 increased from the baseline level of performance obtained for FFY 2004 and the measurable and rigorous targets from FFY 2005 and FFY 2006. The measurable and rigorous targets increased by one percentage point for FFY 2007 in both English Language Arts and Mathematics (from 45% to 46% in ELA and from 37% to 38% in Mathematics). The data for FFY 2007 show an increase in percentage points of LEAs with a disability subgroup meeting AYP for both ELA and Mathematics. For ELA, there was an increase of 14.1 percentage points from FFY 2006. For Mathematics, there was an increase of 6.6 percentage points from FFY 2006. From FFY 2005 to FFY 2007, there was an increase of 30.5 and 31.2 percentage points in ELA and Mathematics, respectively.

To receive a positive AYP determination in FFY 2007, schools and districts must meet a student participation requirement, an additional attendance or graduation requirement, and either the State’s FFY 2007 performance target for that subject or the district, school, or subgroup’s own FFY 2007 improvement target (See Table 1 on the following page for MA’s calculation of AYP determinations).
### Table 1 – Calculation of AYP Determinations

**A + (B or C) + D = AYP**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Participation Rate:</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>95% or greater participation in Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS) &amp; MCAS-Alternate Assessment (MCAS-Alt) tests</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>+</td>
<td>Performance:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>85.4 or greater Composite Performance Index (CPI) in ELA</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>or</td>
<td>76.5 or greater CPI in mathematics</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>+</td>
<td>Improvement:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>Meet or exceed 2007 improvement target (Specific to districts, schools and subgroups)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>+</td>
<td>Additional Indicator:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>Grades 1-8: 92% or higher attendance rate, or 1% improvement over 2006</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High School: 55% or higher graduation rate for 2006 cohort</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The significant increase in the percentage of districts making AYP for special education subgroups in ELA and Mathematics from FFY 2005 to FFY 2006 (16.4 increase in ELA and 24.6 increase in Mathematics) may be attributed to MASSDE’s change in methodology in the calculation of AYP determinations. The data reported for FFY 2006 reflected a change in MASSDE’s approach to identifying districts for improvement or corrective action status under the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB). In the summer of 2006, MASSDE received approval from the U.S. Department of Education (USED) to identify a district for improvement or corrective action only if the district failed to make AYP in the same subject area (English Language Arts/Reading or Mathematics) for each of the elementary, middle, and high school grade-spans for students in the aggregate or any subgroup for two consecutive years.

Previously, district AYP and accountability status determinations in ELA and Mathematics had been based on scores on the Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS) exams and attendance data for all district students, combined across grade levels. For FFY 2006 AYP reporting, MASSDE issued district-level AYP determinations separately for three grade-spans – grades 3-5, 6-8, and 9-12 – for students in the aggregate and student subgroups in ELA and Mathematics. District accountability status determinations were driven by the new grade-span AYP determinations. The revised methodology did not apply to Massachusetts districts that consisted of a single school; single-school districts in Massachusetts continued to receive AYP determinations based on all grades assessed.

The data reported from FFY 2006 to FFY 2007 also reflected changes to MASSDE’s calculation of AYP determinations. Beginning in 2006, MCAS ELA and Mathematics tests were administered at each grade from grade 3 through grade 8, and in grade 10. This change greatly increased the number of student assessment results included in annual accountability determinations. With the significantly increased number of test-takers per school participating in annual MCAS tests, MASSDE was able to calculate single year, annual performance and improvement calculations for the majority of schools and districts with a measure of reliability similar to calculations previously based on two years of data.

Beginning with FFY 2007 AYP reporting, MASSDE has discontinued the practice of combining two years of data in even-numbered years. Instead, annual AYP performance calculations were
based on a single year of data and improvement calculations that were based on one year of data as compared to the previous year of data. This change both simplified the process for calculating AYP and increased the transparency of AYP performance and improvement calculations.

Accordingly, FFY 2007 AYP performance calculations were based on the performance of all students tested in MCAS ELA and Mathematics tests at each grade from grade 3 through grade 8, and in grade 10; 2007 AYP improvement calculations were based on a comparison of student assessment results in those grades from spring 2006 (the 2007 baseline) to spring 2007.

Due to the changes in calculations of AYP determinations from FFY to FFY, the longitudinal data (FFY 2005 – FFY 2007), as it relates to Indicator 3A, should be interpreted with caution. Additionally, contributing to the fallacious comparability of data over multiple reporting periods for Indicator 3A is the inclusion of both multi-school districts and single-school districts with a special education subgroup in FFY 2007, unlike the FFY 2006 data which only reported data from multi-school districts.

Massachusetts is pleased to report the increase in the percentage of districts making AYP for students with disabilities in both ELA and Mathematics. MASSDE will continue to work with the focused indicator workgroup to identify the performance gaps in our schools and districts that require attention so that we will continue to meet the AYP targets. We will continue to work with educators to take the information from the accountability reporting and use it to improve the performance of students with disabilities overall.

**Explanation for Progress or Slippage for 3B – Participation rate for students with IEPs in a regular assessment with no accommodations; regular assessment with accommodations; alternate assessments against grade level standards; alternate assessment against alternate achievement standards.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participation Count</th>
<th>Number of students with IEPs in grades assessed (a)</th>
<th>Number of students with IEPs in regular assessment with or without accommodations (b) &amp; (c)</th>
<th>Number of students with IEPs in alternate assessment against grade level and alternate achievement standards (d) &amp; (e)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ELA</td>
<td>Math</td>
<td>ELA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grades* 3-5</td>
<td>39,094</td>
<td>39,109</td>
<td>35,162</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grades 6-8</td>
<td>40,952</td>
<td>40,975</td>
<td>36,768</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade 10</td>
<td>12,110</td>
<td>12,062</td>
<td>10,589</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Number of students with IEPs in grades assessed</td>
<td>Number of students with IEPs in regular assessment with or without accommodations</td>
<td>Number of students with IEPs in alternate assessment against grade level and alternate achievement standards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(a)</td>
<td>(b) &amp; (c)</td>
<td>(d) &amp; (e)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ELA</td>
<td>92,156</td>
<td>82,519</td>
<td>7,664</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Math</td>
<td>92,146</td>
<td>82,410</td>
<td>7,903</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note: The data presented above are presented by the grade spans used for making AYP determinations (as presented in Indicator 3A).

ELA and Math – Participation Rate

Overall percent = [(b + c + d + e) divided by (a) * 100].

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>(b) &amp; (c)</th>
<th>(d) &amp; (e)</th>
<th>(a)</th>
<th>Overall Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ELA</td>
<td>82,519</td>
<td>7,664</td>
<td>92,156</td>
<td>97.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MATH</td>
<td>82,410</td>
<td>7,903</td>
<td>92,146</td>
<td>98%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For FFY 2007 there were 92,156 students with IEPs enrolled in all grades assessed for ELA. Of the 92,156 students, 82,519 participated in the regular assessment and 7,664 participated in an alternate assessment. The total participation rate for ELA was 97.9%.

In Mathematics, there were 92,146 students with IEPs enrolled in all grades assessed. Of the 92,146 students, 82,410 participated in the regular assessment and 7,903 participated in an alternate assessment. The total participation rate for Mathematics was 98% for FFY 2007.

Participation rate for students with IEPs for FFY 2007 indicates the number of students included in the disability subgroup who participated in MCAS and MCAS-Alt tests divided by the number of students included in the disability subgroup enrolled on the date the tests were administered. Students absent during testing, including those with a medical excuse, were counted in school and district participation rates as non-participants. A student was neither a participant nor a non-participant (i.e., excluded from both the numerator and the denominator in participation rate calculations) if all of the following statements were true: (1) The student transferred during the testing window (between the first day of ELA testing and the last day of testing for Mathematics or Science); and (2) The student missed at least one entire session of the test in question; and (3) The student was not medically excused or absent for the test in question.

The difference of 10 students with IEPs in grades assessed from ELA (92,156) to Mathematics (92,146) may have included cases in which a student was repeating 10th grade who previously
took MCAS, a student was removed from the calculation on appeal (e.g., a student with a medically-documented absence whose non-participation caused a school as a whole to not make AYP), and a student who transferred in/out during the ELA/Mathematics testing window and thus did not complete testing.

Analysis for Indicator 3B

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participation Rate for Students with IEPs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Percentage Points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>95%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>90%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>ELA</th>
<th>MATH</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>FFY 2007 Target</td>
<td>99%</td>
<td>99%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Actual FFY 2005</td>
<td>97.6%</td>
<td>97.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Actual FFY 2006</td>
<td>97.9%</td>
<td>97.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Actual FFY 2007</td>
<td>97.9%</td>
<td>98.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The target set for participation rate for students with IEPs, for FFY 2007, remained at 99% as it continued to represent a measurable and rigorous target. For FFY 2007, the participation rate for students with IEPs on statewide assessments was 97.9% for ELA and 98% for Mathematics. In ELA, the data for FFY 2007 shows the same high level of participation from FFY 2006. In Mathematics, there was a 0.3 increase in percentage points for participation from FFY 2006. Compared to FFY 2005, there was a 0.3 increase in percentage points for both ELA and Mathematics. MASSDE continues to be pleased to report the excellent participation rate for students with disabilities on statewide assessments.

**Explanation for Progress or Slippage for 3C – Proficiency rate for students with IEPs against grade level standards and alternate achievement standards.**

(see chart on following page)
### Proficiency Count and Rate

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Number of students with IEPs in grades assessed</th>
<th>Number of students with IEPs in grades assessed who are proficient or above as measured by the regular assessment with or without accommodations and by the alternate assessment against grade level or alternate achievement standards</th>
<th>Percent of students with IEPs scoring proficient or above on statewide assessment</th>
<th>Actual target data for students with IEPs (Composite Performance Index)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(a)</td>
<td>(b), (c), (d), &amp; (e)</td>
<td>[(b), (c), (d), &amp; (e)] divided by (a) *100</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ELA</td>
<td>Math</td>
<td>ELA Math</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grades 3-5</td>
<td>38,675</td>
<td>38,779</td>
<td>7,663</td>
<td>8,170</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grades 6-8</td>
<td>40,054</td>
<td>40,189</td>
<td>12,099</td>
<td>5,508</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade 10</td>
<td>11,454</td>
<td>11,345</td>
<td>3,925</td>
<td>3,716</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State Total</td>
<td>90,183</td>
<td>90,313</td>
<td>23,687</td>
<td>17,394</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For FFY 2007, there were 90,183 students with IEPs in all grades assessed for ELA. Of the 90,183 students, 23,687 students were proficient or above as measured by the regular and alternate assessment. The percent of students with IEPs scoring proficient or above on the ELA statewide assessment was 26.3. The Composite Performance Index (CPI) for students with disabilities for FFY 2007 was 65.9 in ELA.

In Mathematics, there were 90,313 students with IEPs in all grades assessed. Of the 90,313 students, 17,394 students were proficient or above as measured by the regular and alternate assessment. The percent of students with IEPs scoring proficient or above on the Mathematics statewide assessment was 19.3. The CPI for students with disabilities for FFY 2007 was 55.4 in Mathematics.

To calculate proficiency rate, Massachusetts used the CPI, a 100-point index that assigned 100, 75, 50, 25, or 0 points to each student participating in MCAS and MCAS-Alt tests based on their performance. The total points assigned to each student were added together and the sum was divided by the total number of students assessed. The result was a number between 0 and 100, which constitutes a district, school or subgroup’s CPI for that subject and student group. CPIs were generated separately for ELA and Mathematics, and at all levels – state, district, school, and student subgroup. For additional details on the CPI, refer to the School Leaders’ Guide to the 2007 AYP Reports (http://www.doe.mass.edu/sda/ayp/2007/schleadersguide.doc).
Analysis for Indicator 3C:

The FFY 2007 CPI for students with disabilities was 65.9 in ELA and 55.4 in Mathematics, which are below the targets of 85.4 for ELA and 76.5 for Mathematics set for this year. MASSDE, in collaboration with the Massachusetts Steering Committee, continues to adopt the state-set targets for students as a whole as the same targets for students with disabilities.

As presented in the charts below, the data reflect a slippage of 0.8 points in ELA compared to FFY 2006. There was an increase of 1.1 points from FFY 2005 to FFY 2007. MASSDE considers this minor slippage from FFY 2007 in ELA a possible result of any number of individual things and generally inconsequential.

In Mathematics, there was an increase of 1.4 points from FFY 2006 to FFY 2007. There was an increase of 3.9 points from FFY 2005 to FFY 2007.

![MCAS Proficiency Rates CPI: English Language Arts](image)

![MCAS Proficiency Rates CPI: Mathematics](image)

Improvement Activities for Indicators 3A, 3B and 3C

Over this past year, MASSDE further developed its public reporting of student assessment and other special education data. Data for Indicator 3 can be viewed at [http://profiles.doe.mass.edu/state_report/special_ed.aspx](http://profiles.doe.mass.edu/state_report/special_ed.aspx). From this table, viewers can select a specific district to access more detailed data.

In order to meet the goal of students with disabilities achieving academic success, MASSDE works with districts and schools to analyze student assessment data and implement effective improvement plans as outlined in the MA SPP submitted in December 1, 2005.

During FFY 2007, several improvement activities were completed in an effort to provide LEAs additional resources for increasing participation and improving performance of students with disabilities on statewide assessments. The following improvement activities had a direct affect on
the participation and performance of students with disabilities on statewide assessments in Massachusetts. Please note that these improvement activities also had components that affect other indicator areas. Only the components that directly relate to Indicator 3 are detailed below. For fuller descriptions of these activities, see Appendix A.

- MASSDE staff analyzed data both at the district and school level to determine appropriate technical assistance to provide resources for increasing participation and improving performance of students with disabilities on statewide assessments. These analyses also drove much of the discussions and collaboration with key stakeholders such as the Massachusetts Statewide Special Education Steering Committee and the State Performance Plan Interest Group for Indicator 3.

- Trainings offered through The Comprehensive System of Personnel Development (CSPD) related to the improvement of participation and performance of students with disabilities on statewide assessments included; The Massachusetts IEP Process; A Principal's Role and Special Education in Massachusetts; and, Is Special Education the Right Service?. In each of these trainings, participants learn key information regarding how to determine appropriate methods for students to participate in statewide assessments, and learn information that helps inform instructional decision-making.

- Special Education Professional Development Summer Institutes offered professional development opportunities related to the improvement of participation and performance of students with disabilities on statewide assessments during FFY2007. The training provided through these institutes improved the capacity of educators to provide differentiated, responsive classroom instruction, which will lead to improved academic outcomes for students with disabilities. Professional development opportunities included: Managing Behavior in an Inclusive Classroom; Teaching Strategies for Students with Vision Impairments, Blindness or Deafblindness; Teaching Strategies for Students Who are Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing; and Teaching Strategies for Students with Autism Spectrum Disorders in the General Education Classroom.

- MASSDE through the Partnership for Online Professional Development (POPD) offered courses related to the improvement of participation and performance of children with disabilities on statewide assessments. The training provided through these institutes increased the content knowledge of teachers and improved the instructional methods that they use. Courses included: Every Student is a Champion: Assistive Technology and Universal Design for Learning Strategies to Support Middle School Students in Science; Algebraic Thinking: Differentiating to Reach All Learners; and Reading Comprehension Strategies and Universal Design for Learning for the Middle and High School Teacher.

- The Secondary School Reading grant program selected middle schools, high schools, and vocational schools to receive four years of funding to develop and implement a school-wide approach to improving reading achievement across content areas. This program has been in place for six years and has provided funding for more than 100 schools in four cohorts. In the past two years, eligibility has been limited to schools that are considered high-need based on poor MCAS performance or unusually large special education populations. School-wide approaches must include: involvement and training for all professional and paraprofessional staff; reading across content areas; multiple targeted intervention programs for struggling readers; adequate time for reading instruction; assessment that drives instruction; a variety of flexible grouping patterns; and leadership structures that provide ongoing support and guidance.
• The technical assistance provided to educators and guidance counselors at the nine high schools participating in **Project FOCUS Academy** allowed teams of general and special educators to improve the quality and content of their academic instruction. In particular, training on the implementation of Universal Design for Learning (UDL) will lead to improved instruction, increased student engagement, and appropriate methods of participation on statewide assessments for students with disabilities.

• Similar to Project FOCUS Academy (above), **Massachusetts FOCUS Academy** provides courses in the area of UDL. The courses were developed during FFY2007, and the first course was offered in fall 2008. 59 educators from 20 districts participated in the first UDL course offered in fall 2008.

• A priority of the **Special Education Program Improvement Grants** that were offered to every LEA in FFY 2007 included Curriculum Development, Assessment, and Instruction. The goal of this priority was to assist the skills and capacity of educators to meet the diverse instructional and curricular needs of students with disabilities. Districts were able to use funds provided through this grant to provide on-going professional development to general and special educators.

In addition to the improvement activities described above, MASSDE maintained web based resources for professionals including MCAS-Alt Newsletters, resource guides, and educators’ manuals. The following two improvement activities had a direct impact on the participation of students with disabilities on statewide assessments:

• The **“Requirements for the Participation of Students with Disabilities in MCAS”** guide was updated. The purpose of this document was to provide guidelines for the participation of students with disabilities in statewide tests and to familiarize educators and parents/guardians with available test accommodations.

• **Resources for conducting MCAS-Alt and training sessions** were offered.

Finally, the **Office of Accountability and Targeted Assistance** at MASSDE provided resources and technical assistance related to school and district accountability processes, school improvement initiatives, federal Title I and III programs and Comprehensive School Reform (CSR) programs. These initiatives impact the participation and performance of ALL students on statewide assessments. Activities and documents from the Office of Accountability and Targeted Assistance related to Indicator 3 during FFY 2007 include:

• Creating and issuing data files, technical manuals, and required actions based on AYP determinations;
• Providing guidance to districts, schools, and parents on public school choice and supplemental education services options;
• Providing detailed, longitudinal MCAS files that districts and schools can use to inform strategic planning;
• Directly assisting identified school districts with school improvement planning; and
• Identifying exemplary “Compass” schools – MASSDE’s Office of NCLB Accountability identified 35 Massachusetts public schools during FFY 2007 with high performance and/or significant improvement in ELA and/or Mathematics during the past two years.

**Revisions, with Justification, to Proposed Targets / Improvement Activities / Timelines / Resources for FFY 2007 (2007-2008):**

Improvement activities have been revised in the MA SPP to include updated activities. The format for presenting the improvement activities has been revised, including the addition of an appendix that describes selected activities in greater detail. See the MA SPP for the revised activities.
Monitoring Priority: FAPE in the LRE

Indicator 4: Rates of suspension and expulsion:

A. Percent of districts identified by the State as having a significant discrepancy in the rates of suspensions and expulsions of children with disabilities for greater than 10 days in a school year; and
B. Percent of districts identified by the State as having a significant discrepancy in the rates of suspensions and expulsions of greater than 10 days in a school year of children with disabilities by race and ethnicity.

(20 U.S.C. 1416(a)(3)(A); 1412(a)(22))

Measurement:

A. Percent = [(# of districts identified by the State as having significant discrepancies in the rates of suspensions and expulsions of children with disabilities for greater than 10 days in a school year) divided by the (# of districts in the State)] times 100.
B. Percent = [(# of districts identified by the State as having significant discrepancies in the rates of suspensions and expulsions for greater than 10 days in a school year of children with disabilities by race ethnicity) divided by the (# of districts in the State)] times 100.

Include State’s definition of “significant discrepancy.”

Indicator 4A

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FFY</th>
<th>Measurable and Rigorous Target</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2007 (2007-2008)</td>
<td>The % of districts with a significant discrepancy finding will be 0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2007-08 Special Education Enrollment</th>
<th>2007-08 State Suspension/Expulsion Rate</th>
<th>% of districts with suspension/expulsion rate that is five times State Rate*</th>
<th>% of districts with a finding of “significant discrepancy”**</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>164,298</td>
<td>1.2%</td>
<td>1.4% (5 districts)</td>
<td>0.57% (2 districts)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Districts with fewer than 30 students in special education were removed from this part of the calculation. The total number of districts included in the calculation was 348. Districts with fewer than 30 students in special education were individually considered in the analysis.

** The calculation is (2/348)*100.
Discussion of Improvement Activities Completed and Explanation of Progress or Slippage that occurred for FFY 2007 (2007-2008):

Explanation of Progress or Slippage

The data presented in the table above are based on the state’s definition of ‘significant discrepancy’ -- a district having a suspension/expulsion rate of five times the state rate for two consecutive years. Two districts (0.57% of all districts) met the threshold of exceeding the state rate by five times for two years in a row and were found to have a ‘significant discrepancy’ in the rate of suspensions and expulsions of students with disabilities for greater than 10 days in a school year. This slightly exceeds our rigorous target of 0% for each year. For districts found to be significantly discrepant, MASSDE reviews the districts’ policies, procedures, and practices related to the development and implementation of IEPs, the use of positive behavioral interventions and supports, and procedural safeguards, and requires the “significantly discrepant” LEAs to revise their policies, practices, and procedures as appropriate. The review has been conducted for one of the two LEAs identified, as this LEA was also found significantly discrepant in FFY 2006 (see section below titled “Massachusetts Response to the OSEP Part B FFY 2006 SPP/APR Letter and Response Table”).

Over the past four years, the state suspension/expulsion rate for students with disabilities has increased (Figure 1). The FFY 2004 rate was 0.514%, the FFY 2005 rate was 0.916%, the FFY 2006 rate was 1.0%, and the FFY 2007 rate is 1.2%. Since the increase over three years is less than a full percentage point, it is unclear whether this variation is a cause for concern. As an initial step in investigating this increase, MASSDE is upgrading our activities to ensure that the data are appropriately reported (see description of improvement activities below). MASSDE considers the main effort in this area to rest with appropriate procedures to ensure accurate reporting, an effective review of policies and procedures, and improved understanding at the school district level of alternatives to suspension. The following chart illustrates the state suspension rate over the past three years:

![Figure 1: State Suspension Rate FFY 2004 - 2007](image)

Despite the steady increase in long-term suspension/expulsion rates, the number of districts identified with a suspension/expulsion rate that is five times greater than the state rate in a given
year has been relatively consistent – six districts in FFY 2004, four districts in FFY 2005, four districts in FFY 2006, and five districts in FFY 2007. Once more, MASSDE considers this variation in data to be a result of inconsistent district definitions, policies and procedures, and works towards increasing the validity of data in the future.

Improvement Activities

In FFY 2006 MASSDE conducted data analyses and held meetings with LEAs from across the state to discuss policies, procedures, and practices related to suspension. Districts reported a wide-range in definitions and reporting practices of suspension, specifically around In-School-Suspension. To create valid and reliable data across the state, MASSDE conducted the following activities focused on data improvement in FFY 2007, as well as exploring alternatives to suspension with school districts, generally:

The Massachusetts Special Education State Performance Plan (MA SPP) Indicator 4 Interest Group Meetings took place in April and October. MASSDE facilitated a discussion on the concerns with data, and presented the group with case studies containing In-School-Suspension programmatic requirements and the coinciding data collection requirements. In response to the case studies, the group was able to provide valuable feedback on the challenges facing schools around the complex issues of In-School-Suspension. More importantly, MASSDE solicited feedback from interest groups members regarding the components of creating a data collection self assessment. Interest Groups participants were comprised of advocacy groups, stakeholders, LEAs and MASSDE staff members.

In December 2008, MASSDE met with the Massachusetts Special Education Steering Committee to identify key elements in creating valid data and in improving school districts’ understanding of appropriate educational alternatives to suspension. Based on the presentation and feedback from the Interest group, MASSDE presented the Committee current suspension/expulsion data. MASSDE also presented the group with a variation of the case studies initially presented to the SPP Interest Group. The Committee provided MASSDE with valuable feedback on several challenges regarding the programmatic requirements of suspension. MASSDE solicited additional information from Committee members regarding creating a data collection self assessment designed to guide districts with the programmatic requirements of In-School-Suspension as well as guidance on streamlining district level data collection procedures and improving district practices. The Massachusetts Special Education Steering Committee is comprised of members from advocacy groups, stakeholders, LEAs, and MASSDE staff.

Based on feedback from the Massachusetts Special Education Steering Committee and the MA SPP Interest Group for Indicator 4, MASSDE has begun the development of a Data Collection and Practice Improvement Self Assessment. The purpose of the document is to provide technical assistance around the programmatic requirements of In-School-Suspension as well as logistical guidance and training on the differences between the Student Information Management System (SIMS) and the School Safety Discipline Report (SSDR). Technical assistance on the differences between SIMS and the SSDR is essential in ensuring that LEAs deliver accurate data to MASSDE. In addition, the Data Collection Self Assessment is intended to provide districts assistance in defining In-School-Suspension through programmatic requirements. Furthermore, the Data Collection Self Assessment will increase awareness of LEA current suspension programs, alternates to suspension, and the impacts of suspension data.

Over this past year, MASSDE further developed its public reporting of suspension/expulsion data. Data for Indicator 4A are reported through tables. The information can be viewed at [http://profiles.doe.mass.edu/state_report/special_ed.aspx](http://profiles.doe.mass.edu/state_report/special_ed.aspx). From this table, viewers can select a specific district to access more detailed data.

In FFY 2008, MASSDE will be holding a Suspension/ Expulsion Technical Assistance
Seminar. Participants will include staff of the significantly discrepant LEA identified in FFY 2006 as well as the significantly discrepant LEAs identified in the FFY 2007 data collection. Additional districts identified as having a rate that is five times the state rate for one year and are at risk for being identified as significantly discrepant in the next data collection will be encouraged to attend. The objectives of the Suspension/Expulsion Technical Assistance Seminar are listed below:

- Clarify appropriate definition of suspension;
- Increase awareness of current district data collection systems;
- Analyze disaggregated data, provided by MASSDE, to identify trends within each district; and
- Identify programmatic services that may be provided rather than having a student experience In-School Suspension (ISS).

MASSDE believes that providing LEAs with this information will assist in the self-assessment process, and begin to increase awareness of the data being reported to MASSDE. In addition to data analysis, the significantly discrepant LEA will be encouraged to pilot the Data Collection and Program Improvement Self Assessment developed by MASSDE in an effort to begin the restructuring of suspension programs and the logistical coordination of reporting data to MASSDE.

Programmatic Improvement Activities

In addition to data collection improvement activities, MASSDE focused resources on programs to provide LEAs with tools to reduce suspension/expulsion rates. By providing professional development opportunities in a variety of areas, specifically in the principles of the Universal Design for Learning (UDL) and the use of positive behavioral intervention and supports (PBIS), LEAs will be better equipped to focus on reducing suspension and expulsion rates for students with disabilities. Please note that these improvement activities had components that relate to other indicator areas, and only the components that directly relate to Indicator 4A are detailed below. For fuller descriptions of these activities, see Appendix A. The following programs were provided in FFY 2007:

Over the summer, MASSDE offered the Special Education Summer Institute: Managing Behavior in the Inclusive Classroom. The course was offered in two parts: content delivery in the summer and participant involvement in the fall. Upon completion, participants received 67.5 PDPs. Over 50 practitioners participated, including administrators, teachers, and paraprofessionals.

The course content covered the following:
- Research-based classroom interventions
- Designing effective instructional, curricular, and assessment methodologies
- Supporting students with high risk behavioral needs
- Conducting functional behavior assessments and developing behavior intervention plans
- Facilitating positive interactions between students and adults and de-escalating challenging situations

FFY 2007 was the fourth and final year of our state improvement grant – Project FOCUS Academy. Onsite technical assistance was provided to the nine high schools participating in the grant program. Practitioners, administrators, and related service providers moved from theory to practice in the areas of UDL and PBIS. MASSDE believes that implementing and creating sustainable programs is essential in reducing suspension rates. In particular, the training and technical assistance on PBIS will help the participating high schools develop and sustain supportive educational environments that will lead to reductions in the suspensions and expulsions of students with disabilities.
MASSDE was awarded a State Personnel Development grant to continue and build upon the previous success of Project FOCUS Academy. This initiative, called **Massachusetts FOCUS Academy**, is an online network offering course work in a variety of key areas including UDL and PBIS. The target audiences for these courses were middle and high school teachers and administrators. The purpose is to enhance Massachusetts’ educators in creating environments that encourage positive behavior in addition to providing professional development that fosters sound instructional, and assessment methodologies. Courses in UDL and PBIS were offered beginning in the fall of 2008. The UDL course helped educators develop responsive, inclusive classroom environments and differentiated instructional techniques that will engage and support students with disabilities – thus leading to improved academic engagement and reduced suspensions. 59 educators from 20 districts participated in the first UDL course offered in fall 2008. The PBIS course focused on improving the ability of educator to support students with disabilities in the general education classroom. 43 educators from 14 districts participated in the first PBIS course offered in fall 2008.

In partnership with the **Central Massachusetts Communities of Care (CMCC) Project**, MASSDE provided grant funds to support districts in Worcester County with the development and implementation of **Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports** and with developing “wrap-around” mental health services and supports. CMCC is a provider of care management services for youth with mental health impairments and has two community based family centers in Worcester County. The overarching goal of the school district-CMCC partnership is to reduce court involvement among students with emotional impairments as well as identify students in need of mental health services. The participating districts receive professional development as well as onsite assistance in the development and implementation of the principles of PBIS. In its first year, a total of four districts, six schools, and over 50 school personnel (including teachers, administrators, related service providers, paraprofessional, parents, and students) participated. In the second year of the program (FFY 2008), this first cohort of districts will move from the planning stages into implementation, and a second cohort of four districts will enter into grant program.

Finally, the **Special Education Program Improvement Grants** offered funding to LEAs for professional development activities that helped improve the capacity of educators to meet the diverse needs of students with disabilities. Topics for professional development under two of four priorities for the grant included **Curriculum Development, Assessment, and Instruction** and **Positive Behavioral and Social Skills Strategies in the Classroom**. The goal of this grant was to assist the skills and capacity of educators to meet the diverse needs of students with disabilities. The two priorities identified above will enable educators to better provide quality instruction and responsive learning environments that allow students with disabilities to succeed behaviorally and academically, thus reducing the number of classroom removals.

**Massachusetts Response to the OSEP Part B FFY 2006 SPP/APR Letter and Response Table**

MASSDE was required to report on the state’s review, and if appropriate, revision, of policies, procedures, and practices relating to the development and implementation of IEPs, the use of positive behavioral interventions and supports, and procedural safeguards to ensure compliance with the IDEA for the LEA identified with a significant discrepancy in FFY 2006. As required, MASSDE has conducted a review of the LEA’s policies, procedures, and practices relating to the development and implementation of IEPs, the use of positive behavioral interventions and supports, and procedural safeguards to ensure compliance with the IDEA. The LEA was found to have successfully implemented the use positive behavioral interventions and supports. However, the LEA was found to have partially implemented areas relating to the development and implementation of IEPs and procedural safeguards to ensure compliance with the IDEA. The LEA was required to take corrective actions to address these areas. MASSDE is in the process of reviewing the most recent corrective action report submitted by the LEA.

Improvement activities have been revised in the MA SPP to include updated activities. The format for presenting the improvement activities has been revised, including the addition of an appendix that describes selected activities in greater detail. See the MA SPP for the revised activities.

The proposed targets for FFY 2007 remain appropriate.

**Note:** States are not required to report on Indicator 4B in FFY 2007.
Monitoring Priority: FAPE in the LRE

Indicator 5: Percent of children with IEPs aged 6 through 21:

A. Removed from regular class less than 21% of the day;
B. Removed from regular class greater than 60% of the day; or
C. Served in public or private separate schools, residential placements, or homebound or hospital placements.

(20 U.S.C. 1416(a)(3)(A))

Measurement:

A. Percent = ([# of children with IEPs removed from regular class less than 21% of the day] divided by the [total # of students aged 6 through 21 with IEPs]) times 100.
B. Percent = ([# of children with IEPs removed from regular class greater than 60% of the day] divided by the [total # of students aged 6 through 21 with IEPs]) times 100.
C. Percent = ([# of children with IEPs served in public or private separate schools, residential placements, or homebound or hospital placements] divided by the [total # of students aged 6 through 21 with IEPs]) times 100.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FFY</th>
<th>Measurable and Rigorous Target</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>% of students with IEPs aged 6 through 21 in full inclusion (Indicator 5A)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007 (2007-2008)</td>
<td>54.3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


| % of students with IEPs aged 6 through 21 in full inclusion (Indicator 5A) | % of students with IEPs aged 6 through 21 in substantially separate placements (Indicator 5B) | % of students with IEPs aged 6 through 21 in out-of-district placements (Indicator 5C) |
| 55.7%* | 15.1% | 6.7% |

*Note: The full inclusion percentage for Indicator 5A, above (55.7%) is inconsistent with the FFY 2007 data for reported for IDEA section 618 (55.41%). This inconsistency reflects the
removal of the parentally placed private school students from the 618 data set for the purposes of accurate APR reporting.

Discussion of Improvement Activities Completed and Explanation of Progress or Slippage that occurred for FFY 2007 (2007-2008):

Explanation of Progress or Slippage

In FFY 2007, the total number of students with disabilities ages 6-21 was 149,963. In this year, 55.7% of students with IEPs were served in the general education classroom 80% or more of the day, which exceeds the full inclusion rigorous target of 54.3% by 1.4 percentage points. MASSDE is pleased with the progress that has been made in this area. Persistent growth can be attributed to the fact that districts are implementing practices that promote full inclusion of all students. The data support this by showing an increase in full inclusion that essentially mirrors the decrease in partial inclusion over the past several years.

Massachusetts has met the target of 15.1% for substantially separate placements. However, out-of-district placements have remained virtually the same at 6.7%; therefore we did not meet our target of 6.2% for FFY 2007. The chart below details the trends in educational environments over the past four years.

An analysis of these data by disability category over the past five years indicates that all disability categories increased in rates of full inclusion over this time period, while at the same time decreased in rates of partial inclusion. The disability categories that have increased the most in full inclusion from FFY 2003 to FFY 2007 are:

- Physical (49.2% in FFY 2003; 76.2% in FFY 2007)
- Sensory Vision (38.7% in FFY 2003; 63.7% in FFY 2007)
- Specific Learning Disability (38.9% in FFY 2003; 63.4% in FFY 2007)
- Health (45.9% in FFY 2003; 70.3% in FFY 2007)
The chart below shows both the five-year change in full inclusion for all disability categories from FFY 2003 to FFY 2007, as well as the one-year change in full inclusion from FFY 2006 to FFY 2007.

All but two disability categories decreased their percentage of students in substantially separate placements between FFY 2003 and FFY 2007. Substantially separate placements increased for students with intellectual disabilities and students with neurological disabilities.

- For students with intellectual disabilities, partial inclusion decreased. Movement of these students is relatively evenly split between full inclusion placements and substantially separate placements.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Difference from FFY 2003-2007</th>
<th>Full Inclusion</th>
<th>Partial Inclusion</th>
<th>Substantially Separate</th>
<th>Out of District</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>+4.8%</td>
<td>-10.5%</td>
<td>+4.9%</td>
<td>+0.8%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- For students with neurological disabilities, partial inclusion is decreased at approximately the same rate as full inclusion is increased. Substantially separate placements increased, while out-of-district placements decreased.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Difference from FFY 2003-2007</th>
<th>Full Inclusion</th>
<th>Partial Inclusion</th>
<th>Substantially Separate</th>
<th>Out of District</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>+19.0%</td>
<td>-19.4%</td>
<td>+0.5%</td>
<td>-0.07%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Almost all disability categories decreased in the use of out-of-district placements. The three disability types that have decreased the most in out-of-district placements are:

- Emotional Disabilities (decrease of 3 percentage points);
- Sensory Vision (decrease of 2.2 percentage points); and
- Sensory Hearing (decrease by 1.6 percentage points).

Only four disability types increased in the use of out-of-district placement. These four include: Communication and Specific Learning Disability which both increased by 0.1 percentage points; Deafblind which increased by 7.4 percentage points; and Intellectual which increased by 0.8 percentage points.

These data indicate that inclusive practices are increasing for most students with disabilities. However, the trend in placement for students who have Deafblindness should be noted. For these students, full inclusion and out-of-district placements have increased as partial inclusion and substantially separate placement have decreased.

In addition to the analysis of these data by primary disability category, a review of longitudinal data exploring the relationship between full inclusion and student achievement was performed. Student achievement was measured through the Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS) Composite Performance Index scores in both English Language Arts and Mathematics. The MCAS Composite Performance Index (CPI) was chosen for this analysis because it is used for ‘big picture’ accountability findings that provide context for the year-by-year aggregate and subgroup AYP determinations. Additionally, CPI was chosen because it is an inclusive score that reflects the achievement of all students with disabilities, including those who take the alternate MCAS. This analysis was inconclusive and served to raise more questions than it answered. MASSDE will continue to review data and delve deeper into determining factors of this relationship.

Another objective for this review was to identify districts with either 1) a high increase in full inclusion placements corresponding with a high increase in achievement; or 2) a consistently high level of full inclusion corresponding with a consistently high level of student achievement. Target school districts were identified and MASSDE plans to host focus groups to identify and describe best practices that could be used to create additional technical assistance deliverables. The
Indicator 5 State Performance Plan Interest Group also suggested that MASSDE create an LRE self-evaluation for district and school use. Based on this suggestion, MASSDE is investigating the development of such a tool.

Improvement Activities

Numerous activities occurred around LRE that contributed to the state’s increase in full inclusion. The Special Education Planning and Policy Development Office (SEPP) is working to ensure that students with disabilities and their educators are positively impacted by the improvement activities sponsored across MASSDE. SEPP staff is participating in discussions and program development and are connecting with the following additional offices in the MASSDE:

- School and District Assistance
- Literacy
- Secondary School Services
- Elementary School Services
- Student Assessment
- English Language Acquisition
- Program Quality Assurance
- Educator Policy, Preparation, and Licensure

Over this past year, MASSDE further developed its public reporting of LRE and other special education data. Data for Indicator 5 are reported through tables, and thematic maps have been developed to display the full inclusion rate for students with disabilities for each district. The information can be viewed at [http://profiles.doe.mass.edu/state_report/special_ed.aspx](http://profiles.doe.mass.edu/state_report/special_ed.aspx). From this table, viewers can select a specific district to access more detailed data and the thematic maps for that district.

In FFY 2007, MASSDE provided a number of improvement activities to support IEP Teams in making appropriate placement decisions so that students with disabilities are educated in the LRE. The following improvement activities had a direct impact on Indicator 5.

- MASSDE made changes to the Student Information Management System (SIMS) Data Collection in order to improve Indicator 5 data collection and reporting. MASSDE created two new placement categories and corresponding placement forms that are split by ages three through five and six through twenty-one. Use of these forms began in September of FFY 2007. Additionally, MASSDE staff continues to analyze data both at the district and student level to determine appropriate technical assistance to ensure students are educated in the most appropriate, least restrictive environment for their educational needs. These analyses drive much of the discussions and collaboration with key stakeholders such as the Massachusetts Statewide Special Education Steering Committee and the State Performance Plan Interest Group for Indicator 5.

- Inclusive Schools Week™ highlights and celebrates the progress our schools have made in providing a supportive and quality education to all students, particularly those who have disabilities and those from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. It also provides an important opportunity for educators, students, and parents to discuss what else needs to be done in order to ensure that their schools continue to improve their ability to successfully educate all students and youth. To promote awareness of this initiative, MASSDE encourages districts to highlight the accomplishments of students, families, school personnel, and community members in promoting inclusive education for all students.

- The Massachusetts Special Education State Performance Plan (MA SPP) Indicator 5 Interest Group Meetings took place in April and October. MASSDE facilitated a
discussion regarding data collection and analysis; improvement activities currently being implemented that impact LRE; and necessary professional skills, in the public school setting, which allow students to be as fully included as appropriate. Furthermore, MASSDE solicited feedback from interest groups members regarding the essential components of a LRE self assessment and the creation of additional technical assistance deliverables to aid districts in evaluating their inclusive practices. Interest Groups participants were comprised of advocacy groups, stakeholders, LEAs and MASSDE staff members.

In addition to the improvement activities described above, MASSDE engaged in further improvement activities that directly impact LRE while also affecting other indicator areas. Please note that only the components that directly relate to Indicator 5 are detailed below. For a fuller description of these activities, please see Appendix A.

- MASSDE offered distance learning opportunities via satellite to educators across the state from the National Association of State Directors of Special Education (NASDSE) at no cost to Massachusetts school districts and educational organizations. These telecasts bring nationally recognized experts to Massachusetts using technology, providing an affordable means of quality personnel development for a variety of stakeholders. Regarding LRE, a presentation entitled Redesigning Instructional Delivery: Co-Teaching as a Strategy for Success was promoted for special educators across the state.

- Through the Comprehensive System of Personnel Development (CSPD) Training Project, online training modules and face-to-face training are offered in a variety of topical areas for districts across the state. There are three training modules that provide content designed to help educators and IEP Teams make appropriate placement decisions and to facilitate student inclusion: The Massachusetts IEP Process, A Principal's Role and Special Education in Massachusetts, and Is Special Education the Right Service?.

- The onsite technical assistance provided to nine high schools participating in Project FOCUS Academy assisted these schools in creating and implementing sustainable programs and practices that will better ensure student placement in the LRE. Of the content areas offered, training and technical assistance on Universal Design for Learning (UDL) will help personnel from the participating high schools develop curriculum and provide instruction that addresses diverse student needs and facilitates the inclusion of all students.

- Similar to Project FOCUS Academy, Massachusetts FOCUS Academy provides online, graduate level coursework to middle and high school educators across the state. Of the content areas being offered, UDL will have the greatest impact on Indicator 5. The courses help educators gain a better understanding of how disability impacts student learning and provides them with improved skills in the areas of curriculum design, instruction, and assistive technology. This knowledge and skill-base better enable educators to address individual student needs in the LRE. The UDL courses were developed during FFY2007, and the first course was offered in fall 2008. 59 educators from 20 districts enrolled in the first UDL course offered in fall 2008.

- In partnership with the Central Massachusetts Communities of Care (CMCC) Project, MASSDE provided grant funds to support districts in Worcester County with the development and implementation of Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports and with developing "wrap-around" mental health services and supports. One of the priorities of the school district-CMCC partnership is to provide professional development as well as onsite assistance in the development and implementation of the principles of
PBIS. By increasing the use of PBIS, students with mental health concerns are more likely to receive the supports to participate in less restrictive environments.

- **Special Education Professional Development Summer Institutes** were sponsored by the MASSDE in partnership with school districts, educational collaboratives, institutions of higher education, and professional associations. The institutes which specifically affect Indicator 5 were designed to support districts’ efforts to ensure students are educated in the most appropriate, least restrictive environment for their educational needs. FFY 2007 LRE related Special Education Summer Institutes included: *IEP Team Facilitation Skills; Managing Behavior in an Inclusive Classroom; Occupational Therapy Services in Educational Settings; Teaching Strategies for Students with Vision Impairments, Blindness or Deaf-blindness; Teaching Strategies for Students Who are Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing; and Teaching Strategies for Students with Autism Spectrum Disorders in the General Education Classroom.*

- In order to facilitate students’ with disabilities access to the general curriculum in the LRE, MASSDE funded the **Secondary School Reading Grant**. This grant program selects middle schools, high schools and vocational schools with poor MCAS performance or unusually large special education populations to receive four years of funding to develop and implement a school wide approach to improving reading achievement across content areas.

- Lastly, the **Special Education Program Improvement Grants** offered funding to LEAs for professional development activities that helped improve the capacity of educators to meet the diverse needs of students with disabilities in the least restrictive environment appropriate. Topics for professional development under three of four priorities for the grant included *Serving Students with Autism Spectrum Disorders in Inclusive Settings; Curriculum Development, Instruction, and Classroom Assessment; and Meeting the Behavioral and Social Needs of a Diverse Student Population*. The three priorities identified above will enable educators to provide quality instruction and responsive learning environments, thus allowing students with disabilities to access more inclusive environments.

**Revisions, with Justification, to Proposed Targets / Improvement Activities / Timelines / Resources for FFY 2007 (2007-2008):**

Improvement activities have been revised in the MA SPP to include updated activities. The format for presenting the improvement activities has been revised, including the addition of an appendix that describes selected activities in greater detail. See the MA SPP for the revised activities.

The proposed targets for FFY 2007 remain appropriate.
Monitoring Priority: FAPE in the LRE

Indicator 8: Percent of parents with a child receiving special education services who report that schools facilitated parent involvement as a means of improving services and results for children with disabilities.

(20 U.S.C. 1416(a)(3)(A))

Measurement: Percent = [(# of respondent parents who report schools facilitated parent involvement as a means of improving services and results for children with disabilities) divided by the (total # of respondent parents of children with disabilities)] times 100.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FFY</th>
<th>Measurable and Rigorous Target</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2007 (2007-2008)</td>
<td>76%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th># of Surveys Issued</th>
<th># of Surveys Returned</th>
<th>% of Surveys Returned</th>
<th># of Surveys Meeting Standard*</th>
<th>% of Surveys Meeting Standard</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>40,307</td>
<td>6,360</td>
<td>15.8%</td>
<td>4,926</td>
<td>77.5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*The standard adopted to demonstrate “that schools facilitated parent involvement as a means of improving services and results for students with disabilities” requires the survey respondent to agree, strongly agree, or very strongly agree on at least 50% of the survey items (13 out of 25).

Discussion of Improvement Activities Completed and Explanation of Progress or Slippage that occurred for FFY 2007 (2007-2008):

Explanation of Progress or Slippage

In order to collect data for this indicator, MASSDE uses the “School’s Efforts to Partner with Parents” scale from the Part B survey instrument developed by the National Center for Special Education Accountability Monitoring (NCSEAM). In FFY 2007, this 25-item survey was mailed to every parent of a student with an IEP in grades kindergarten and above in 101 districts across Massachusetts. See Appendix B for a copy of the Massachusetts Parent Involvement Survey.

The 77.5% of parents reporting that schools facilitated their involvement as a means of improving services and results for students with disabilities is an increase from the data reported the past two years (76.0% in FFY 2005 and 77.0% in FFY 2006). The chart on the following page presents the state data over the past three years:
Of the 101 districts participating in the survey, 60 districts were at or above the state rate of 77.5%. This represents an increase in the number of districts exceeding the state rate from the past two survey administrations. 53 districts were at or above the state rate for their cohort in FFY 2005, and 57 districts were at or above the state rate in FFY 2006.

Although all items on the survey are important to consider, MASSDE stakeholder groups identified the three most important survey statements that they felt were most crucial to the establishment of good parent partnerships. In order of importance, the three items (with FFY 2007 results) were:

1. My child’s teachers give me enough time and opportunities to discuss my child's needs and progress – 84%;
2. Teachers and administrators encourage me to participate in the decision-making process – 78%; and
3. Teachers are available to speak with me – 87%.

There were a total of 40,307 surveys issued in three languages – English, Spanish, and Portuguese – and the overall return rate was 15.5%. The FFY 2007 return rate is lower than in past years (16.6% in FFY 2006 and 17.0% in FFY 2007). Although the 15.5% return rate yields valid and reliable results and the drop in return rate is not statistically significant, MASSDE will continue to work with districts and stakeholder groups to improve the survey response rates in future years (see Improvement Activities below). A breakdown of the surveys issued/returned by language is below:

- English: 36,448 sent and 6,068 returned. Return rate: 16.6%.
- Spanish: 3,359 sent and 260 returned. Return rate: 7.7%.
- Portuguese: 500 sent and 32 returned. Return rate: 6.4%.
MASSDE collects data for Indicator 8 through a cohort model approved by OSEP. The 101 districts participating in the survey for FFY 2007 are representative of the state as a whole, and includes the one LEA with an average daily membership of over 50,000 students. Further information on the cohort model can be found at: http://www.doe.mass.edu/sped/2006/0522idea.html. Additional review of FFY 2007 respondent data by geography, race/ethnicity, and disability category indicates that these data are representative of the state as a whole.

Improvement Activities

Over this past year, MASSDE worked with stakeholder groups and staff from a number of school districts to determine the best way to publicly report data for Indicator 8 at an LEA level. In order to meet the requirement that district indicator data be publicly reported, data for Indicator 8 was added to the “Special Education Results” web page that is a part of each district’s profile on the MASSDE website. The information can be viewed at http://profiles.doe.mass.edu/state_report/special_ed.aspx. From this table, viewers can select a specific district to access more detailed data. MASSDE is also exploring how to best present these data through thematic maps, and anticipate that this feature will be ready for Indicator 8 during FFY 2008.

MASSDE engaged in several improvement activities in FFY 2007 that were designed to improve survey return rates and results, and to better enable educators to effectively facilitate parent involvement.

- **Massachusetts Special Education State Performance Plan (MA SPP) Indicator 8 Interest Group** meetings took place in April and October, 2008. At these meetings, MASSDE staff worked collaboratively with stakeholders to identify ways to improve the survey return rate. Based on feedback from the Interest Group, several steps are being taken to improve return rates in future survey distributions. The survey cover letter was revised to more succinctly explain to parents the importance of completing the survey, and the group provided several suggestions on reminders/follow-up activities that can be conducted during the survey process. Additionally, the survey distribution timeline has been moved up so that the surveys will now be distributed in mid-February (it was previously distributed in mid-April). By moving the survey window to a time of year in which parents are more likely to be at home and schedules are slightly less hectic, it is anticipated that more parents will have the opportunity to complete and return the survey.

- Throughout FFY 2007 and into FFY 2008, **technical assistance teleconferences** have been held with districts regarding their survey results. Once the surveys have been returned and the results analyzed, each district receives a detailed report providing their survey results. The reports include information on respondent demographics, survey results by demographic group, and item-by-item results. MASSDE provides a guidance letter to assist districts in interpreting and utilizing their results, and also holds periodic teleconferences with districts to discuss potential strategies for disseminating survey results and for identifying areas of improvement.

- In September 2008, MASSDE hosted training for districts on the seven **training modules developed by the National Center for Special Education Accountability Monitoring (NCSEAM)**. NCSEAM staff led a day-long training for over 60 educators from districts across the state. The module topics covered by NCSEAM at the training were:
  - General Communication Strategies;
  - Parent Friendly Individualized Education Program (IEP) Practices;
  - Home-School Note;
  - Reading Strategies;
  - Mathematics Strategies;
  - Homework Strategies; and
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- Behavior Strategies.

- MASSDE also provides a variety of online resources for parents and educators. The “Parent’s Rights in Special Education” online module (http://www.doe.mass.edu/sped/training.html) provides districts and Parent Advisory Counsels with materials to lead annual workshops on the state and federal special education laws and regulations. The “Parent Information” section of the MASSDE special education website (http://www.doe.mass.edu/sped/parents.html) provides a wide variety of resources for parents and educators, including the “Parent’s Guide to Special Education”. This technical assistance document is designed to provide information on the special education process to parents and schools, and was written collaboratively with the Federation for Children with Special Needs - the Massachusetts Parent Training and Information Center (PTI).

In addition to the improvement activities described above, MASSDE engaged in other improvement activities that impacted multiple indicator areas and had components that directly impact the capacity of districts to facilitate parent involvement. Please note that only the components that directly relate to Indicator 8 are detailed below. For a fuller description of these activities, please see Appendix A.

- The Special Education Leadership Academies for special education administrators and the Special Education Summer Institute: IEP Facilitation Skills provided content to administrators and teachers on how to more effectively collaborate with parents throughout the special education process. Special education administrators from 60 districts attended the Special Education Leadership Academies, and 25 teachers from across the state participated in the IEP Facilitation Skills Summer Institute.

- During the final year of Project FOCUS Academy, technical assistance was provided by MASSDE and the Federation for Children with Special Needs to nine high schools participating in implementation year activities. The high schools received onsite training and support on effective practices for facilitating parent involvement.

- Through MASSDE’s federal State Personnel Development Grant – Massachusetts FOCUS Academy – two online courses in the area of Family Involvement were developed during FFY 2007. These courses are designed to equip educators with the knowledge and skills required to develop and strengthen collaborative partnerships with families of middle and high school students with disabilities, in order to assist students to successfully transition to adult life. The first course was offered in fall 2008. 26 educators from seven districts across Massachusetts participated in this course. The second course will be offered in spring 2009, and both courses will be offered in the coming years.


Improvement activities have been revised in the MA SPP to include updated activities. The format for presenting the improvement activities has been revised, including the addition of an appendix that describes selected activities in greater detail. See the MA SPP for the revised activities.

The proposed targets for FFY 2007 remain appropriate.
Monitoring Priority: Disproportionality

Indicator 9: Percent of districts with disproportionate representation of racial and ethnic groups in special education and related services that is the result of inappropriate identification.

(20 U.S.C. 1416(a)(3)(C))

Measurement:
Percent = [(# of districts with disproportionate representation of racial and ethnic groups in special education and related services that is the result of inappropriate identification) divided by the (# of districts in the State)] times 100.

Include State’s definition of “disproportionate representation.”

State’s definition of “disproportionate representation”:
Massachusetts defines “disproportionate representation” using a calculation of weighted or alternate risk ratio and a review of the appropriateness of a district’s policies and procedures for identifying students as disabled. MASSDE calculates a weighted or alternate risk ratio for each school district using the techniques described in detail in Westat’s “Methods for Assessing Racial/Ethnic Disproportionality in Special Education” - http://www.ideadata.org/docs/Disproportionality%20Technical%20Assistance%20Guide.pdf. The state uses a minimum cell size of 20 for each race/ethnic group in every district. Cells less than 20 are individually reviewed to see if data irregularities for specific racial and ethnic groups in these districts would suggest disproportionate representation due to inappropriate identification. Once the calculation is made for each district, the weighted risk ratios are compared to the two previous years’ weighted risk ratios. Districts are flagged if for 3 consecutive years, they exhibit a weighted risk ratio of 3.0 or greater for possible over-representation, and .25 or less for possible under-representation.

All districts identified by way of this quantitative analysis are then subject to a review of the appropriateness of their policies, practices, and procedures (PPPs) for special education eligibility determination and disability identification.

Description of determination that disproportionate representation is due to inappropriate identification:
Any district identified using the measurement techniques described above submitted their current PPPs to MASSDE where they were reviewed by a policy analyst with expertise in disproportionality. If the analyst concluded that the PPPs were inappropriate or otherwise inconsistent with federal and state regulations, and concluded that the PPPs likely caused the disproportionate representation at least to some degree, then a district was identified as having disproportionate representation due to inappropriate identification.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FFY</th>
<th>Measurable and Rigorous Target</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2007 (2007-2008)</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Calculating the weighted risk ratios for FFY 2007 over-representation produced one district that met the criteria of three consecutive years of a weighted risk ratio (WRR) of 3.0 or higher. After a thorough review of that district’s policies, procedures and practices, the district was determined to have been identifying students for special education appropriately. In terms of FFY 2007 under-representation, the calculation yielded zero districts with a WRR of .25 or lower for three consecutive years.

The one district flagged for disproportionate over-representation was found to have appropriate identification practices, and because zero districts met the criteria for the determination of under-representation in FFY 2007, MASSDE met its measurable and rigorous target of 0%.

Discussion of Improvement Activities Completed and Explanation of Progress or Slippage that occurred for FFY 2007 (2007-2008):

Explanation of Progress or Slippage
Massachusetts has met the rigorous, proposed target of 0% districts with disproportionate representation of racial and ethnic groups receiving special education or related services due to inappropriate identification.

Improvement Activities
Over this past year, MASSDE worked with stakeholder groups and staff from a number of school districts to determine the best way to publicly report data for Indicators 9 and 10 at an LEA level. In order to meet the requirement that district indicator data be publicly reported, data for these indicators was added to each district’s profile on the MASSDE website. The information can be viewed at http://profiles.doe.mass.edu/state_report/special_ed.aspx. From this table, viewers can select a specific district to access data on Indicators 9 and 10.

In FFY 2007, MASSDE conducted disproportionality research and published a report on the topic now posted on the MASSDE website - http://www.doe.mass.edu/research/reports/Edbrief_final.pdf. The research report examined trends in several areas of disproportionality in Massachusetts, and provided MASSDE with a contextual framework through which it can improve its assistance to districts and students. The report was distributed to the public by way of the website, as well as in an electronic newsletter to all superintendents in the commonwealth, in a research update sent to stakeholders around the commonwealth, as well as in person at stakeholder meetings.

MASSDE also broadened its stakeholder group and increased the frequency of its communications. The group has been consulted regarding formulae, thresholds, district intervention practices, and other, more general concerns.

In addition to these activities, MASSDE has identified a number of improvement activities that will strengthen the disproportionality monitoring process:

   Improvement Activity: "Further refine the formula for calculating disproportionality to allow certain discretion for districts that inherit the vast majority of their special education students."

   After OSEP’s visit to Massachusetts in October 2008, a notable change suggested by the team was to refine the MASSDE disproportionality formula so that it would give different weights to different types of districts, especially those that inherit, rather than identify themselves, the vast majority of their special education students. For the new federal fiscal year, MASSDE will seek technical assistance from NERRC and Westat to improve the calculation method.
Timelines: Ongoing
Resources: Research organizations (NERRC, Westat)

Improvement Activity: Develop individually tailored self-assessment tools for districts that are 'flagged' for potential disproportionality. Districts in need of improving their current practices use these self-assessment tools to examine their own policies, procedures, and practices that influence district culture around special education eligibility and disability definition. In discussions with our research advisory group, we determined that a one-size-fits-all self-assessment was not appropriate, and that any self-assessment would need to be tailored to a district’s specific needs. MASSDE will be tailoring self-assessment tools on an as-needed basis to those districts that exhibit some slippage in the area of disproportionality.

Timelines: Ongoing

Improvement Activity: "Develop broader and more robust communications with state disproportionality stakeholders, and create more discrete responsibilities, more frequent opportunities for interaction, and specific annual goals for the SPP disproportionality workgroup."

The SPP disproportionality workgroup has broadened its membership this year, communicated more frequently, but at least to some extent still has not been utilized to its potential. MASSDE depends on these stakeholders to provide guidance and external accountability, and in its current state, the workgroup has not been used adequately to those ends. It is MASSDE’s goal to further increase communications, improve the quality of those communications, increase stakeholder accountability, and regularly consult with the workgroup regarding formulae, thresholds, and district intervention practices.

Timelines: Ongoing.
Resources: OSPRE Research and Evaluation Advisory Group, District Administration, Advocacy Groups such as the Federation for Children with Special Needs, MASSDE website

Improvement activities have been revised in the MA SPP to include updated activities, and the format for presenting the improvement activities has been revised. See the MA SPP for the revised activities.
Monitoring Priority: Disproportionality

Indicator 10: Percent of districts with disproportionate representation of racial and ethnic groups in specific disability categories that is the result of inappropriate identification.

(20 U.S.C. 1416(a)(3)(C))

Measurement: Percent = [(# of districts with disproportionate representation of racial and ethnic groups in specific disability categories that is the result of inappropriate identification) divided by the (# of districts in the State)] times 100.

State’s definition of “disproportionate representation”:
Massachusetts defines “disproportionate representation” using a calculation of weighted or alternate risk ratio and a review of the appropriateness of a district’s policies and procedures for identifying students as disabled. MASSDE calculates a weighted or alternate risk ratio for every school district in each of the six required disability categories (intellectual impairments, specific learning disabilities, emotional disturbance, speech/language impairments, other health impairments, autism) using the techniques described in detail in Westat’s “Methods for Assessing Racial/Ethnic Disproportionality in Special Education” - http://www.idealdata.org/docs/Disproportionality%20Technical%20Assistance%20Guide.pdf. The state uses a minimum cell size of 10 for each racial/ethnic disability group in every district. Cells less than 10 are individually reviewed to see if data irregularities for specific racial and ethnic groups in these districts would suggest disproportionate representation due to inappropriate identification. Once the calculation is made for each district, the weighted risk ratios are compared to the two previous years’ weighted risk ratios. Districts are flagged if for 3 consecutive years, they exhibit a weighted risk ratio of 4.0 or greater for possible over-representation, and of .20 or less for possible under-representation.

All districts identified by way of this quantitative analysis are then subject to a review of the appropriateness of their policies, practices, and procedures (PPPs) for special education eligibility determination and disability identification.

Description of determination that disproportionate representation is due to inappropriate identification:
Districts identified using the measurement techniques described above submitted their current PPPs to the MASSDE (or MASSDE verified recent compliance information/reviews) where the PPPs were reviewed by a committee of policy analysts and compliance specialists. If the committee concluded that the PPPs were inappropriate or otherwise inconsistent with federal and state regulations, and concluded that the PPPs likely caused the disproportionate representation at least to some degree, then a district was identified as having disproportionate representation due to inappropriate identification.

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<tr>
<th>FFY</th>
<th>Measurable and Rigorous Target</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>0%</td>
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<tr>
<td>(2007-2008)</td>
<td></td>
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</table>
Calculating the weighted risk ratios for FFY 2007 over-representation produced nine districts that met the criteria of three consecutive years of a weighted risk ratio (WRR) of 4.0 or higher. Using policies, procedures and practices (PPP) information submitted by districts and by way of conversations with each of those special education directors, MASSDE determined that none of these districts were using inappropriate special education identification procedures.

In terms of FFY 2007 under-representation, the calculation yielded nine districts with a WRR of .20 or lower for three consecutive years. Using PPP information submitted by districts and by way of conversations with each of those special education directors, MASSDE determined that none of these districts were using inappropriate special education identification procedures. Because zero districts met the criteria for the determination of over-representation and under-representation in FFY 2007, MASSDE met its measurable and rigorous target of 0%.

Discussion of Improvement Activities Completed and Explanation of Progress or Slippage that occurred for FFY 2007 (2007-2008):
MASSDE’s improvement activities and explanation of progress for this indicator are the same as for Indicator 9.

MASSDE’s revisions and improvement activities for this indicator are the same as for Indicator 9.
Monitoring Priority: Effective General Supervision Part B / Child Find

Indicator 11: Percent of children with parental consent to evaluate, who were evaluated within 60 days (or State established timeline).

(20 U.S.C. 1416(a)(3)(B))

Measurement:
- a. # of children for whom parental consent to evaluate was received.
- b. # determined not eligible whose evaluations were completed within State established timeline.
- c. # determined eligible whose evaluations were completed within State established timeline.

Account for children included in a but not included in b or c. Indicate the range of days beyond the timeline when the evaluation was completed and any reasons for the delays.

Percent = [(b + c) divided by (a)] times 100.

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<tr>
<th>FFY</th>
<th>Measurable and Rigorous Target</th>
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<tr>
<td>2007 (2007-2008)</td>
<td>100%</td>
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Based on 98 districts reporting on initial evaluations conducted in the months of October, November, and December of 2007, there were:

- a. 2,941 students for whom parental consent to evaluate was received
- b. 1,078 students whose initial evaluations were completed within the State established timeline and found not eligible for special education services
- c. 1,711 students whose initial evaluations were completed within the State established timeline and found eligible for special education services

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Students for whom parental consent to evaluate was received</th>
<th>Students whose initial evaluations were completed within the State established timeline and found not eligible for special education services</th>
<th>Students whose initial evaluations were completed within the State established timeline and found eligible for special education services</th>
<th>% of students with parental consent to evaluate, who were evaluated within the State established timeline</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2,941</td>
<td>1,078</td>
<td>1,711</td>
<td>94.8%</td>
</tr>
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</table>

% of students with parental consent to evaluate, who were evaluated within the State established timeline: 94.8% (1078+1711)/2941
Discussion of Improvement Activities Completed and Explanation of Progress or Slippage that occurred for FFY 2007 (2007-2008):

Explanation of Progress or Slippage

The FFY 2007 result of 94.8% includes cases where the evaluation was completed within the State established timeline or cases in which the district had an acceptable reason for not meeting the timeline. These are reasons that were beyond the district’s control, including school cancellation due to weather, parent scheduling needs, and significant student absenteeism.

In order to obtain student level data, MASSDE required each district selected for this monitoring activity to collect information and report data on all initial evaluations conducted during October, November, and December of 2007. The MA SPP for this indicator provides additional information on the approval of OSEP regarding the cohort data collection.

In examining the 152 cases in which a district did not meet the timeline and did not have an acceptable reason, Table 1 below outlines the various reasons reported by the districts for not completing the evaluations in a timely manner.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reason</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Insufficient staff availability to complete the evaluation on time (excessive caseload)</td>
<td>53.1%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other reasons determined within the district's control (e.g., staff member unavailable at the time of meeting)</td>
<td>14.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Delay due to evaluator reports not received on time</td>
<td>12.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Delay due to lack of qualified staff to complete the evaluation on time</td>
<td>10.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Delay due to district scheduling need</td>
<td>9.5%</td>
</tr>
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</table>

Of the cases that did not meet the State established timeline, the average number of days beyond the 45-day timeline for evaluation and eligibility determination was 14.9 school working days. This is an improvement of 0.1 working days from the previous data collection effort which was 15 working days and an improvement of 2.6 working days from the first data collection effort (FFY 2005) which was 17.5 working days.

Compared with the first two years of data reported in FFY 2005 (88.5% in compliance) and FFY 2006 (93.8% in compliance), MASSDE has seen a rise in the percentage of students for whom initial evaluations are conducted within the State established timeline. The rise in percentage points from FFY 2006 to FFY 2007 (94.8% in compliance) was one percentage point, and the rise in percentage points from our baseline year of FFY 2005 was 6.3 percentage points.
Of the LEAs that submitted data in FFY 2007, five LEAs received a finding of noncompliance and were required to complete corrective actions related to their policies, practices or procedures that interfered with appropriately meeting timelines for initial evaluations. Three of the LEAs reported completion of corrective actions with reports submitted to MASSDE, reviewed and approved by MASSDE, including any necessary follow-up activities. These three LEAs (60%) were found to have corrected the noncompliance within one year of the notice of the finding. There are two LEAs that have not yet completed their required corrective actions. One of these LEAs is still within one year of the finding being made and is taking the necessary steps to remedy any noncompliance. The other LEA is taking the necessary steps to remedy any noncompliance and continues to work closely with MASSDE on their corrective action.

**Improvement Activities**

Over this past year, MASSDE worked with stakeholder groups and staff from a number of school districts to determine the best way to publicly report data for Indicator 11 at an LEA level. In order to meet the requirement that district indicator data be publicly reported, data for Indicator 11 was added to the “Special Education Results” web page that is a part of each district’s profile on the MASSDE website. The information can be viewed at [http://profiles.doe.mass.edu/state_report/special_ed.aspx](http://profiles.doe.mass.edu/state_report/special_ed.aspx). From this table, viewers can select a specific district to access more detailed data.

During FFY 2007, several improvement activities were completed in an effort to provide LEAs additional resources for meeting required timelines in the provision of an initial evaluation to determine if a student is eligible for special education services. MASSDE developed self-assessment tools for LEAs to self-identify barriers impeding their capacity to meet State established timelines. One self-assessment tool was designed based on the analysis of the data reported from LEAs impeding their ability to meet State established timelines from FFY 2007 (see Table 1 above for breakdown of barriers). Similarly, a second self-assessment tool was designed to allow LEAs to identify trends in personnel/disciplines involved in the initial evaluation process. The self-assessments focus on identifying disciplines involved in evaluations/assessments in response to the most common barriers reported from districts impeding their ability to evaluate within State established timelines. The self-assessment allows LEAs to identify the disciplines involved in the evaluation/assessments and determine whether the individual discipline completed the evaluation/assessment within the required timeframe. The self-assessment also allows LEAs to analyze a discipline’s capacity to complete evaluations within the State.
established timeframe and determine if the evaluation corresponded with the student’s area of suspected disability. This assessment will allow a LEA to identify if a certain discipline (e.g., speech and language pathologists, psychologists, occupational therapists, special educators, etc.) are unable regularly to meet timelines and will allow for more specific improvement activities for the district. Both self assessment tools were presented to Massachusetts stakeholders and received positive remarks. The self-assessment tools were adapted based on their feedback and advice. MASSDE anticipates LEAs completing these self-assessments, as necessary, during FFY 2008.

Other MASSDE improvement activities for FFY 2007 included professional development opportunities. As part of these professional development initiatives, special education administrators/staff participated in activities to more effectively generate systems change for compliance areas. The following professional development opportunities had a direct impact on Indicator 11. Please note that these improvement activities also had components that affected other indicator areas, and only the components that directly relate to Indicator 11 are detailed below. For fuller descriptions of these activities, see Appendix A.

- One of the professional development activities offered was a Special Education Leadership Academy for special education administrators. The Special Education Leadership Academy offered activities focused on a number of areas related to special education laws, regulations, and compliance, including initial evaluation timelines.

- Trainings offered through The Comprehensive System of Personnel Development (CSPD) related to initial evaluation timelines included; The Massachusetts IEP Process; A Principal's Role and Special Education in Massachusetts; and Is Special Education the Right Service?.

- A professional development module related to determining eligibility under specific learning disability was also created by MASSDE, Special Education Planning and Policy Development (SEPP) for district and building level administrators, general and special educators, related service providers and parents to provide information regarding requirements when a student is being assessed for special education with a specific learning disability (SLD). This module addressed evaluation timelines when determining eligibility for special education under specific learning disability.

- The Special Education – Program Improvement Grant offered funding to LEAs for professional development activities that helped improve the capacity of educators to meet the diverse needs of students with disabilities. Topics for professional development under one of four priorities for the grant included district special education policies and procedures, federal and State special education legislation and regulations, and IEP development and process. These areas will assist special education personnel in completing initial evaluations in a timely manner.

- MASSDE staff also analyzed data at the district level to determine appropriate technical assistance to provide resources for meeting required timelines in the provision of an initial evaluation to determine if a student is eligible for special education services. These analyses also drove much of the discussions and collaboration with key stakeholders such as the Massachusetts Statewide Special Education Steering Committee and the State Performance Plan Interest Group for Indicator 11.
FFY 2006, 16 LEAs received a finding of noncompliance and were required to complete corrective actions related to their policies, practices or procedures that interfered with appropriately meeting timelines for initial evaluations. The 16 LEAs reported completion of corrective actions with reports submitted to MASSDE, reviewed and approved by MASSDE, including any necessary follow-up activities. All 16 LEAs (100%) were found to have corrected the noncompliance within one year of the notice of the finding.

Finally, the OSEP Part B FFY 2006 SPP/APR Letter and Response Table required the state to review its improvement activities and revise them if appropriate. We have conducted this review and added the development of self-assessment tools (described in the previous section) as important improvement activities.


Based on the analysis of data and in response to the OSEP Part B FFY 2006 SPP/APR Letter and Response Table, improvement activities have been revised to include the self-assessment activity detailed above. The format for presenting the improvement activities also has been revised, including the addition of an appendix that describes selected activities in greater detail.
Monitoring Priority: Effective General Supervision Part B / Effective Transition

Indicator 12: Percent of children referred by Part C prior to age 3, who are found eligible for Part B, and who have an IEP developed and implemented by their third birthdays.

(20 U.S.C. 1416(a)(3)(B))

Measurement:

a. # of children who have been served in Part C and referred to Part B for eligibility determination.
b. # of those referred determined to be NOT eligible and whose eligibilities were determined prior to their third birthdays.
c. # of those found eligible who have an IEP developed and implemented by their third birthdays.
d. # of children for whom parent refusal to provide consent caused delays in evaluation or initial services.

Account for children included in a but not included in b, c or d. Indicate the range of days beyond the third birthday when eligibility was determined and the IEP developed and the reasons for the delays.

Percent = [(c) divided by (a – b – d)] times 100.

<table>
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<th>FFY</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2007 (2007-2008)</td>
<td>100%</td>
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</table>


2296 children found eligible and served by 3 / (3854-716-368) x 100 = 82.9%

Discussion of Improvement Activities Completed and Explanation of Progress or Slippage that occurred for FFY 2007 (2007-2008):

Massachusetts Response to the OSEP Part B FFY 2006 SPP/APR Letter and Response Table

MASSDE was required to report on: 1) the technical assistance sources from which the state received assistance; 2) what actions the state took as a result of that technical assistance; 3) the correction of noncompliance identified in FFY 2005; and 4) the correction of noncompliance identified in FFY 2006.
1. Massachusetts sought technical assistance and resources to improve how we asked the LEAs to collect transition data and respond correctly and how we make local determinations:

- The Massachusetts Department of Early Education and Care (MEEC) and MASSDE participated in several SPP/APR TA calls conducted by Ruth Ryder throughout the course of the year. Particularly helpful were the May 8 call on Local Reporting and Determinations and January 9 call on APR/SPP Submission.

- MEEC sought out the resources listed on the Regional Resource Center Program’s (RRCP) website and of particular help was Local Corrective Action Plans: Collection and Use of Valid and Reliable Data for Determining Factors Contributing to Noncompliance (March 24, 2008). It guided us in our work with both Part C and 619 programs (Communities of Practices are described below) and will help frame the questions we ask LEAs in the next data collection, June 2009. http://www.nectac.org/~pdfs/topics/transition/noncompliance_contributing_factors.pdf

- MASSDE also had an OSEP verification visit in October 2008 and had an opportunity to both share with and learn from the OSEP officers Ken Kienas and Al Jones. MEEC expressed its concerns that districts that have met all their timelines and propose an IEP well before the child’s third birthday are held accountable for parent delays in returning a proposed IEP and should be able to subtract those situations from the formula. MEEC collected this information this year and will report it alongside its compliance data.

- In preparation of writing the MA APR/SPP, MEEC also referred to the B 12 Checklist document developed by the North Central Resource Center.

2. Actions the State took as a result of this technical assistance:

- MEEC created an Excel spreadsheet for LEAs to submit their data, including cell protections that flagged districts when their numbers didn’t compute. Unfortunately, without Macros set up, individual districts could undo the protections and consequently we ended up with only 196 districts submitting clean data.

- MEEC brought together both individual Early Intervention programs and LEAs as well as groups of EI programs and their respective LEAs to strategize ways to improve their Transition practices.

- Please also see activities listed under Improvement Activities.

3. Correction of districts from FFY 2005 and FFY 2006:

- Correction of noncompliance from FFY 2005: In the 2005-2006 school year, 686 children were served after turning three. As the MA APR, submitted February 1, 2007 stated, “As we did not properly collect data on when referrals were received, including the impact of summer on evaluation timelines, we believe that this is a significant underrepresentation of the responsiveness and timelines of Massachusetts districts.” Consequently, Massachusetts did not make individual district findings of non-compliance in FFY 2005, rather, the application for FFY 2006 funds required all districts to plan specific improvement activities in the area of transition from early intervention. All districts did plan and undertake these activities during 2006-07. These activities can be considered to be in lieu of findings of non-compliance and corrective action for FFY 2005. Massachusetts has now improved our data collection, notified LEAs of their noncompliance, have a system in place of
communicating with LEAs and their partnering EI programs to improve practice, collaborate with monitoring on Indicator 15, and consistently show progress toward compliance.

**Correction of noncompliance from FFY 2006:** On February 8, 2008 Corrective Action reports were sent to 179 districts citing noncompliance in one or both of the two previous school years (2006-2007 and 2007-2008). Districts were asked to verify, and if applicable revise, their data as well as provide current data showing correction of non-compliance. Responses were received from 170 LEAs (95%). MEEC verified that all 170 Corrective Action Reports submitted showed timely correction of data and or timely correction of systemic non-compliance in this area, leaving only nine districts from the original 179. MEEC will continue to work assertively with these districts to ensure proper correction of non-compliance.

**Explanation of Progress or Slippage**

82.9% compliance for FFY 2007 represents 196 (81%) districts reporting out of 243; an additional 47 LEAs, which would account for an additional 1919 children (or a total of 5,773 referred), had issues with data that we are unable to report on at this time.

With activities to improve data collection and Corrective Action reports issued this year based on last year’s data, Massachusetts comes closer to full compliance. Of the 199 children served after turning three, 189 (95%) had an IEP proposed to the family prior to the child turning three. LEAs state their delays are largely beyond their control. They cite parent delays ranging from missed appointments, illnesses, vacations, and other delays (not refusal) in returning a signed consent form and/or IEP. Only three districts stated the delay was due to the inability to get qualified staff to conduct the assessment(s). Districts state their concerns to being held accountable when the delays are due to the parents and when they feel they have done everything within the required timelines and have proposed an IEP prior to the child’s third birthday. Districts with 20 or fewer referrals in a given year are concerned that delays for one child puts them in noncompliance (95%). In the 196 districts that reported, 124 (63%) districts with 20 or fewer referrals.

Districts continue to be challenged when Early Intervening (EI) programs refer children late. Late referrals do not allow for 45 day timelines. Of the 4,726 total referrals from Part C in the 2007-2008 school year in the 196 reporting districts, 4,233 (89.5%) were received in a timely manner, allowing at least the 45 school working days as defined in State special education regulations to complete the assessment and eligibility determination. While this is an improvement from last year (77%), districts continue to respond with great effort to complete the process and serve eligible children as close to their third birthday as possible.

**Improvement Activities -- Training and Technical Assistance Provided at the Interagency Level and to LEAs and Local Part C Programs**

In February 2008 MEEC was awarded the SpecialQuest grant to develop a Statewide Birth-Five Leadership Team to improve the inclusive opportunities for children with disabilities birth to five.

**SpecialQuest Vision Statement:**

Recognizing that all children are born with possibilities, families and children birth to five will have access to high quality, child- and family-centered inclusive settings in a seamless system of coordinated supports and services.

Paramount to the successful experiences is seamless transitions for all involved – the children, their families, and their sending and receiving programs.
SpecialQuest activities include a professional development seminar scheduled for spring 2009 that will feature a session on Transitions. Current multimedia SpecialQuest materials, including information on Transition, are being used in Higher Education courses on Infant/Toddler development in six (6) participating colleges and universities as well as at the five (5) Early Childhood Regional Resource Centers housed at public libraries across the Commonwealth and available statewide through the inter-library system. Materials are also available on the SpecialQuest website at www.specialquest.org. In its efforts to bridge the materials to cover 3-5 year olds, SpecialQuest is currently exploring film sites. Massachusetts has volunteered to welcome film crews in its preschool programs. There are three Local Demonstration Sites (Fall River, Holyoke and Barnstable) that are working locally with their EI, Early Head Start/Head Start, child care, higher education, and public schools to improve transitions and inclusion of young children with disabilities. The Statewide Birth-Five Leadership Team is comprised of 42 members including representatives from Part C/DPH, local EI programs, ESE, DCF, DMH, Higher Education, child care, Head Start, ACF, NECTAC, and parents. MEEC's 619 Coordinator also serves on the SpecialQuest Advisory Council.

On May 6 and 17, 2008, MEEC hosted its Communities of Practice with the topic “Transition Practices.” Free and open to anyone in the early childhood field, these sessions (held at two of our MEEC regional offices – the northeast and western offices) were attended by EI program directors and staff, LEA staff, ICC members, Head Start, child care, and state agency staff. Program staff shared strategies that have improved transition practices, as well as the challenges that the whole group brainstormed for solutions. Key strategies that made transitions successful required the collaboration, cooperation, and participation of all three: Part C, Part B, and families. The distinct differences between Part C and B programs and regulations require each to get to know one another’s requirements and adjust accordingly (e.g., school working days vs. calendar days; year round programming vs. school year programming [although extended year services must be considered for each child, not everyone is eligible]; clinical/medical model vs. educational model; and eligibility differences). More meetings on Early Childhood Transition are planned for 2008-2009 school year.

In fall 2008, MASSDE and MEEC worked with stakeholder groups to examine data and identify possible improvement activities. The suggested improvement activities focused on ways to foster improved communication and partnerships between EI providers and LEAs. In addition, MEEC and DPH (Lead Agency for Part C) completed an online, 3 unit course on Transition from Part C to Part B. The course will be a requirement to meet EI competencies and a required activity for LEAs in noncompliance. The modules look at Transition from both Parts C and B perspectives and the responsibilities each have in the process. Designed with True/False quizzes at the end of each unit that the participant can only fail twice, it requires the participant to seek technical assistance from one Administrator that represents both Lead Agencies. The Administrator will provide the necessary TA for successful completion of the units.

MEEC also participated in the ICC Retreat, specifically in the session on Transition Practices. The two agencies continue to enjoy a collaborative relationship. The revised Transition MOU, a cross agency agreement between Head Start, DPH, MEEC, MASSDE and child care, is complete and at legal review within each participating agency. When vetted, it is expected to be signed by each Commissioner and the Secretary of Education. It will serve both as guidance and a model for LEAs and local EI and community programs.

MEEC participates with Program Quality Assurance (PQA) at MASSDE on its scheduled compliance reviews. ESE schedules districts on a 6 year review cycle. This year MEEC will visit six (6) LEAs between March and May, 2009 identified in noncompliance for Indicator 12 to review transition practices/timelines, including but not limited to children’s records (from both last year and this current year to verify corrected practice and compliance), interview staff, and if needed, make findings/recommendations for improvement activities and policies to improve practice.

For the past three years, Massachusetts has collected, analyzed and reported statewide data on transition compliance. Each year the Commonwealth has moved closer to substantial compliance. We will continue to collect and report by LEA on transition, but in order to look more closely at transition practices Massachusetts is proposing to add an improvement activity. In FFY 2008, Massachusetts will work with the LEAs having two consecutive years in substantial noncompliance [under 95%] for this Indicator to examine the referrals received from Part C within a three month period and track eligibility determination and the successful transition of eligible children into services by age 3. We will first pilot this review with ten LEAs who receive referrals from ten different EI programs, then in the spring 2009 work with all districts with two consecutive years of substantial non-compliance in this area. We will also identify districts and EI programs that are in consistent compliance, look at their policies and practices, write up tips for successful transitions and disseminate them to all districts.

Massachusetts will continue to host Communities of Practice and other professional development opportunities through SpecialQuest, and meet with DPH/EI programs to improve transition practices.
Monitoring Priority: Effective General Supervision Part B / Effective Transition

Indicator 13: Percent of youth aged 16 and above with transition planning that includes coordinated annual goals and transition services that will reasonably enable the student to meet his/her post-secondary goals in the identified areas.

(20 U.S.C. 1416(a)(3)(B))

Measurement: Percent = [(# of youth with disabilities aged 16 and above with transition planning that includes coordinated, measurable, annual IEP goals and transition services that will reasonably enable the student to meet the post-secondary goals) divided by the (# of youth with an IEP age 16 and above)] times 100.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FFY</th>
<th>Measurable and Rigorous Target</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2007 (2007-2008)</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th># of Student Records reviewed</th>
<th># of Student Records with transition planning that included coordinated annual goals and transition services</th>
<th>Percentage of student records in compliance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1,881</td>
<td>1,865</td>
<td>99.1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Discussion of Improvement Activities Completed and Explanation of Progress or Slippage that occurred for FFY 2007 (2007-2008):

Explanation of Progress or Slippage

Of the 1,881 student records reviewed during FFY 2007, 99.1% contained transition planning that includes coordinated annual goals and transition services that will reasonably enable the student to meet his/her post-secondary goals in the identified areas.

In order to obtain student level data, MASSDE required each district selected for this monitoring activity to collect information on a representative sample of students aged 16-21 with IEPs. The sample student files were reviewed for evidence of full transition planning discussions.

As was done with data collections in previous years, a review sheet allowed districts to assess a student record for evidence of appropriate transition planning. This data collection directed districts to use the mandated Massachusetts Transition Planning Form (TPF 28M/9) (documenting full transition planning discussion) as appropriate evidence of transition planning. If such documentation was not found in the student record, then the student was not considered to have received appropriate transition planning.
As evidenced in the chart below, the percentage of student records with transition planning that included coordinated annual goals and transition services increased substantially from FFY 2005 to FFY 2006 (83.8% to 98.8%). The rate for FFY 2007 increased slightly to 99.1%. The high rate of compliance is in large part due to the implementation by LEAs of the Massachusetts Transition Planning Form (TPF 28M/9), a mandated form maintained with the IEP issued in February 2007, developed for every student with an IEP of transition age.

![Chart showing percentage of student records in compliance (FFY 2005-2007)]

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percentage of student records in compliance (FFY 2005 -2007)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>FFY 2005</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>83.8%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Of the LEAs that submitted data in FFY 2007, two districts were identified as not in compliance with this indicator. The following table presents the information in more detail:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FFY 2007</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Districts with non-compliance findings:</strong> 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Individual student findings in these districts:</strong> 16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Percent corrected within one year:</strong> 100% (all district and individual student findings)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The districts were notified of the findings of noncompliance and completed corrective actions and reported their actions to MASSDE. All of the districts were required to conduct transition planning for any students identified as not having had transition planning, and to complete a corrective action report documenting the date on which the most recent Massachusetts Transition Planning Form (TPF 28M/9) was completed for each student. MASSDE required submission of a selection of the individual students’ transition planning reports. In addition to the student-level correction of noncompliance, districts with systemic non-compliance were required to document the date(s) district reviewed and or revised, as needed, its policies, practices and procedures to ensure that the mandated Massachusetts Transition Planning Form (TPF 28M/9) is developed for every
student with an IEP of transition age. All identified districts, after completing necessary corrective
actions, stated that the district has appropriate policies, practices, and procedures in place to
ensure that the Massachusetts Transition Planning Form (TPF 28M/9) is used to develop a
transition plan for every student with an IEP of transition age, and that transition planning has
taken place for each student who had been previously reported as not having transition planning
provided. MASSDE reviewed all completed corrective action reports and selected submitted
plans to determine if the issues were successfully corrected. All identified districts (100%)
completed their corrective actions and successfully remedied any noncompliance within one year
of the notice of the finding of non-compliance. Information from the review of individual and
district-level data is provided to the MASSDE compliance unit (Program Quality Assurance) to
inform its decision-making in future monitoring activities.

Improvement Activities

Over this past year, MASSDE worked with stakeholder groups and staff from a number of school
districts to determine the best way to publicly report data for Indicator 13 at the LEA level. In order
to meet the requirement that district indicator data be publicly reported, data for Indicator 13 was
added to the “Special Education Results” web page that is a part of each district’s profile on the
MASSDE website. The information can be viewed at
http://profiles.doe.mass.edu/state_report/special_ed.aspx. From this table, viewers can select a
specific district to access more detailed data.

Several effective strategies for maintaining compliance levels took place in FFY 2007. To sustain
the high rate of compliance, MASSDE continued to focus its efforts on professional development.
The following improvement activities had a direct impact on secondary transition planning.
Please note that these improvement activities also had components that impacted other indicator
areas, and only the components that directly relate to Indicator 13 are detailed below. For fuller
descriptions of these activities, see Appendix A.

- Trainings on the use of the Massachusetts Transition Planning Form (TPF 28M/9)
  continue to be available (along with information on the MASSDE website that includes
  completed samples of the form) as part of The Comprehensive System of Personnel

- Technical assistance was offered to educators and guidance counselors at the nine high
  schools participating in implementation year activities associated with Project FOCUS
  Academy (MASSDE’s federal State Improvement Grant). Building on coursework
  offered in previous years, participants from the nine participating high schools received
  training and support from experts in the field of transition planning.

- MASSDE’s federal State Personnel Development Grant – called Massachusetts FOCUS
  Academy - builds upon Project FOCUS Academy and offers online courses in a variety
  of key areas, including Post-Secondary Transition Planning. Two courses (Youth
  Development and Leadership, and Transition Topics) were offered during the 2007-08
  school year as part of the four-course Post-Secondary Transition Planning sequence that
  is designed to give special education personnel expertise in the area of post-secondary
  transition planning. The target audience for these courses was middle and high school
  educators and guidance counselors working with students with disabilities. Seventy-two
  participants representing 37 districts and educational collaboratives completed the Youth
  Development and Leadership course. Sixty-four participants representing 32 districts
  completed the Transition Topics course. In Fall 2008, the third course, Career
  Development and Competitive Employment, was completed by 55 participants
  representing 30 districts, two educational collaboratives and one state agency. A fourth
  course on Postsecondary Education is scheduled for Spring 2009. Courses in all key
areas will be offered in FFY 2009.

- **Massachusetts Special Education State Performance Plan (MA SPP) Indicator 13 Interest Group** meetings took place in April and October, 2008 with MASSDE staff facilitating discussion to identify barriers and opportunities for professional development in the area of transition planning. Stakeholders reviewed professional development, technical assistance and other improvement activities provided to special education professionals across the state. In addition, stakeholders identified skills required of special education staff to improve post-school outcomes for students with disabilities and identified additional professional development and technical assistance offerings.

- MASSDE offered distance learning opportunities via satellite from the **National Association of State Directors of Special Education (NASDSE)** at no cost to school districts and educational organizations in Massachusetts. In May 2008, a presentation entitled Moving from High School to Post-School Opportunities: Transition Components and Strategies for High School Redesign was promoted for special educators across the state.

- **The Inclusive Concurrent Enrollment Partnership Programs for Students with Disabilities** grant program is primarily focused on building partnerships between high schools and state public institutions of higher education to offer inclusive concurrent enrollment opportunities for students with severe disabilities. As part of the technical assistance provided to the 20 participating high schools, school personnel learned how to conduct person-centered planning for students with disabilities. This transition planning approach is student-led and promotes greater self-determination and self-advocacy skills in youth with disabilities.

**Massachusetts Response to the OSEP Part B FFY 2006 SPP/APR Letter and Response Table**

MASSDE was required to report on the compliance activities of LEAs participating in data activities for this Indicator in FFY 2006 and forward. Compliance activities are detailed in the explanation of progress and slippage above for FFY 2007. In FFY 2006, six districts were identified as not in compliance with this indicator. All six identified districts (100%) completed their corrective actions and have successfully remedied any noncompliance within one year of the notice of the finding of non-compliance. The following table presents the information in more detail:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FFY 2006</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Districts with non-compliance findings: 6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Individual student findings in these districts: 16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent corrected within one year:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>100% (all district and individual student findings)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The description of activities taken is described above in the explanation of progress and slippage section.

**Revisions, with Justification, to Proposed Targets / Improvement Activities / Timelines / Resources for FFY 2007 (2007-2008):**

Improvement activities have been revised in the MA SPP to include updated activities. The format for presenting the improvement activities has been revised, including the addition of an
appendix that describes selected activities in greater detail. See the MA SPP for the revised activities.
Monitoring Priority: Post-School Outcomes

Indicator 14: Percent of youth who had IEPs, are no longer in secondary school and who have been competitively employed; enrolled in some type of postsecondary school; or both, within one year of leaving high school.

(20 U.S.C. 1416(a)(3)(B))

Measurement:
Percent = [(# of youth who had IEPs, are no longer in secondary school and within one year of leaving high school, have been competitively employed and enrolled in some type of postsecondary school) divided by (the # of youth assessed who had IEPs and are no longer in secondary school)] times 100.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FFY</th>
<th>Measurable and Rigorous Target</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2007 (2007-2008)</td>
<td>93%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of Students with Disabilities in the cohort who responded to the survey</th>
<th>Number of Respondents who have been competitively employed</th>
<th>Number of Respondents who have been enrolled in postsecondary education</th>
<th>Number of Respondents who have been competitively employed and enrolled in postsecondary education</th>
<th>% of Respondents who have been competitively employed and/or enrolled in postsecondary education</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1,380</td>
<td>406</td>
<td>186</td>
<td>696</td>
<td>93.3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Discussion of Improvement Activities Completed and Explanation of Progress or Slippage that occurred for FFY 2007 (2007-2008):

Explanation of Progress or Slippage:
The FFY 2007 cohort data indicate that, of the 1,380 respondents to the “Post-Secondary Outcomes Survey” and “CVTE Graduate One-Year Follow-Up Survey”, 93.3% of the respondents have been competitively employed, enrolled in postsecondary education, or both competitively employed and enrolled in postsecondary education, within one year of leaving high school. 406
(29.4%) of the respondents have been competitively employed within one year of leaving high school. 186 students (13.5%) have been enrolled in postsecondary education within one year of leaving high school. 696 (50.4%) of the respondents have been competitively employed and enrolled in postsecondary education within one year of leaving high school. The 93.3% is a slight improvement over the baseline data from FFY 2006 (92.8%), and meets MASSDE’s target of 93.0%.

Overall, districts in this cohort contacted 2,766 of the 3,245 students with disabilities who exited high school within the 2006-2007 school year. This represents 85.2% of all students with disabilities who exited high school in FFY 2007. Of the students who were contacted, 1,380 (49.9%) completed either the “Post-Secondary Outcomes Survey” or the “CVTE Graduate One-Year Follow-Up Survey”. The total response rate of all exiting students in Massachusetts with disabilities was 42.5%, an increase from the FFY 2006 response rate of 39.4%. Survey respondents are representative of the students with disabilities who exited high school in FFY 2007. MASSDE compared the demographics of the respondents reported by districts to the Student Information Management System (SIMS) database. The respondents reported by districts are an appropriate representation of students with disabilities who exited high school within FFY 2007 with regards to various factors such as race/ethnicity, gender, disability, level of need, and program placement. Therefore, the respondents are representative of the target population of students with disabilities who exited high school within FFY 2007.

However, several exiter subgroups continue to be underrepresented in Indicator 14 data collection. Although this does not impact the overall representativeness of the survey results, this is a potential area of concern. For instance, exiters who dropped out of high school are not adequately represented in the “Post-Secondary Outcomes Survey” data collection because districts had difficulty surveying these students due to the lack of updated contact information. Attempts were made to contact 50 students who dropped out within this cohort. Of those students, only 22 responded to the survey. Although these 22 students represent 44% of the dropouts who were contacted, they only represent 2% of the total dropouts in this cohort. Because districts continue to have difficulty contacting the majority of exiters who drop out, the representativeness of the respondents may be persistently affected. MASSDE continues to revise data collection protocols and technical assistance to districts in order to contact a higher
percentage of students with disabilities who exited high school and further improve the validity of data for this indicator.

Note: As of the date of reporting, three districts have not submitted data from the CVTE Graduate One-Year Follow-Up Survey. There could potentially be another 150 students with disabilities to add into the survey results. MASSDE is continuing to work with these districts to compile and submit full data sets.

Definitions

MASSDE defines exiters as students with disabilities who graduated high school with a diploma or a certificate of attainment, aged out of special education, or dropped out of high school.

MASSDE adopts the competitive employment definition stated under the Rehabilitation Act: “Competitive employment means work- (i) In the competitive labor market that is performed on a full-time or part-time basis in an integrated setting; and (ii) For which an individual is compensated at or above the minimum wage, but not less than the customary wage and level of benefits paid by the employer for the same or similar work performed by individuals who are not disabled”. (Authority: Sections 7(11) and 12(c) of the Act; 29 U.S.C. 705(11) and 709(c)) MASSDE recognizes full-time military service and supported employment positions as competitive employment.

MASSDE defines postsecondary school enrollment as full-time or part-time enrollment in the following types of programs: a technical school, a vocational school, a two-year college or university, and a four-year college or university. MASSDE allows the definition of full-time and part-time enrollment to be dictated by postsecondary school program descriptions.

Improvement Activities

MASSDE acknowledges that post-school outcomes are the culmination of all educational efforts. Activities that directly or indirectly affect Indicator 14 cross a broad spectrum of disciplines and include most, if not all, indicator areas. However, for the purpose of this document, post-school outcomes improvement activities have been limited to those that have had a direct impact on Indicator 14.

- MASSDE evaluated the Indicator 14 data collection protocol to determine its ease of use for districts completing the data collection activity. With the intent of maximizing student participation in the survey process and based on the protocol evaluation as well as district feedback, an Indicator 14 technical assistance document was provided to districts. This document provided information regarding data collection technical assistance conference calls and contact information of staff in the Special Education Planning and Policy Office (SEPP) who could be called for one-on-one support. It also offered guidance on the: overall survey process, survey personnel, and steps for contacting students by phone, mail and e-mail.

- The Massachusetts Special Education State Performance Plan (MA SPP) Indicator 14 Interest Group Meetings took place in April and October. MASSDE facilitated a discussion regarding post-school outcomes data collection and analysis. The group identified additional ways to analyze data, reviewed activities currently being implemented and suggested potential Indicator 14 improvement activities. In particular, group members proposed that new activities endeavor to improve student motivation to attend postsecondary opportunities as well as establish strong links to the Massachusetts School-to-Work Initiative.
The Inclusive Concurrent Enrollment Partnership Programs for Students with Disabilities grant program provides funding to establish and sustain partnerships between Massachusetts public high schools and public institutions of higher education to support students with severe disabilities, ages 18-22, who have not been able to earn a competency determination and do not have typical high school prerequisites, to enroll in post-secondary credit and non-credit classes with their non-disabled peers. The intent of this partnership program is to improve post-secondary outcomes for young adults with disabilities. There are currently six partnerships in the grant program. These six partnerships consist of seven community colleges, one four-year college, and 26 public school districts. In the fall of 2008, 64 students with severe disabilities enrolled in 78 courses. In the spring in 2009, it is anticipated that more than 79 students will enroll in over 83 courses.

MASSDE also provided professional development through the National Association of State Directors of Special Education (NASDSE) Satellite Series. FFY 2007’s theme was High School and Beyond: Strategies and Opportunities for Positive Results. This series provided one telecast specific to Indicator 14 titled, “Moving From High School to Post-school Opportunities: Transition Components and Strategies for High School Redesign”. Participants included school personnel from districts across Massachusetts, as well as staff from other units within MASSDE.

Furthermore, MASSDE engaged in additional improvement activities designed to primarily target other indicators (e.g., Indicator 1: Graduation Rates and Indicator 13: Secondary Transition Planning) but that also had components that directly influence post-school outcomes. Please note that only the components that directly relate to Indicator 14 are detailed below. For a more detailed description of these activities, please see Appendix A.

The Comprehensive System of Personnel Development (CSPD) Training Project provides professional development training opportunities to public school staff across the state through online and face-to-face modules. “Transition from Adolescence into Adulthood in Massachusetts” and “The Transition Planning Process” are two CSPD modules that assist teachers to support student outcome improvement.

Post-secondary education and employment specific technical assistance opportunities were offered to educators and guidance counselors at the nine high schools participating in the Project FOCUS Academy implementation year which focused on transition planning for successful adult outcomes.

Additionally, online professional development courses, including Youth Development and Leadership, and Transition Topics were offered in FFY 2007 through the Massachusetts FOCUS Academy. In FFY 2008, a Career Development and Competitive Employment course and a Postsecondary Education course will also presented through this grant program. Seventy-two participants representing 37 districts and educational collaboratives completed the Youth Development and Leadership course in fall 2007, and 64 participants representing 32 districts completed the Transition Topics course in spring 2008. In Fall 2008, the third course, Career Development and Competitive Employment, was completed by 55 participants representing 30 districts, two educational collaboratives and one state agency. A fourth course on Postsecondary Education is scheduled for Spring 2009. Courses in all key areas will be offered in FFY 2009.

The Special Education Summer Institutes which provide free, statewide special education training designed to increase the practical and policy knowledge of special education personnel also provided an Indicator 14 related professional development opportunity in FFY 2007. The course was titled Transition: Promoting Youth Development and Leadership for ALL Students and focused on how to prepare students
to take the lead in advocating for their education, career development, and community participation.

- Lastly, as part of THINK AGAIN, a sweeping effort to increase college readiness and improve post-secondary outcomes for all students, MASSDE created the Ready, Set, Go To College Initiative webpage - http://www.readysetgotocollege.com/. This college and career readiness web tool is designed to help students in Massachusetts understand what they need to do to graduate from high school, get into the college that is right for them and succeed. Although the webpage was created for all students, MASSDE staff is working to promote these resources to high school students with disabilities.

**Revisions, with Justification, to Proposed Targets / Improvement Activities / Timelines / Resources for FFY 2007 (2007-2008):**

Improvevment activities have been revised in the MA SPP to include updated activities. The format for presenting the improvement activities has been revised, including the addition of an appendix that describes selected activities in greater detail. See the MA SPP for the revised activities.

The proposed targets for FFY 2007 remain appropriate.
Monitor[ing Priority: Effective General Supervision Part B / General Supervision

Indicator 15: General supervision system (including monitoring, complaints, hearings, etc.) identifies and corrects noncompliance as soon as possible but in no case later than one year from identification.

(20 U.S.C. 1416 (a)(3)(B))

Measurement:

A. Percent of noncompliance related to monitoring priority areas and indicators corrected within one year of identification:
   a. # of findings of noncompliance made related to monitoring priority areas and indicators.
   b. # of corrections completed as soon as possible but in no case later than one year from identification.
   Percent = b divided by a times 100.

For any noncompliance not corrected within one year of identification, describe what actions, including technical assistance and/or enforcement that the State has taken.

B. Percent of noncompliance related to areas not included in the above monitoring priority areas and indicators corrected within one year of identification:
   a. # of findings of noncompliance made related to such areas.
   b. # of corrections completed as soon as possible but in no case later than one year from identification.
   Percent = b divided by a times 100.

For any noncompliance not corrected within one year of identification, describe what actions, including technical assistance and/or enforcement that the State has taken.

C. Percent of noncompliance identified through other mechanisms (complaints, due process hearings, mediations, etc.) corrected within one year of identification:
   a. # of agencies in which noncompliance was identified through other mechanisms.
   b. # of findings of noncompliance made.
   c. # of corrections completed as soon as possible but in no case later than one year from identification.
   Percent = c divided by b times 100.

For any noncompliance not corrected within one year of identification, describe what actions, including technical assistance and/or enforcement that the State has taken.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FFY</th>
<th>Measurable and Rigorous Target</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(2007-2008)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

a. 936 findings of special education noncompliance were made through the Problem Resolution System (PRS), Coordinated Program Reviews (CPRs), or Mid-cycle Reviews (MCRs) or MASSDE’s Bureau of Special Education Appeals (dispute resolution system) (BSEA) between July 1, 2006 and June 30, 2007.

b. Using the date that the satisfactory evidence of correction was received from the LEA as the date noncompliance was corrected (see #2c of Massachusetts Response to the OSEP Part B FFY 2006 SPP/APR Letter and Response Table, below), 730 findings of noncompliance were corrected within one year of the finding, for an overall one-year correction rate of 78.0%, and 927 findings of noncompliance have been corrected to date, for an overall correction rate to date of 99.0%. (At the August 2008 Accountability Conference, MASSDE notes that clarification was provided by OSEP that the one-year correction rate should be dated from notice of the finding to verification of correction. Our procedures for verification have now been revised and MASSDE will use the date of verification of compliance for all future reports. Although MASSDE did not use the verification date for the 2006-2007 findings, we did calculate what the correction rate would have been: The overall rate of correction within one year would be 62.2% (582) if calculated by the date of MASSDE’s verification of noncompliance; the overall rate of correction to date would be the same, 99.0% (927).

See Appendix D: Indicator #15 Worksheet for the disaggregation of findings made from July 1, 2006 to June 30, 2007.


In the FFY 2006 SPP/APR Response Table, OSEP noted that Massachusetts “must demonstrate, in the FFY 2007 APR, due February 1, 2009, that [it] has corrected the remaining noncompliance identified in Indicator 15 [during] FFY 2005 and FFY 2004.”

FFY 2006 (2006-2007): As reported in the FFY 2006 APR, 89% of the 1125 findings of special education noncompliance made in FFY 2005 had been corrected by the date of the revised FFY 2006 APR, April 14, 2008. As of the date of this report, April 7, 2009, 99.8% (1123) have been verified as corrected. (See Program-specific follow-up activities related to uncorrected noncompliance for CPR findings made in FFY 2005 (2005-2006), below).

FFY 2005 (2005-2006): As reported in the FFY 2006 APR, 82% of the 813 findings of special education noncompliance made in 2004-2005 through the CPR system had been corrected by the original date of the FFY 2006 APR, February 1, 2008. As of the date of this report, April 7, 2009, 98.9% (804) have been verified as corrected. (See Program-specific follow-up activities related to uncorrected noncompliance for CPR findings made in FFY 2004.)

Discussion of Improvement Activities Completed and Explanation of Progress or Slippage that occurred for FFY 2007 (2007-2008):

Explanation of Progress or Slippage

Of the 936 findings of special education noncompliance made through the PRS, CPR, or MCR system or the BSEA between July 1, 2006 and June 30, 2007, 78.0% (730) were corrected within one year of the finding and 99.0% (927) have been corrected to date, using the date that the satisfactory evidence of correction was received from the LEA as the date noncompliance was corrected (see #2c of Massachusetts Response to the OSEP Part B FFY 2006 SPP/APR Letter and Response Table, below).

Though Massachusetts has not met the target of 100% correction of noncompliance within one year, it has made considerable progress in increasing the percentage of findings of special
education noncompliance corrected within one year. Of the FFY 2006 findings of special education noncompliance, 78.0% (730) have been corrected within one year, significantly greater than the 62.8% of FFY 2005 findings corrected within one year. (Furthermore, 99.0% of FFY 2006 findings have been corrected to date, again greater than the 89% of FFY 2005 findings reported as corrected to date in the FFY 2006 APR.)

Reasons for progress: The progress described above with respect to correction within one year of the total number of findings made in FFY 2006 can be ascribed to training of PQA staff around the one-year correction requirement and internal monitoring of that requirement, from late 2005 to early 2008. The improvement activities described below, both those initiated as a result of technical assistance (described under #2 of Massachusetts Response to the OSEP Part B FFY 2006 SPP/APR Letter and Response Table) and other improvement activities (described under Discussion of Improvement Activities Completed) have all been undertaken since the spring of 2008. The full beneficial effects of these improvement activities have therefore not yet been seen in the data; it is anticipated that they will begin to be seen in the FFY 2008 data to be reported in the 2010 APR and will be seen even more clearly in the years that follow, as the electronic corrective action plan/progress reporting system and the web-based monitoring system are expanded and our software is upgraded (see Discussion of Improvement Activities Completed, below).

Massachusetts Response to the OSEP Part B FFY 2006 SPP/APR Letter and Response Table

1. **Technical assistance sources from which MASSDE has received assistance with respect to Indicator 15:** Since receiving OSEP Acting Director William W. Knudsen’s letter of June 6, 2008, to Massachusetts Commissioner of Elementary and Secondary Education Mitchell Chester, MASSDE—specifically, Program Quality Assurance Services (PQA), the unit of MASSDE that conducts most of its monitoring—has consulted and received assistance from the following technical assistance sources with respect to Indicator 15:

   a) The National Accountability Conference (NAC) on August 25-26, 2008, in Baltimore, Maryland, which several PQA and other MASSDE staff members attended, particularly the opening session on *Improving Results and Compliance through the SPP/APR* and the breakout session on *Part B General Supervision: Identification and Timely Correction of Noncompliance (B15).*

   b) OSEP's monitoring team, consisting of Ken Kienas, MASSDE's state contact, as well as Judy Gregorian and Al Jones, who visited Massachusetts during the week of October 27, 2008.

In addition, PQA staff have participated in numerous webinars and technical assistance calls, including the July 29, 2008 Webinar on Developing States’ SPP/APR Planning Calendar and Annual Cycle of General Supervision Activities and the December 4, 2008 Webinar on Methods of Collecting District-level Data to Improve a State’s Existing Data Collection System (hosted by the Regional Resource Centers); two webinars hosted by NERRC with Sara Doutré of Doutré Consulting, one on November 13, 2008, entitled *The Basics: FFY 2007 APR due February 2, 2009,* and one on November 25, 2008, entitled *The Part B APR: Indicator-Specific Technical Assistance;* multiple NERRC State to Local Monitoring Work Group calls; and multiple SPP/TA Conference Calls with Ruth Ryder, director of OSEP’s Division of Monitoring & State Improvement Planning, as chairperson. None of these webinars and technical assistance calls, however, dealt specifically with the question of how to improve states’ compliance with the requirement of correction of noncompliance as soon as possible but in no case later than one year from identification.

2. **Imposition of the requirement that districts document self-assessments in connection with progress reports:** As a result of technical assistance received from the
OSEP monitoring team in October, 2008, PQA has taken action by imposing requirements on
districts in connection with progress reports they submit on their implementation of corrective
action to resolve findings of noncompliance. In almost all cases PQA requires districts, after
implementing corrective action, to monitor whether they are now complying with the relevant
requirement and to report their internal monitoring to PQA. In response to a recommendation
made during the OSEP monitoring team’s visit to Massachusetts, PQA now requires districts,
in the course of conducting their internal monitoring, to document the date of the internal
monitoring, the person who conducted it, and the records reviewed. This documentation must
be signed by the person who conducted the internal monitoring and retained by the district.
PQA monitoring staff has been trained to include a requirement for such documentation in
reviews of CAPs or of progress reports that require internal monitoring by the district.

b) Revision of student record review procedures to cover single instances of
noncompliance: As a result of technical assistance received at the NAC in August, 2008, on
procedures to be followed in the event of a single instance of noncompliance, as opposed to
systemic noncompliance, PQA has revised its student record review procedures and trained
its staff (on September 19, 2008) on the revised procedures. In the case of a single instance
of noncompliance, PQA staff now order corrective action to be carried out within 30 days for
the affected student or students. At the training staff were given, to use in these cases, a
template for a letter to convey the finding(s) and required corrective action(s) to the district’s
superintendent (to be used immediately on discovery of the non-systemic noncompliance), a
template for a letter of closure to the superintendent, and a tracking log on which to record
these instances of noncompliance and their subsequent, verified correction.

c) Revision of system for tracking correction of noncompliance to use the proper
date of correction: As a result of technical assistance received at the NAC in August, 2008,
PQA has revised its system for tracking the correction of noncompliance. It has revised this
system in accordance with the requirement, as clarified by OSEP in Baltimore, that
noncompliance be considered to have been corrected as of the date that the state verifies its
correction—and documents that verification—rather than the date that the satisfactory
evidence of correction was received from the LEA. PQA now tracks the date of verification as
well as the date that the satisfactory evidence of correction is received.

d) Revision of monitoring procedures and staff training: Also as a result of the technical
assistance received at the NAC clarifying that correction of noncompliance must be verified
by the state within one year, PQA has revised its procedures for monitoring the correction of
noncompliance and trained its staff on these revised procedures. Immediately after the NAC
procedures were revised to tighten the timeline for corrective action plans and progress
reports from districts and their review by PQA staff. One of the duties of the new staff trainer
(see #2 under Discussion of Improvement Activities Completed, below) is to assist staff to
help districts to structure corrective action so that verification of correction can be
accomplished within one year.

e) Development of a more focused method of monitoring: The final action taken by
PQA as a result of the technical assistance received at the NAC has been the development
of a more focused method of monitoring. This action has been taken both as a result of
technical assistance on when noncompliance may be considered to have been corrected and
as a result of technical assistance on aligning monitoring to the 20 indicators in the SPP.
(Please see the SPP for Indicator 15 for a description of the monitoring conducted by PQA by
means of Coordinated Program Reviews (CPRs) and Mid-cycle Reviews (MCRs).)

This more focused method of monitoring was developed because of a desire to avoid
duplication of monitoring efforts with other units of MASSDE and a desire to concentrate
PQA’s monitoring efforts on those compliance criteria that have the most direct impact on
students with disabilities and their families. (See the discussion of the need to better target
MASSDE’s monitoring in #1 of Further Improvement Steps in the FFY 2006 APR, about the
development of web-based monitoring; see also the description below in #3 under Discussion of Improvement Activities Completed in this APR of PQA’s continuing steps toward web-based monitoring.)

Discussion of Improvement Activities Completed

In addition to the improvement activities PQA has completed as a result of technical assistance received from OSEP, described above, it has also completed the following improvement activities:

1) **Reorganization of PQA**: As a result of the data reported in the FFY 2006 APR of 63% for Indicator 15 and 91% for Indicator 16, PQA determined to reorganize its staff, who constitute the unit of MA SSD responsible both for monitoring of LEAs through Coordinated Program Reviews and Mid-cycle Reviews and for resolution of complaints. The aim of the reorganization was to improve PQA’s performance in both monitoring and complaint management and to increase our compliance with Indicators 15 and 16. The reorganization was planned in the winter and spring of 2008 and went into effect July 1, 2008. In the past, PQA’s functions with respect to public schools were carried out by six public school teams, each of which served a geographic area. All of the PQA staff members on each team both investigated complaints made through the Problem Resolution System (PRS) and conducted monitoring by means of Coordinated Program Reviews and Mid-cycle Reviews. Under the reorganization, PQA’s public school staff members are organized into four “monitoring teams” and two “PRS teams.”

With respect to Indicator 15, the expectation is that having staff and supervisors dedicated entirely to monitoring will result in CPRs and MCRs being handled more efficiently and, since the staff members will not need to attend to competing complaint timelines, in a timelier manner. It is also expected that the monitoring staff will have more time to devote to technical assistance for districts, thus preventing or remedying noncompliance outside of the context of a review. An added benefit of the reorganization is that PQA staff members were allowed to choose their role in the reorganized unit—whether to be on a PRS team or a monitoring team—with the result that the staff members now conducting monitoring are those who enjoy and have an aptitude for this work.

2) **Hiring of staff trainer and training on one-year timeline** (see #4 under Further Improvement Steps in the FFY 2006 APR): PQA has continued and intensified the training given to supervisors and staff with respect to the one-year correction requirement. The staff trainer mentioned in the FFY 2006 APR was hired in June 2008; in August and September of 2008, she conducted several trainings for supervisors and staff on monitoring procedures, with an emphasis on structuring corrective action and progress reports on a timeline that leaves enough time to complete those activities and to make sure that they have been effective before the year elapses. After PQA staff returned from the NAC in Baltimore, the staff trainer incorporated into her training guidance on the proper date to consider correction of noncompliance to have occurred (the verification date) and the implications of using this date for the establishment of corrective action and progress report timelines (see #2d of Massachusetts Response to the OSEP Part B FFY 2006 SPP/APR Letter and Response Table, above). The staff trainer has also taken the lead, along with the assistant director of PQA in charge of monitoring, in the trainings on the web-based monitoring system and the electronic CAP/progress reporting system described below (see #3 and #5 in this Discussion of Improvement Activities Completed).

3) **Further development of web-based monitoring** (see #1 under Further Improvement Steps in the FFY 2006 APR and Attachment E to the FFY 2006 APR): During FFY 2008 PQA has expanded the implementation of its new web-based monitoring system (WBMS), piloted during FFY 2007. The eight pilot districts that conducted self-assessments through WBMS last year will receive onsite reviews this year using the new system. Twenty-six districts have been selected for onsite reviews in FFY 2009 and are in the first phase of WBMS this year:
they have received an orientation on the WBMS process and are in the midst of receiving training on conducting a self-assessment (end of January/beginning of February 2009).

4) **Use of Crystal Reports software** (see #2 under Further Improvement Steps in the FFY 2006 APR): In the spring of 2008 MASSDE decided, instead of replacing Remedy’s Action Request System—used to track the dates of publication of CPR and MCR reports, receipt of corrective action plans (CAPs), reviews of CAPs, receipt of progress reports, and reviews of progress reports—to upgrade to the latest and most advanced version of this software. The version currently in use by MASSDE is a very old one, difficult to use with the more recent versions of Microsoft Word and Outlook employed by MASSDE staff. The latest version of Remedy is expected to resolve these problems; however, the planned upgrade has not yet been completed.

In the meantime, however, while waiting for the upgrade to Remedy, PQA purchased other software, Crystal Reports, to solve two of the longstanding problems with Remedy: the difficulty of using the old version of Remedy to produce reports and the unreliability of reports produced by it. Reports can now be printed out frequently giving information on timelines: the dates CAPs and progress reports have been received and reviewed and the date of verification of correction of noncompliance. Crystal Reports also aid in making sure that when CAPs or progress reports are received they are expeditiously assigned to a PQA monitoring specialist for review. In both these ways, Crystal Reports is expected to aid supervisors and the assistant director in charge of monitoring in improving the percentage of CPR and MCR findings corrected within one year.

5) **Further development of electronic corrective action plan/progress reporting system** (see #3 under Further Improvement Steps in the FFY 2006 APR): The electronic CAP/progress reporting system whose pilot was reported in the FFY 2006 APR has now moved beyond the pilot stage. PQA staff who participated in the FFY 2007 “ECAP” pilot reported that the emailing of electronic materials greatly facilitated the exchange of information with districts, resulting in a quicker turnaround time for CAPs and progress reports. Except for one district where difficulties external to it and PQA impeded turnaround, every district participating in the ECAP pilot experienced 100% or nearly 100% correction of noncompliance within one year: their one-year correction rate, for 72 findings, was 98.6%. Counting all the pilot districts, the one-year correction rate for their group of 88 FFY 2007 CPR findings was 80.7%.

As a result of feedback from PQA staff participating in the pilot, some changes were made to the electronic forms: separate documents were created for CAPs and progress reports for each of the program areas monitored in CPRs—special education, civil rights, English learner education, and career/vocational technical education—and a one-page progress report status sheet was added to show at a glance the current status of corrective action, including the criteria for which progress reports are due.

The assistant director of PQA in charge of monitoring and the staff trainer conducted a round of regional trainings on the electronic CAP/progress reporting system in the fall of 2008 for districts scheduled for CPRs in 2008-2009, all of which will be required to use this system for their CAPs and progress reports.

6) **Meetings with Steering Committee and targeted interest group:** PQA and other MASSDE staff met with the Massachusetts Statewide Special Education Steering Committee on December 10, 2008 to review current data and activities and seek input. Staff also met with the interest group for Indicator 15 on March 26 and October 16, 2008, in the spring to discuss with the group the reorganization of PQA described in #1 above and in the fall to discuss with the group the changes to PQA monitoring described in #2e of Massachusetts Response to the OSEP Part B FFY 2006 SPP/APR Letter and Response Table, above.

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1 Using the date of verification of correction of noncompliance as the date noncompliance was corrected.
2 Except for districts being monitored using the web-based monitoring system (whose CAPs and progress reports are anyway very similar).
Actions taken when CPR and MCR findings of noncompliance were not corrected within one year of identification (all findings of noncompliance stemming from complaints and BSEA proceedings were corrected within one year):

**General description:** Under the one-year correction mandate instituted at the beginning of the 2005-06 school year, corrective action must be completed within a year from the date of the CPR final report or MCR report. After technical assistance received from OSEP in August, 2008 at the National Accountability Conference, PQA revised its tracking system and monitoring procedures to reflect its new understanding that not only must noncompliance be corrected within a year, but also its correction must be verified within that year.

When a progress report from a district shows that corrective action has not been taken by the time required or in the manner required or has not been effective in remedying noncompliance, the PQA monitoring specialist reviewing it makes a new order of corrective action. When a progress report is overdue from a district, the monitoring specialist will contact district personnel to ask for it. In either of these cases the specialist may well, in the course of communicating with the district on this matter, offer technical assistance on the corrective action necessary. This technical assistance, involving both clarification as to MASSDE’s expectations for implementation and support in that implementation, may be given either in a meeting in the district or in a meeting at MASSDE that district staff are asked to attend. Enforcement action is an option that is available when corrective action has not been completed as required, but it is seldom used unless the failure to complete the corrective action is egregious.

**Program-specific follow-up activities related to uncorrected noncompliance:**

*Findings of special education noncompliance made through CPR reports published between July 1, 2006 and June 30, 2007:* Of the 936 findings of special education noncompliance made in 2006-2007, nine findings (1.0%) remain uncorrected. These nine findings were made against four districts, all of which were required to develop corrective action plans and submit progress reports on the corrective action. PQA staff reviewed the progress reports: when noncompliance was found to remain, further corrective action and progress reporting were required. The third set of progress reports for two of these districts are due to MASSDE on April 15, 2009, (for four instances of noncompliance) and May 1, 2009 (one instance). The other two districts submitted three or four sets of progress reports without being found to have resolved the last of the noncompliance from the CPR. Those two districts have recently undergone Mid-cycle Reviews; although some of their outstanding noncompliance was found to have been resolved, one instance was found to remain outstanding for one district, and three instances for another, for which MASSDE’s order of corrective action must now be carried out.

*Findings of special education noncompliance made through CPR reports published between July 1, 2005 and June 30, 2006:* Of the 1125 findings of special education noncompliance made in 2005-2006, 2 findings (0.2%) remain uncorrected, one finding each against two districts. Both districts were required to develop corrective action plans and submit progress reports on the corrective action. PQA staff reviewed the progress reports: when noncompliance was found to remain, further corrective action and progress reporting were required. Both districts have had Mid-cycle Reviews in the last year; although some noncompliance was found to have been resolved, either during the onsite or in subsequent progress reports, these last two instances are due for progress reporting, in the second or third set of MCR progress reports for these districts, by May 1, 2009.

*Findings of special education noncompliance made through CPR reports published between July 1, 2004 and June 30, 2005:* Of the 813 findings of special education noncompliance
made in 2004-2005 through CPR reports, nine findings (1.1%) remain uncorrected. One district, against which seven of these findings were made, was placed into the web-based monitoring program and is now completing a web-based self-assessment of compliance with all monitoring criteria, which includes these seven criteria, due to MASSDE by the end of April, 2009. The other two findings were made, one each, against two other districts. After the usual progression of corrective action plans, progress reporting, progress report review, further corrective action, further progress reporting, and further progress report review, both districts underwent Mid-cycle Reviews; although some noncompliance was found to have been resolved, these last two instances of noncompliance are awaiting additional progress reports, the fourth set since the Mid-cycle review for one district and the fifth for the other, by May 1, 2009.


In response to the OSEP Part B FFY 2006 SPP/APR Letter and Response Table, improvement activities have been reviewed and revised as appropriate. The revised improvement activities are detailed above and have also been revised in the MA SPP. Additionally, the format for presenting the improvement activities in the MA SPP has been revised.
Monitoring Priority: Effective General Supervision Part B / General Supervision

Indicator 16: Percent of signed written complaints with reports issued that were resolved within 60-day timeline or a timeline extended for exceptional circumstances with respect to a particular complaint.

(20 U.S.C. 1416(a)(3)(B))

**Measurement (data from Appendix E):**
Percent = (1.1(b) + 1.1(c)) divided by (1.1) times 100.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FFY</th>
<th>Measurable and Rigorous Target</th>
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<tr>
<td>2007 (2007-2008)</td>
<td>100%</td>
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**Actual Target Data for FFY 2007 (2007-2008):**

\[
\frac{(177 \text{ reports within timeline} + 37 \text{ reports within extended timeline})}{234 \text{ complaints with reports issued}} \times 100 = 91.5\%
\]

Discussion of Improvement Activities Completed and Explanation of Progress or Slippage that occurred for FFY 2007 (2007-2008):

**Explanation of Progress or Slippage**

Although MASSDE did not meet its target for FFY 2007 of 100%, it made progress on the previous year. It increased the percent of signed written special education complaints with reports issued that were resolved within 60 days, or within a timeline extended for exceptional circumstances with respect to a particular complaint, from 91.1% in FFY 2006 to 91.5% in FFY 2007. It also made progress on: a) reducing the number of signed written complaints with reports issued whose timelines were extended from 50 extended timelines (21% of complaints with reports issued) in FFY 2006 to 38 (16%) in FFY 2007; and b) increasing the percentage of signed written complaints with reports issued that were resolved within an extended timeline (from 72% in FFY 2006 to 97.4% in FFY 2007).

This progress with respect to extensions in FFY 2007 took place before changes in the approach to extensions were introduced as a result of the technical assistance received from the OSEP monitoring team in October 2008 (see last four bullets under #2 of Massachusetts Response to the OSEP Part B FFY 2006 SPP/APR Letter and Response Table below; MASSDE expects that these changes will build on the internal monitoring of extensions described in the FFY 2006 APR (see #1 under “Status of Improvement Activities Previously Completed”) to result in even fewer extensions (and shorter ones) in FFY 2008).

As for the percentage of signed, written complaints with reports issued that are resolved within 60 days or within an extended timeline, MASSDE expects that the improvement activities described
below, especially the “improvement activities recently completed,” will increase this percentage substantially. It is apparent that the ongoing improvement activities listed in the FFY 2006 APR (see paragraphs 1 – 5 under “Status of Improvement Activities Previously Completed” in the FFY 2006 APR) have been helpful, but are not enough by themselves to reach the target of 100% compliance for Indicator 16. The extensive “improvement activities recently completed” described below—including the reorganization of PQA, the institution of biweekly PRS meetings, the physical location of the PRS staff together, the increase in the frequency with which complaint tracking reports are reviewed, and the implementation of Crystal Reports—have all been completed in FFY 2008. Improved results are therefore anticipated in the complaint data, especially the timeliness data, for FFY 2008 and the years that follow. Over time the data should reflect the benefits gained through the web-based monitoring system (see #5 under “Status of Improvement Activities Previously Completed,” below).

Massachusetts Response to the OSEP Part B FFY 2006 SPP/APR Letter and Response Table

Response to OSEP Part B FFY 2006 SPP/APR Letter:

1. Since receiving OSEP Acting Director William W. Knudsen’s letter of June 6, 2008, to Massachusetts Commissioner of Elementary and Secondary Education Mitchell Chester, MASSDE—specifically, Program Quality Assurance Services (PQA), the unit of MASSDE responsible for resolution of complaints—has consulted and received assistance from the following technical assistance sources with respect to Indicator 16:

   a) Technical Assistance Related to SPP Indicators and Determinations, specifically Technical Assistance for Part B, Indicator 16, on the Regional Resource and Federal Centers (RRFC) Network website; and

   b) OSEP’s monitoring team, consisting of Ken Kienas, MASSDE’s state contact, as well as Judy Gregorian and Al Jones, who visited Massachusetts during the week of October 27, 2008.

In addition, PQA staff have participated in numerous webinars and technical assistance calls, including the July 29, 2008 Webinar on Developing States’ SPP/APR Planning Calendar and Annual Cycle of General Supervision Activities and the December 4, 2008 Webinar on Methods of Collecting District-level Data to Improve a State’s Existing Data Collection System (hosted by the Regional Resource Centers); two webinars hosted by NERRC with Sara Doutré of Doutré Consulting, one on November 13, 2008, entitled The Basics: FFY 2007 APR due February 2, 2009, and one on November 25, 2008, entitled The Part B APR: Indicator-Specific Technical Assistance; multiple NERRC State to Local Monitoring Work Group calls; and multiple SPP/TA Conference Calls with Ruth Ryder, director of OSEP’s Division of Monitoring & State Improvement Planning, as chairperson. None of these webinars and technical assistance calls, however, dealt specifically with the question of how to improve states’ compliance with the requirement of resolution of signed, written complaints within 60 days or within a timeline extended for exceptional circumstances with respect to a particular complaint. Nor did the August 2008 National Accountability Conference or OSEP Leadership Conference, which several PQA and other MASSDE staff members attended, have technical assistance sessions devoted to this requirement.

On January 20, 2009, PQA submitted this section of the Annual Performance Report for FFY 2007, on Indicator 16, to Kristin Reedy, NERRC director, for technical assistance. Feedback from NERRC was received on January 21 and 23, 2009, and changes were made in the draft as a result.
2. PQA decided, as a result of the data reported in the FFY 2006 APR of 63% for Indicator 15 and 91% for Indicator 16, to reorganize the staff responsible for resolution of complaints and for monitoring of LEAs through Coordinated Program Reviews and Mid-cycle Reviews (see #1 under “Improvement Activities Recently Completed,” below). The reorganization was planned in the winter and spring of 2008 and went into effect July 1, 2008.

In implementing this reorganization, PQA has taken action by instituting changes in the areas highlighted by the following Investigative Questions for Part B, Indicator 16, included in *Technical Assistance for Part B, Indicator 16*, on the RRFC Network website:

- What training/TA support is available to investigators?
- What mechanisms are in place to support investigators in working through complex issues that could potentially delay decisions?
- How often do you review the data on timeliness [of complaint resolution]?

**Institution of biweekly meetings and relocation of complaint investigators:** In relation to the first two of these questions, PQA has instituted regular meetings, every two weeks, of all of the complaint investigators with their two supervisors and the assistant director of PQA in charge of the complaint system, known as the Problem Resolution System (PRS). In these meetings they discuss new issues that have arisen or that are expected to arise; this discussion enhances consistency and helps the investigators to deal more quickly and efficiently with the complaints they are investigating. PQA has also taken advantage of the opportunity afforded by MASSDE’s move from 350 Main Street to 75 Pleasant Street, Malden, to seat all of the complaint investigators together, thereby enhancing their ability to discuss complaint issues in between their biweekly meetings.

**More frequent internal monitoring:** In relation to the third of these questions, PQA has increased the frequency of review of reports of what signed, written complaints have been received and when; to which investigators they have been assigned; what stage the investigation is at; and when the 60 days will elapse. The two PQA supervisors assigned to PRS meet every week with the assistant director of PQA in charge of PRS to review these reports, in an effort to ensure that all complaints are resolved in a timely manner. (Please see #3 under “Improvement Activities Recently Completed,” below, for an account of the new software used to produce these reports.)

PQA has taken action with respect to extensions as a result of technical assistance received from the OSEP monitoring team in October 2008. The monitoring team informed PQA that it had too many extensions, and that the extensions were too long.

As a result of this technical assistance, PQA has:

- directed staff to limit extensions to no more than 30-45 calendar days beyond the original 60 days, recommending that extensions be kept to 30 days—or less—whenever possible;
- instituted a policy that if complaint investigators obtain the material they need in investigating the complaint early in the extension period, they should resolve the complaint as early as possible;
- informed staff that complaint timelines may be extended only for extenuating circumstances: for example, extensions are allowed if the complainant requests an
extension for the purpose of rebuttal or if the district needs to produce documentation and the staff person necessary to produce it is unavailable (e.g., during the summer); and

- required that extensions be approved by the assistant director of PQA in charge of PRS in addition to being approved by the complaint investigator’s supervisor.

When asked if there were other things PQA could change to help with the timely resolution of complaints, the OSEP monitoring team said that they had no other recommendations. The OSEP monitoring team commended the fact that in complaints where noncompliance is found PQA sends not only a letter of finding, but also, when the noncompliance has been corrected, a closure letter that is copied to the parent.

Response to Part B FFY 2006 SPP/APR Response Table:
OSEP’s Massachusetts Part B FFY 2006 SPP/APR Response Table for Indicator 16, sent June 6, 2008, directed that “The State must review its improvement activities and revise them, if appropriate …” Since receiving the Response Table in June, 2008, MASSDE, specifically PQA, has reviewed and revised its improvement activities and added new ones, as described in #2 of the Response to OSEP Part B FFY 2006 SPP/APR Letter, above, and in Discussion of Improvement Activities Completed, below.

Discussion of Improvement Activities Completed
Improvement activities recently completed:

1. **Reorganization of PQA:** As mentioned in #2 under Massachusetts Response to the OSEP Part B FFY 2006 SPP/APR Letter and Response Table, above, PQA has been reorganized, with the aim of improving its performance in both monitoring and complaint management and of increasing its compliance with Indicators 15 and 16. The reorganization was planned in the winter and spring of 2008 and went into effect July 1, 2008. In the past, PQA’s functions with respect to public schools were carried out by six public school teams, each of which served a geographic area. All of the PQA staff members on each team both investigated complaints made through the Problem Resolution System (PRS) and conducted monitoring by means of Coordinated Program Reviews and Mid-cycle Reviews. Under the reorganization, PQA’s public school staff members are organized into four “monitoring teams” and two “PRS teams.”

With respect to Indicator 16, the expectation is that having staff and supervisors dedicated primarily to complaint management will result in complaints being handled more expertly and, since the staff members will not need to attend to competing monitoring timelines or be out of the office for long periods on onsite monitoring reviews, in a timelier manner. (The fact that PRS team members do not go “on the road” is a help in adhering to the new approaches to reducing the number and length of timeline extensions described in #2 of Massachusetts Response to the OSEP Part B FFY 2006 SPP/APR Letter and Response Table, above.) Furthermore, only one of the two assistant directors of PQA is responsible for overseeing PRS, whereas formerly one of them oversaw four of the public school teams and the other, two (in addition to two private school teams). Having responsibility for PRS vested in only one of the assistant directors makes for greater efficiency and better communication with the staff who manage complaints.

2. **Improvement activities described above:** For other improvement activities recently completed, see the description of actions taken by PQA in #2 of Massachusetts Response to the OSEP Part B FFY 2006 SPP/APR Letter and Response Table, above: in brief, the institution of biweekly PRS meetings and the physical location of the PRS staff together; the increase in the frequency with which complaint tracking reports are
reviewed; and the four different approaches to reducing the number and duration of timeline extensions.

3. **Use of Crystal Reports software:** (See #2a under "Improvement Activities Recently Completed" in APR for FFY 2006.) In the spring of 2008 MASSDE decided, instead of replacing Remedy’s Action Request System currently used to track complaints and their resolution, to upgrade to the latest and most advanced version of this software. While waiting for the upgrade to Remedy, PQA purchased other software, Crystal Reports, to solve two of the longstanding problems with Remedy: the difficulty of using the old version of Remedy to produce reports and the unreliability of reports produced by it. The purchase was made in the late winter of 2008, and staff began using the new software immediately after the conclusion of two training sessions related to it in March and June. It is by means of Crystal Reports that the PRS supervisors and the assistant PQA director to whom they report are able to review accurate reports on complaint timelines in weekly meetings and in between those meetings, as described in the second bullet under #2 of Massachusetts Response to the OSEP Part B FFY 2006 SPP/APR Letter and Response Table, above. Crystal Reports also makes it easy for the PRS supervisors and the assistant director to review and adjust caseloads as needed.

4. **Analysis of data:** PQA has prepared a statistical report on complaint resolution in connection with preparing this APR, and has analyzed the reasons for noncompliance and barriers to timely compliance (see Explanation of Progress or Slippage above). The recent modifications to PRS have been described under #2 of Massachusetts Response to the OSEP Part B FFY 2006 SPP/APR Letter and Response Table, above, and in #1 and #3 above in this section. No additional modifications have been made as a result of the preparation and analysis of Table 7 for this APR.

5. **Meeting with Steering Committee:** PQA and other MASSDE staff met with the Massachusetts Statewide Special Education Steering Committee on December 10, 2008 to review current data and activities and seek input.

**Status of Improvement Activities Previously Completed:**

1. The system of intensive **internal monitoring** (review of complaint logs) developed in FFY 2005 has been replaced by a system of even more intensive internal monitoring: see the second bullet under #2 of Massachusetts Response to the OSEP Part B FFY 2006 SPP/APR Letter and Response Table, above, and #3 of “Improvement Activities Recently Completed,” directly above.

2. The **modification made to Remedy’s Action Request System software** in FFY 2005 remains in effect, so that PQA staff continue to receive more frequent reminders from the system that action with respect to a complaint is required. Now, supervisors receive the reminders as well as the complaint investigators.

3. (See Explanation of Progress or Slippage in the Massachusetts APR for FFY 2005.) The **guidance** to complaint investigators that **extensions** should allow ample time for all of the required steps involved in resolving a complaint has been modified by the new emphasis on reducing the length of timeline extensions described above in the first of the last four bullets under #2 of Massachusetts Response to the OSEP Part B FFY 2006 SPP/APR Letter and Response Table.

4. (See Explanation of Progress or Slippage in APR for FFY 2005.) The PRS Implementation Guide for PQA Staff continues to include **guidance on the duration of extensions**; again, however, that guidance has been modified by the new emphasis on reducing the length of timeline extensions described above in the first of the last four bullets under #2 of Massachusetts Response to the OSEP Part B FFY 2006 SPP/APR Letter and Response Table. This emphasis will be added to the PRS Implementation Guide for PQA Staff in its next edition, now being prepared.
5. (See #2b under “Improvement Activities Recently Completed” in APR for FFY 2006.) PQA has continued to implement a web-based system (WBMS) for monitoring school districts and charter schools. Its implementation has been expanded in FFY 2008 as expected: 26 districts are participating in the first phase of web-based monitoring this year, as opposed to 8 last year. It is still hoped that the new system’s emphasis on self-assessment will make local agencies more proactive in identifying their own problems, thus reducing the need for complaints.


In response to the OSEP Part B FFY 2006 SPP/APR Letter and Response Table, improvement activities have been reviewed and revised as appropriate. The revised improvement activities are detailed above and have also been revised in the MA SPP. Additionally, the format for presenting the improvement activities in the MA SPP has been revised.
Monitoring Priority: Effective General Supervision Part B / General Supervision

Indicator 17: Percent of fully adjudicated due process hearing requests that were fully adjudicated within the 45-day timeline or a timeline that is properly extended by the hearing officer at the request of either party.

(20 U.S.C. 1416(a)(3)(B))

Measurement (data from Appendix E):
Percent = (3.2(a) + 3.2(b)) divided by (3.2) times 100.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FFY</th>
<th>Measurable and Rigorous Target</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2007 (2007-2008)</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th># of Hearings (fully adjudicated)</th>
<th>18</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Decisions issued within 45-day timeline or a timeline that is properly extended by the hearing officer at the request of either party.</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of fully adjudicated due process hearing requests that were fully adjudicated within the 45-day timeline or a timeline that is properly extended by the hearing officer at the request of either party.</td>
<td>94.4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Discussion of Improvement Activities Completed and Explanation of Progress or Slippage that occurred for FFY 2007 (2007-2008):

These data reflect that only one decision was not issued within the 45-day timeline or timeline properly extended. The following explanation addresses the reason said decision was not issued within the timeline.

Owing to a scheduling anomaly, the hearing officer who issued the one decision that was not timely, found herself in a situation where multiple decisions were due on or about the same date. She prioritized and issued those first that were most time sensitive vis-à-vis service delivery to the student.
Over the past four years, data for Indicator 17 have improved. The percentage in FFY 2004 (baseline year) was 91.6%, in FFY 2005 the percentage was 88.8%, in FFY 2006 the percentage was 96.2%, and the percentage in FFY 2007 is 94.4%. MASSDE does not feel that the drop from FFY 2006 to FFY 2007 constitutes “slippage” – in both years, only one decision was not issued within the 45-day timeline or timeline properly extended.


The BSEA is increasing supervision/monitoring to ensure that hearing officers who are assigned multiple cases that have similar decision deadlines will have such cases reassigned to other hearing officers who are more available to conduct the hearing and write the decision in a timely manner.

Improvement activities have been revised in the MA SPP to include this updated activity, and the format for presenting the improvement activities has been revised. See the MA SPP for the revised activities.
**Monitoring Priority: Effective General Supervision Part B / General Supervision**

**Indicator 18:** Percent of hearing requests that went to resolution sessions that were resolved through resolution session settlement agreements.

(20 U.S.C. 1416(a)(3)(B))

**Measurement (Data from Appendix E):**
Percent = (3.1(a) divided by 3.1) times 100.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FFY</th>
<th>Measurable and Rigorous Target</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>48%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(2007-2008)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Actual Target Data for FFY 2007 (2007-2008):** (15/418) x 100 = 3.6%

**Discussion of Improvement Activities Completed and Explanation of Progress or Slippage that occurred for FFY 2007 (2007-2008):**

Difficulties encountered when trying to collect data for this indicator have been reported in ongoing manner by the Bureau of Special Education Appeals (BSEA) since this indicator was introduced. As noted in the FFY 2006 MA APR, the baseline data submitted in the FFY 2005 MA SPP were not deemed reliable, and also utilized a different tool for measurement. All data for this indicator should be viewed with caution. The particular concerns with these data are described below.

First, the denominator called for in the measurement data equation above (i.e., line 3.1 in Table 7), in this instance 418, includes multiple possibilities:

- This number was determined by calculating the total number of hearing requests, minus the number of hearings requested by LEAs (resolution session not required), minus the number of mediations related to due process (notion being that parties may opt for mediation in lieu of resolution session), minus the number of settlement conferences held by the BSEA in lieu of a resolution session. However, the number (418) is likely to include cases in which both a resolution session and a mediation were held, cases in which both parties waived the resolution session and did not opt for mediation, and cases in which the LEA failed to timely convene a resolution meeting within the 15 days and therefore it was constructively waived.

- None of these situations is separately accounted for in the above-noted number.

Second, the numerator (i.e., line 3.1a in Table 7), in this instance 15, is likely reflective of under-reporting owing to the following factor:
During FFY 2005 and FFY 2006, the BSEA utilized a form that was to be submitted by a party who was withdrawing a hearing request as the result of a settlement agreement reached at a resolution session. The 25 settlement agreements reported for FFY 2006 represented the number of such forms the BSEA received during the reporting period. However, it is probable that not all parties whose case was resolved via a settlement agreement reached at a resolution session in fact submitted such a form. In order to further improve the reliability of these data, the BSEA launched a back-up system in which parties who had filed hearing requests but did not proceed to hearing were called by a BSEA staff person to inquire as to the means by which the matter had been resolved. However, this method did not prove as successful as anticipated, in that some parties did not respond and of those that did there was apparent confusion regarding terminology; thus it is not clear that the meetings reported were all actually resolution sessions nor that the settlements reported were all as result of resolution sessions.

Therefore, during FFY 2007, the BSEA launched a system whereby a form was sent to all LEAs against whom a hearing request had been filed. This form was to be completed by the Special Education Administrator and submitted to the BSEA reporting if a resolution session had been conducted in the individual case and, if so, whether it had resulted in an agreement. Again, there was concern as to the reliability of the data gleaned from this process as the number of responses did not seem high enough. Therefore, the BSEA has recently implemented a process wherein hearing officers request resolution session information from parties during the initial (19) day conference call, record such data, and file it with the Assistant Director who maintains BSEA statistics. MASSDE anticipates that this confirmation of information as close to the date of the resolution session as possible will result in the best information possible and we look forward to our next APR submission.


The targets, improvement activities, timelines and resources for FFY 2007 remain appropriate. MASSDE intends to consider revision of the baseline and targets prior to submission of the next APR for FFY 2008 using the more complete data collection method now in use.
Monitoring Priority: Effective General Supervision Part B / General Supervision

Indicator 19: Percent of mediations held that resulted in mediation agreements.

(20 U.S.C. 1416(a)(3)(B))

Measurement (data from Appendix E): Percent = \((2.1(a)(i) + 2.1(b)(i)) \div (2.1)\) times 100.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FFY</th>
<th>Measurable and Rigorous Target</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2007 (2007-2008)</td>
<td>86%</td>
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</tbody>
</table>


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th># of Mediations</th>
<th>906</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td># of Mediation Agreements</td>
<td>760</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of Mediations Held that Resulted in Mediation Agreements</td>
<td>83.9%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Discussion of Improvement Activities Completed and Explanation of Progress or Slippage that occurred for FFY 2007 (2007-2008):

Explaination of Progress or Slippage

The MASSDE mediation program is managed by the Bureau of Special Education Appeals, Mediation Office (BSEA-Mediation) and is nationally recognized as providing highly effective mediation services. The MA SPP identified our target setting for this indicator to be a maintenance target as it was strongly felt that although tracking mediation agreements was important, it would be inappropriate to suggest that we seek to “compel” parties in mediation to reach agreement. Therefore, while the 83.8% reported for FFY 2007 represents only slight improvement over the FFY 2006 percentage (83.7%) and is slightly lower than our FFY 2004
baseline year of 85.9%, we believe that 83.8% appropriately meets our essential goal of maintaining a high level of mediation agreements. It should also be noted that the raw number of mediations conducted this fiscal year increased by 9.2% over the prior year.

The BSEA will continue to work toward the target percentage for this indicator.

**Improvement Activities Completed**

All improvement activities identified in the MA SPP for FFY 2006 have been completed, and FFY 2007 improvement activities identified to-date in the MA SPP have been completed.

**Revisions, with Justification, to Proposed Targets / Improvement Activities / Timelines / Resources for FFY 2007 (2007-2008):**

The targets, improvement activities, timelines and resources for FFY 2007 remain appropriate at this time.
Monitoring Priority: Effective General Supervision Part B / General Supervision

Indicator 20: State reported data (618 and Massachusetts State Performance Plan and Annual Performance Report) are timely and accurate.

(20 U.S.C. 1416(a)(3)(B))

Measurement:
State reported data, including 618 data and annual performance reports, are:
  a. Submitted on or before due dates (February 1 for child count, including race and ethnicity; placement; November 1 for exiting, discipline, personnel; and February 1 for Annual Performance Reports); and
  b. Accurate (describe mechanisms for ensuring error-free, consistent, valid and reliable data, and evidence that these standards are met).

Please see Appendix F for scoring rubric used to calculate this measurement.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FFY</th>
<th>Measurable and Rigorous Target</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2007 (2007-2008)</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Actual Target Data for FFY 2007 (2007-2008): 98.8% on-time submissions, 100% of data submitted

Indicator #20 Calculation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Step</th>
<th>Formula</th>
<th>Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A.</td>
<td>APR Total =</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B.</td>
<td>618 Total =</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C.</td>
<td>Grand Total (APR Total (A) + 618 Total (B)) =</td>
<td>88</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Percent of timely and accurate data = (C divided by 86) x 100 = 98.8%

The target data for FFY 2007 were based on MASSDE’s ability to produce its required data submissions for FFY 2007 (618 data: Tables 1-7, and the APR submission) in a manner consistent with OSEP’s data submission requirements. The percent compliance indicates the percentage of data submissions that were successfully submitted for FFY 2007. For further explanation on how this calculation was derived, please refer to the scoring rubric located in Appendix F.
Discussion of Improvement Activities Completed and Explanation of Progress or Slippage that occurred for FFY 2007 (2007-2008):

Explanation of Progress or Slippage

Applying OSEP’s revised Indicator 20 rubric from December 2008 to last year’s calculation, MASSDE achieved a score of 93.5% on its submission of required state data in FFY 2006. For FFY 2007, MASSDE showed improvement with this Indicator by achieving a score of 98.8%.

In the APR data section of the scoring rubric, MASSDE has one issue. For purposes of Indicator 20 reporting, the data for Indicator 18 are not considered valid and reliable for FFY 2007. Please see Indicator 18 in the MA APR for a description of how this issue is being addressed. Data submitted for all other indicators were valid and reliable, and the correct calculations were used. In the 618 data section of the scoring rubric, MASSDE revised the calculation based on clarifications made in the Massachusetts Part B FFY 2007 SPP/APR Status Table provided by the Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) on March 30, 2009. Data for all seven 618 data tables are considered timely, complete, and passed the edit checks.

Improvement Activities

This was the first year in which all LEAs in the state reported their personnel data through our new Education Personnel Information Management System (EPIMS), which collects personnel data from the LEAs at an individual level. In the past, our data were collected through our District and School Staffing Report (DSSR), which collected data from the LEAs at an aggregate level.

For this year’s 618 data submission, Massachusetts has also achieved EDEN-only status for the following 618 Tables: 2, 4, 5, and 6. Massachusetts was already approved for EDEN-only submissions for Tables 1 and 3 in FFY 2006. Therefore, Massachusetts is now an EDEN-only state for all 618 data submissions for which this distinction can be attained. Massachusetts will continue working towards providing timely and accurate personnel data to OSEP through our future EDEN submissions, and our Table 7 submissions. We anticipate continuing to work with our personnel to improve data accuracy and timelines to meet the compliance deadline by FFY 2010.

Massachusetts Response to the OSEP Part B FFY 2006 SPP/APR Letter and Response Table

The OSEP Part B FFY 2006 SPP/APR Letter and Response Table required the state to review its improvement activities and revise them if appropriate. MASSDE has reviewed and revised our improvement activities to further detail changes in data collection practices, including the revision of internal timelines for reviewing and cleaning district data files for the purposes for analysis and reporting. These revisions are reflected in the MA SPP.


Although MASSDE began using the OSEP-recommended Indicator 20 scoring rubric in FFY 2007 (see Appendix F), an edit to OSEP’s Indicator 20 scoring rubric was recently distributed in December 2008. Therefore, MASSDE is submitting a revised State Performance Plan submission for this indicator to reflect changes to our baseline data for this indicator according to the new rubric. The baseline data (FFY 2004) are now 50.0%, and data for FFY 2007 are 98.8%.

In response to the OSEP Part B FFY 2006 SPP/APR Letter and Response Table, improvement activities have been revised in the MA SPP and include updated activities. The format for
presenting the improvement activities also has been revised. See the MA SPP for the revised activities.
Appendix A: Description of Selected Cross-Cutting Improvement Activities

Many of the MASSDE improvement activities in FFY 2007 are cross-cutting – that is, they have an impact on multiple indicator areas. The components of these activities that relate to specific indicators are described under their respective MA APR sections. Below is a fuller description of these cross-cutting activities.

Contents of Appendix A:
- Central Massachusetts Communities of Care Positive Behavioral Interventions (PBIS) Grant
- Collaboration with Stakeholders
- Comprehensive System of Personnel Development Training Project (CSPD)
- Inclusive Concurrent Enrollment Partnership Programs for Students with
- Massachusetts FOCUS Academy
- National Association of State Directors of Special Education (NASSDE) Satellite Series
- Project FOCUS Academy
- Secondary School Reading Grant
- Special Education Leadership Academies
- Special Education Professional Development Summer Institutes
- Special Education Program Improvement Grants

Central Massachusetts Communities of Care Positive Behavioral Interventions (PBIS) Grant

Indicators Impacted: 2, 4, 5

The purpose of this grant program is to support the partnership of select school districts in Worcester County with the Central Massachusetts Communities of Care Project (CMCC) toward developing and implementing Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS). PBIS is a tiered system for improving school climate by supporting positive behavior throughout a school. CMCC is a provider of care management services for youth with serious emotional disturbance and has two community-based family centers in Worcester County. Schools receive PBIS training and associated technical assistance and other resources from the Central Massachusetts Communities of Care Project.

The priorities of this grant program are to:
- increase the capacity of school districts in Worcester County to foster positive school climates, support positive behaviors throughout participating schools, and to reduce disruptive behaviors; and to
- increase participating schools' ability to identify students, grades 4-8, in need of mental health services, and to respond to the need for intensive support via both internal capacity and community-based specialty providers of coordinated wraparound services.

The overarching goal of the school district-CMCC partnership is to identify at-risk students who are in need of mental health services and to reduce and/or prevent court involvement among students with emotional impairments. The participating districts receive professional development as well as onsite assistance in the development and implementation of the principles of PBIS. In its first year (FFY 2007), a total of four districts, six schools, and over 50 school personnel (including teachers, administrators, related service providers, paraprofessional, parents, and students) participated. In the second year of the program (FFY 2008), this first cohort of districts will move from the planning stages into implementation.

Over the next four years, four new cohorts of districts will be added, with up to six new schools each year. Overall, up to 30 schools will be impacted in Worcester County.
Collaboration with Stakeholders

Indicators Impacted: 1-20

Special Education Advisory Council (SAC) – The SAC is a group of parents and professionals charged by federal special education law and the state to provide policy guidance with respect to special education and related services for students with disabilities within the Commonwealth. Its responsibilities include:
- Advise MASSDE on unmet needs within the state in the education of students with disabilities;
- Comment publicly on proposed rules and regulations involving special education;
- Advise MASSDE in developing evaluations and corrective action plans; and
- Assist in the coordination of services to students with disabilities.

The SAC meets nine times during the year.

State Performance Plan Indicator Interest Groups - The Special Education Planning and Policy Office continues to recruit members for MA SPP Indicator Interest Groups. Interest groups for each indicator areas have been developed, and members of these groups receive e-mail updates on current work related to the Indicator area. These groups meet regularly to provide input and feedback on issues related to specific MA SPP indicators.

State Special Education Steering Committee – Stakeholders from across disciplines, including parent, educators, administrators, advocates, agency representatives, meet annually to continue to:
- Review baseline and current data (618 data and monitoring data);
- Identify areas in need of attention; and
- Plan for potential improvement activities.

Comprehensive System of Personnel Development (CSPD) Training Project

Indicators Impacted: 3, 5, 11, 13, 14

The Comprehensive System of Personnel Development (CSPD) Training Project was developed as a response to requirements of the Individuals with Disabilities Education (IDEA) 97. The Act required states to develop a multifaceted approach to personnel development under regulations for a Comprehensive System of Personnel Development (CSPD).

To fulfill this obligation, the Special Education Planning and Policy Development Office (SEPP) instituted a series of training activities. These training activities are meant to supplement ongoing personnel preparation activities provided within school districts and other agencies.

The CSPD Training Project consists of three components.
1. Training Modules: SEPP is providing training units to assist school districts and other agencies in providing high quality professional development on special education related topics. The units consist of annotated PowerPoint Presentations and, in some cases, supplemental handouts. Topics presently available include:
   a. The Massachusetts IEP Process
   b. A Principal's Role and Special Education in Massachusetts
   c. Is Special Education the Right Service?
   d. Transition From Adolescence Into Adulthood in Massachusetts
   e. The Massachusetts Transition Planning Chart and Effective Transition Planning

2. CSPD Trainers: SEPP has contracted with a limited number of trainers who receive ongoing training on the CSPD Training Modules. CSPD Trainers are made available as much as possible to groups of 50+ individuals in public schools, collaboratives and approved special education schools. Requests for training for groups larger than 50 people serving multiple districts and/or agencies are given priority.
3. **CSPD Districts**: The 40 largest districts are invited to send their district's professional development provider to training sessions on the modules. It is an opportunity for participants to impact on MASSDE work (including the development of new modules) and network with colleagues.

### Inclusive Concurrent Enrollment Partnership Program for Students with Disabilities

**Indicators Impacted** – 13, 14

This state-funded pilot grant program is designed to develop partnerships between high schools in public school districts and partnering state public institutions of higher education to offer inclusive concurrent enrollment opportunities for students with disabilities, ages 18-22, in credit or non-credit courses that include non-disabled students. These partnerships will result in improved systems that better serve students with disabilities and support their college and work success.

The partnership programs are designed to 1) promote and enhance academic, social, functional, and employment skills and outcomes, and 2) provide opportunities for students with severe disabilities to participate with their non-disabled peers in inclusive credit or non-credit courses, and 3) promote participation in the student life of the college community.

FFY 2007 was the second year of this program, and it has continued in FFY 2008. There are currently six partnerships in the grant program. These six partnerships consist of seven community colleges, one four-year college, and 31 high schools.

### Massachusetts FOCUS Academy

**Indicators Impacted** – 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 8, 13, 14

MFA is a federally funded five-year grant (SPDG) that builds upon the previous successes of Project FOCUS and Project FOCUS Academy (PFA). The grant program provides online professional development opportunities and leadership institutes to educators, families, and other stakeholders on a variety of topics related to instructing students with disabilities, with a particular focus on middle and high schools.

Course offerings include Universal Design for Learning, Positive Behavioral Supports, Family Engagement, and Post-Secondary Transition. The MFA programmatic offerings are research-based and target areas that impact student outcomes. In fall 2008 – the first semester in which all four content areas were offered – 187 educators from 59 districts across Massachusetts participated in these courses.

### National Association of State Directors of Special Education (NASDSE) Satellite Series

**Indicators Impacted**: 5, 13, 14

The National Association of State Directors of Special Education (NASDSE), with support from the Pennsylvania Department of Education and the Pennsylvania Training and Technical Assistance Network (PaTTAN), provides the NASDSE Satellite Series. These telecasts bring nationally recognized experts to the state using technology, providing an affordable means of quality personnel development for a variety of stakeholders. Experts provide important information on high-interest topics to an audience that includes state directors of special education, state agency staff, local administrators, teachers, related service providers, higher education faculty, families and other stakeholders.

There are three ways to bring the NASDSE Satellite Conference Series to a district or school:

1. C-band satellite signal capability to view live; or
2. A computer that can view Windows media stream; or
3. A video request of the conference to be sent to the school library.
The theme for FFY 2007 was *High School and Beyond: Strategies and Opportunities for Positive Results*. The dates and topics for the training provided are listed below:

1. October 3, 2007 - High School Redesign: Expanding Resources and Opportunities through School/Business Partnerships
2. November 14, 2007 - Redesigning Teacher Preparation: Collaborative Programs in General and Special Education
3. March 5, 2008 - Redesigning Instructional Delivery: Co-Teaching as a Strategy for Success
4. May 7, 2008 - Moving From High School to Post-school Opportunities: Transition Components and Strategies for High School Redesign

**Project FOCUS Academy**

*Indicators Impacted: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 8, 13, 14*

In the fall of 2004, MASSDE was awarded a three-year, United States Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (USDOE) funded State Improvement Grant (SIG) - Project FOCUS Academy (PFA). Project FOCUS Academy was designed to develop professional development programs to help students with disabilities build sound career goals and learn skills to ensure successful post-secondary outcomes. As part of the SIG, MASSDE works with educators from selected high schools.

The design of the project required study groups from high schools to participate in face-to-face and distance-learning professional development opportunities in the areas of:

- Transition/Post-Secondary Outcomes;
- School-wide Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports;
- Universal Design for Learning; and
- Family Participation.

The distance-learning model was provided through the Department's Massachusetts Online Network for Education (MassONE). Three courses in each content area were offered over the course of two years. Building on this coursework, participants from the nine participating high schools were involved in Implementation Year activities in FFY 2007 ranging from using new techniques in classrooms to teaching other high school staff about each of the three content areas.

**Secondary School Reading Grant**

*Indicators Impacted: 3, 5*

The Secondary School Reading grant program selects middle schools, high schools and vocational schools to receive four years of funding to develop and implement a school wide approach to improving reading achievement. Generally, each school receives between $8,000 and $10,000 per year. The first year of the grant is focused on self-assessment and program planning. The remaining three years are for action planning and implementation.

This program has been in place for six years and has provided funding for more than 100 schools in four cohorts. For the first four years, all schools were eligible to compete for the grant. In the past two years, eligibility has been limited to schools that are considered high-need based on poor MCAS performance or unusually large special education populations.

School wide approaches must include:

- involvement and training for all professional and paraprofessional staff;
- reading across content areas;
- multiple targeted intervention programs for struggling readers;
- adequate time for reading instruction;
- assessment that drives instruction;
- a variety of flexible grouping patterns; and
- leadership structures that provide ongoing support and guidance.

Funded districts must have an identified district coordinator and develop a cross-sectional Reading Leadership Team in each participating school. Members of the leadership teams attend MASSDE-sponsored professional development events about three times per year.

### Special Education Leadership Academies

**Indicators Impacted:** 8, 11

As part of the Special Education Summer Institute, MASSDE provides two Special Education Leadership Academies each year. Theses academies provide valuable opportunities for special education administrators at the district level to develop new leadership skills and improve current skills.

The Special Education Leadership Academy I is open to administrators who have 1-5 years of experience, while the Special Education Leadership Academy II is open to administrators with more than 5 years of experience. Both Academies provide professional development to administrators on the following areas:

- Effective Leadership in the areas of state and federal laws and regulations;
- Fiscal Administration;
- Data Collection and Analysis;
- Staff Recruitment and Retention;
- Instructional Program Design and Improvement; and
- Access to the general curriculum based on the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks.

### Special Education Professional Development Summer Institutes

**Indicators Impacted:** 3, 4, 5, 8, 14

The Special Education Summer Institutes provide statewide free special education professional development summer institutes designed to increase the practical and policy knowledge of special education professionals. Sponsored by MASSDE in partnership with school districts, educational collaboratives, institutions of higher education, and professional associations, these institutes are designed to support approved private special education schools, educational collaboratives and local school districts’ efforts to increase the quality of programs and services provided to students with disabilities and increase the number of highly qualified educators working in the field of Special Education.

Topics for the 2007 Special Education Summer Institutes included:

- *Individualized Educational Plan Team Facilitation Skills*
- *Managing Behavior in an Inclusive Classroom*
- *Occupational Therapy Services in Educational Settings*
- *Special Education Administrative Leadership Academy*
- *Teaching Strategies for Students with Vision Impairments, Blindness or Deaf-blindness*
- *Teaching Strategies for Students Who are Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing*
- *Teaching Strategies for Students with Autism Spectrum Disorders in the General Education Classroom*
- *Secondary Transition*

Topics for the 2008 Special Education Summer Institutes included:

- *Individualized Educational Plan Team Facilitation Skills*
- *Managing Behavior in an Inclusive Classroom*
- *Occupational Therapy Services in Educational Settings*
- *Special Education Administrative Leadership Academy*
- Teaching Strategies for Students with Vision Impairments, Blindness or Deaf-blindness
- Strategies for Students with Sensory Integration Dysfunction in an Inclusive Classroom
- Mathematics and Science and Technology Content Vocabulary for Educational Interpreters: Secondary Level (Grades 7-12) Institute
- Developing the Socialization Skills of Students with ASD in Inclusive Classroom
- Sustaining Braille Proficiency of Licensed Teachers of Students with Visual Impairments

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Special Education Program Improvement Grants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Indicators Impacted: 3, 4, 5, 11</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The purpose of this grant program is to fund professional development activities that will help to improve the skills and capacity of educators to meet the diverse needs of students with disabilities. Fund Code 274 is available to all public school districts and educational collaboratives, and Fund Code 249 is available to all approved private special education schools.

For FFY 2007, the priorities for Fund Code 274 were:
- Priority 1 - Enhancing Induction and Mentoring Programs *(required)*
- Priority 2a - Serving Students with Autism Spectrum Disorders in Inclusive Settings
- Priority 2b - Curriculum Development, Instruction, and Classroom Assessment
- Priority 2c - Meeting the Behavioral and Social Needs of a Diverse Student Population
- Priority 3 - Recruitment and/or Additional Professional Development Needs as Identified by the District or Educational Collaborative *(10% max could be used for this priority)*

For FFY 2007, the priorities for Fund Code 249 were:
- Priority 1 - Induction/Mentoring
- Priority 2 - Curriculum Development, Instruction, and Classroom Assessment

Almost every school district in the state utilized Fund Code 274 funds in FFY 2007, and regional professional development conferences designed to support the priorities of the grant were held for districts throughout the state.
APPENDIX B -- Massachusetts Parent Survey for Special Education for Indicator #8

- This is a survey for parents of students receiving special education services. Your responses will help guide efforts to improve services and results for children and families. (Note: If you have more than one child currently receiving special education services, you may choose to submit one or more surveys, based upon your experiences as related to your children.)
- For each statement below, please select one of the following response choices: very strongly disagree (VSD), strongly disagree (SD), disagree (D), agree (A), strongly agree (SA), very strongly agree (VSA). You may skip any item that you feel does not apply to you or your child.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Schools' Efforts to Partner with Parents</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>VSD</td>
<td>SD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. I am considered an equal partner with teachers and other professionals in planning my child's program.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. I was offered special assistance (such as child care) so that I could participate in the Individualized Educational Program (IEP) meeting.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. At the IEP meeting, we discussed how my child would participate in statewide assessments.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. My child's teachers give me enough time and opportunities to discuss my child's needs and progress.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. All of my concerns and recommendations were documented on the IEP.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Teachers and administrators at my child's school invite me to share my knowledge and experience with school personnel.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. I was given information about organizations that offer support for parents of students with disabilities.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. I have been asked for my opinion about how well special education services are meeting my child's needs.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. My child's evaluation report is written in terms I understand.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. IEP meetings are scheduled at a time and place that are convenient for me.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Teachers are available to speak with me.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Teachers treat me as a team member.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. I feel I can disagree with my child's special education program or services without negative consequences for me or my child.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Teachers and administrators:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>VSD</td>
<td>SD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. - seek out parent input.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. - show sensitivity to the needs of students with disabilities and their families.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. - encourage me to participate in the decision-making process.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. - respect my cultural heritage.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The school:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>VSD</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>D</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>SA</th>
<th>VSA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>18.</td>
<td>- has a person on staff who is available to answer parents’ questions.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19.</td>
<td>- communicates regularly with me regarding my child’s progress on IEP goals.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20.</td>
<td>- gives me choices with regard to services that address my child's needs.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21.</td>
<td>- offers parents training about special education issues.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22.</td>
<td>- offers parents a variety of ways to communicate with teachers.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23.</td>
<td>- gives parents the help they may need to play an active role in their child’s education.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24.</td>
<td>- provides information on agencies that can assist my child in the transition from school.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25.</td>
<td>- explains what options parents have if they disagree with a decision of the school.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Demographic Information

26. Number of years child has received special education services

- Less than 1 year
- 1-3 years
- 4-7 years
- More than 7 years

27. Child’s race/ethnicity

- White
- Black or African-American
- Hispanic or Latino
- Asian or Pacific Islander
- American Indian or Alaskan Native
- Multi-racial

28. Language spoken in the home

- English
- Spanish
- Portuguese
- Chinese
- Creole/Haitian
- Vietnamese
- Other ________________

29. Child’s school level

- Elementary School
- Middle School
- High School

30. Child’s Primary Disability (check one)

- Autism
- Communication Impairment
- Deaf-Blind Impairment
- Developmental Delay
- Emotional Impairment
- Health Impairment
- Hearing Impairment
- Intellectual Impairment
- Multiple Disabilities
- Neurological Impairment
- Physical Impairment
- Specific Learning Disability
- Vision Impairment

Thank you for participating.
APPENDIX C -- Massachusetts Post-School Outcomes Survey for Indicator #14

School District:
Student Name:
SASID: 
Date of Exit from School (mm/yyyy):
Gender: □ - Male □ - Female

Question 1: What is your educational status since leaving high school?
☐ - CURRENTLY ATTENDING college, community college, or a technical school
☐ - NOT CURRENTLY ATTENDING, but have attended college, community college, or a technical school at some time since leaving high school
☐ - HAVE NOT ATTENDED college, community college, or a technical school at any time since leaving high school (Skip Questions 2 and 3. Go to Question 4.)

Question 2: If you have attended college, community college, or a technical school at any time since leaving high school, check your enrollment status.
☐ - Full-time student enrolled in a degree program
☐ - Part-time student enrolled in a degree program
☐ - Not enrolled in a degree program, but taking college-level courses

Question 3: If you have attended college, community college, or a technical school at any time since leaving high school, check the type of program.
☐ - 4-year college or university
☐ - 2- year college or university
☐ - Technical or vocational school
☐ - Other. Please describe:

Question 4: What is your current employment status?
☐ - Employed – in the competitive job market, including self-employment
☐ - Full-Time Military Service
☐ - Supported Employment – job placement with ongoing support from a job coach or agency
☐ - Unemployed - not employed but looking for employment
☐ - Not in the Labor Force - not employed and not looking for employment

Question 5: If you are NOT CURRENTLY employed, have you been employed at any time since leaving high school?
☐ - Yes
☐ - No

Question 6: If you have been employed at any time since leaving high school, check whether you were working full-time or part-time in your most recent job.
☐ - Full-time – 35 or more hours per week, including summer employment
☐ - Part-time – less than 35 hours per week, including summer employment
☐ - Not employed since leaving high school

Thank you for participating in this survey. If you have any questions, please call ______.
If you are returning this survey by mail, send it to: ______.
## APPENDIX D -- Indicator #15 Worksheet

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indicator/Indicator Clusters</th>
<th>General Supervision System Components</th>
<th># of LEAs Issued Findings in FFY 2006 (7/1/06 to 6/30/07)</th>
<th>(a) # of Findings of noncompliance identified in FFY 2006 (7/1/06 to 6/30/07)</th>
<th>(b) # of Findings of noncompliance from (a) which were corrected no later than one year from identification</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Percent of youth with IEPs graduating from high school with a regular diploma.</td>
<td>Monitoring Activities: Self-Assessment/ Local APR, Data Review, Desk Audit, Onsite Visits, or Other</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Percent of youth with IEPs dropping out of high school.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. Percent of youth who had IEPs, are no longer in secondary school and who have been competitively employed, enrolled in some type of postsecondary school, or both, within one year of leaving high school.</td>
<td>Dispute Resolution: Complaints, Hearings</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Participation and performance of children with disabilities on statewide assessments.</td>
<td>Monitoring Activities: Self-Assessment/ Local APR, Data Review, Desk Audit, Onsite Visits, or Other</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>211</td>
<td>155</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Percent of preschool children with IEPs who demonstrated improved outcomes.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4A. Percent of districts identified as having a significant discrepancy in the rates of suspensions and expulsions of students with disabilities for greater than 10 days in a school year.</td>
<td>Monitoring Activities: Self-Assessment/ Local APR, Data Review, Desk Audit, Onsite Visits, or Other</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Percent of children with IEPs aged 6 through 21 - educational placements.</td>
<td>Monitoring Activities: Self-Assessment/ Local APR, Data Review, Desk Audit, Onsite Visits, or Other</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Percent of parents with a child receiving special education services who report that schools facilitated parent involvement as a means of improving services and results for children with</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

95
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indicator/Indicator Clusters</th>
<th>General Supervision System Components</th>
<th># of LEAs Issued Findings in FFY 2006 (7/1/06 to 6/30/07)</th>
<th>(a) # of Findings of noncompliance identified in FFY 2006 (7/1/06 to 6/30/07)</th>
<th>(b) # of Findings of noncompliance from (a) which were corrected no later than one year from identification</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Percent of districts with disproportionate representation of racial and ethnic groups in special education that is the result of inappropriate identification.</td>
<td>Dispute Resolution: Complaints, Hearings</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Percent of districts with disproportionate representation of racial and ethnic groups in specific disability categories that is the result of inappropriate identification.</td>
<td>Monitoring Activities: Self-Assessment/ Local APR, Data Review, Desk Audit, Onsite Visits, or Other</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Percent of children who were evaluated within 60 days of receiving parental consent for initial evaluation or, if the State establishes a timeframe within which the evaluation must be conducted, within that timeframe.</td>
<td>Monitoring Activities: Self-Assessment/ Local APR, Data Review, Desk Audit, Onsite Visits, or Other</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Percent of children referred by Part C prior to age 3, who are found eligible for Part B, and who have an IEP developed and implemented by their third birthdays.</td>
<td>Monitoring Activities: Self-Assessment/ Local APR, Data Review, Desk Audit, Onsite Visits, or Other</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. Percent of youth aged 16 and above with IEP that includes coordinated, measurable, annual IEP goals and transition services that will reasonably enable student to meet the post-secondary goals.</td>
<td>Monitoring Activities: Self-Assessment/ Local APR, Data Review, Desk Audit, Onsite Visits, or Other</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other areas of noncompliance: Faculty, Staff, and Administration</td>
<td>Monitoring Activities: Self-Assessment/ Local APR, Data Review, Desk Audit, Onsite Visits, or Other</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dispute Resolution: Complaints, Hearings</td>
<td>Dispute Resolution: Complaints, Hearings</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indicator/Indicator Clusters</td>
<td>General Supervision System Components</td>
<td># of LEAs Issued Findings in FFY 2006 (7/1/06 to 6/30/07)</td>
<td>(a) # of Findings of noncompliance identified in FFY 2006 (7/1/06 to 6/30/07)</td>
<td>(b) # of Findings of noncompliance from (a) which were corrected no later than one year from identification</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other areas of noncompliance: Recordkeeping</td>
<td>Monitoring Activities: Self-Assessment/Local APR, Data Review, Desk Audit, Onsite Visits, or Other</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other areas of noncompliance: Among Bureau of Special Education</td>
<td>Monitoring Activities: Self-Assessment/Local APR, Data Review, Desk Audit, Onsite Visits, or Other</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education Appeals findings, appropriateness of IEP or of placement;</td>
<td>Dispute Resolution: Complaints, Hearings</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>among complaint findings, multiple areas, the bulk of which (89)</td>
<td>Dispute Resolution: Complaints, Hearings</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>145</td>
<td>145</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>involved non-implementation or partial implementation of IEP</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sum the numbers down Column a and Column b</td>
<td></td>
<td>936</td>
<td>730</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent of noncompliance corrected within one year of identification</td>
<td></td>
<td>(b) / (a) X 100 =</td>
<td>78.0%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**APPENDIX E – Report of Dispute Resolution for FFY 2007**

Report of Dispute Resolution Under Part B of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act

2007-08

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SECTION A: Written, Signed complaints</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(1) Signed, written complaints total</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(1.1) Complaints with reports issued</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(a) Reports with findings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(b) Reports within timeline</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(c) Reports within extended timelines</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(1.2) Complaints withdrawn or dismissed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(1.3) Complaints pending</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(a) Complaint pending a due process hearing</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SECTION B: Mediation Requests</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(2) Mediation requests total</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(2.1) Mediations held</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(a) Mediations held related to due process complaints</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(i) Mediation agreements</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(b) Mediations held not related to due process complaints</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(i) Mediation agreements</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(2.2) Mediations not held (including pending)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SECTION C: Due Process Complaints</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(3) Due process complaints total</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(3.1) Resolution meetings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(a) Written settlement agreements</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(3.2) Hearings (fully adjudicated)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(a) Decisions within timeline (include expedited)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(b) Decisions within extended timeline</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(3.3) Resolved without a hearing</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SECTION D: Expedited Due Process Complaints (related to disciplinary decision)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(4) Expedited due process complaints total</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(4.1) Resolution sessions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(a) Written settlement agreements</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(4.2) Expedited hearings (fully adjudicated)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(a) Change of placement ordered</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### APPENDIX F – Indicator #20 Scoring Rubric

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>APR Indicator</th>
<th>Part B Indicator 20 – SPP/APR Data</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Valid and Reliable</td>
<td>Correct Calculation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3A</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3B</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3C</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4A</td>
<td>1</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
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**Subtotal** 37

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>APR Score Calculation</th>
<th>Timely Submission Points (5 points for submission of APR/SPP by February 2, 2009)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Grand Total** 42
### Part B Indicator 20 – 618 Data

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table</th>
<th>Timely</th>
<th>Complete Data</th>
<th>Passed Edit Check</th>
<th>Responded to Data Note Requests</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Table 1 – Child Count</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Due Date: 2/1/08</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 2 – Personnel</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Due Date: 11/1/08</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 3 – Ed. Environments</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Due Date: 2/1/08</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 4 – Exiting</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Due Date: 11/1/08</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 5 – Discipline</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Due Date: 11/1/08</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 6 – State Assessment</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Due Date: 2/1/09</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 7 – Dispute Resolution</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Due Date: 2/1/08</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Subtotal</strong></td>
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<td></td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Weighted Total</strong> (Subtotal x 1.87; round &lt;.50) =</td>
<td>43</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Indicator #20 Calculation

A. APR Total (43 total points available) = 42

B. 618 Total (43 total points available) = 43

C. APR Total (A) + 618 Total (B) = 85

D. **Indicator Score** (C divided by 86 times x 100) = 98.8%