

# **STATE PERFORMANCE PLAN / ANNUAL PERFORMANCE REPORT: PART B**

**for STATE FORMULA GRANT PROGRAMS under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act**

**For reporting on  
FFY 2021**

**Massachusetts**



**PART B DUE February 1, 2023**

**U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION  
WASHINGTON, DC 20202**

## Introduction

### Instructions

Provide sufficient detail to ensure that the Secretary and the public are informed of and understand the State's systems designed to drive improved results for students with disabilities and to ensure that the State Educational Agency (SEA) and Local Educational Agencies (LEAs) meet the requirements of IDEA Part B. This introduction must include descriptions of the State's General Supervision System, Technical Assistance System, Professional Development System, Stakeholder Involvement, and Reporting to the Public.

## Intro - Indicator Data

### Executive Summary

Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (MA DESE) is pleased to make available the Massachusetts IDEA Part B FFY 2021 State Performance Plan/Annual Performance Report (SPP/APR). Throughout the Indicator reporting, MA DESE continues to pursue high targets in order to reflect our Commonwealth's commitment to high-performance expectations for our students with disabilities. The SPP/APR serves as the primary blueprint that drives much of MA DESE's work in special education. The annual reporting and related monitoring of state and local performance and compliance indicators is one measure of assessing change in outcomes for students with IEPs. The SPP/APR provides baseline data, targets, discussion of the general supervision system, and improvement activities around which key special education work in the agency is organized. Input from key stakeholders is reflected in the SPP/APR targets and activities. The SPP/APR includes target data, data for the reporting year, an explanation of progress or slippage, and discussion of additional information that provides context for the year's results. MA DESE also reports annually to the public on the performance of LEAs compared to state targets. Current and historical SPP/APRs are available at: <http://www.doe.mass.edu/sped/spp/maspp.html>. LEA performance data may be reviewed at: [https://profiles.doe.mass.edu/statereport/special\\_education.aspx](https://profiles.doe.mass.edu/statereport/special_education.aspx).

Since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic in March 2020 MA DESE and LEAs within the Commonwealth have faced several challenges yet persevered to ensure that student outcomes continue to remain positive and rigorous. Schools across the Commonwealth returned to full in-person schooling in the Fall of 2021, yet the effects of the pandemic continue to linger on, which is evidenced in the performance of a number of Indicators. As discussed in Indicator 1, there continues to be a modified Competency Determination in place that affects graduation requirements for students in the Commonwealth. Within Indicator 3, the 2021-2022 school year was the first year of a full administration of the Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS) since the spring of 2019, which presented challenges of its own since certain subgroups of students would not have taken a full administration in 3 years, and some groups of students taking the MCAS would never taken the assessment before. Indicator 5 saw positive increases during FFY2021 with the number of students being served inside the regular classroom for more than 80% of the day, while also reporting that LEAs saw an increase in students' academic, social, and emotional needs. LEA staffing issues continued to be an issue that affected the performance of a number of compliance Indicators, particularly in Indicators 11 and 12, as COVID-19 related staffing issues may have contributed to delays in meeting regulatory timelines. Students who exited high school with an IEP in the Spring of 2021 faced their own challenges that may have impacted their decisions to either enroll in higher education or enter the competitive workforce, as shown in Indicator 14 data collection activities and responses.

MA DESE, in conjunction with the MA Department of Public Health, continued to jointly issue COVID-19 guidance and technical assistance. COVID-related guidance and resources for special education can be found at: <https://www.doe.mass.edu/covid19/sped.html>, and for all students here, <https://www.doe.mass.edu/covid19/>

MA DESE honors and commends our courageous and resilient educators who continue to serve Massachusetts students under extraordinarily difficult circumstances.

### Additional information related to data collection and reporting

Starting with the FFY2020 SPP/APR cycle, MA DESE engaged with stakeholders in a year-long process throughout 2021 to determine new Indicator baselines and targets. These conversations highlighted our collective commitment to high standards for Massachusetts students in the context of pandemic reality. This work continues in the FFY2021 SPP/APR and beyond, as MA DESE develops and refines systems of continuous stakeholder engagement across all Indicators in order to improve outcomes for students with disabilities. This process is described in the narrative below.

### Number of Districts in your State/Territory during reporting year

400

### General Supervision System:

#### The systems that are in place to ensure that IDEA Part B requirements are met, e.g., monitoring, dispute resolution, etc.

MA DESE has an integrated system of general supervision consisting of eight key components that are aligned to ensure that IDEA Part B requirements are met:

- State Performance Plan (<https://www.doe.mass.edu/sped/spp/maspp.html>);
- Policies, Procedures and Effective Implementation (<https://www.doe.mass.edu/sped/policy.html>);
- Integrated Monitoring Activities (<https://www.doe.mass.edu/sped/cc.html>);
- Fiscal Management (<https://www.doe.mass.edu/federalgrants/idea/>);
- Data on Processes and Results (<https://www.doe.mass.edu/DataAccountability.html>);
- Improvement, Correction, Incentives and Sanctions (<https://www.doe.mass.edu/sped/osep/determinations.html>);
- Effective Dispute Resolution (<https://www.doe.mass.edu/prs/>); and
- Targeted Technical Assistance and Professional Development (<https://www.doe.mass.edu/sped/ta.html>).

### Technical Assistance System:

#### The mechanisms that the State has in place to ensure the timely delivery of high quality, evidenced based technical assistance and support to LEAs.

In an effort to ensure that the MA DESE's Special Education Accountability system is a transparent process focused on data that most impacts outcomes for students with disabilities (SwD), the Special Education Determination process was revised in 2021. In making the 2021-2022 special education determinations, MA DESE assessed LEAs' performance and compliance data, including data about SwD from the general accountability system, Tiered Focused Monitoring process, State complaints, and State Performance Plan/Annual Performance Reports.

A LEA Determinations Rubric was used to calculate the LEA Determination percentage and assign each LEA a determination category. The Rubric included data points for the annual dropout rate and 5-year cohort graduation rate for students with disabilities; Public School Monitoring (PSM) compliance findings (including for Indicators 11, 12, and 13); Problem Resolution System (PRS) complaint findings; Indicators 4B, 9, 10 compliance

findings; a combined full inclusion rate for Indicators 5 and 6; and Significant Disproportionality status.

MA DESE provides technical assistance to all LEAs so that data from the determinations were used to identify root causes for compliance and performance outcomes, with a particular emphasis on equitable education and services for students with disabilities with multiple intersecting identities such as students of color, English learners, low-income students, LGBTQ+ students, etc.

Additionally, MA DESE supports districts assigned the 'Needs Assistance', 'Needs Intervention', or 'Needs Substantial Intervention' determination by offering targeted technical assistance related to special education. Coordinated assistance and intervention are provided from multiple offices including, the Special Education Planning and Policy office (SEPP), Office of Public School Monitoring (PSM), Statewide System of Support (SSoS), Office of School Turnaround (OST), and Office of Charter Schools & School Redesign (CSSRD). Assistance is tailored to meet an LEA's needs, depending on the reasons for which an LEA was identified as needing technical assistance or intervention.

MA DESE's comprehensive systems of technical assistance (TA) and professional development (PD) are tied directly to local and statewide needs identified through the SPP/APR data collection and review processes and through the state's accountability system. Central to this work is the State's framework for district accountability and assistance: <http://www.doe.mass.edu/accountability/>. The framework creates a coherent structure for linking the state's accountability and assistance activities for LEAs and provides school and LEA leaders with common indicators and tools for assessing systems and practices, diagnosing challenges, and identifying appropriate interventions. Under the system, Massachusetts adopted accountability categories that define the progress that schools and LEAs are making and the type of support they may receive from MA DESE.

Special Education Planning and Policy (SEPP) office, along with the Public-School Monitoring (PSM) and the Statewide System of Support (SSoS) offices provide assistance and facilitate improvement planning in schools and districts identified by the accountability system. This includes districts and schools demonstrating performance gaps for students with disabilities. Staff from these offices collaborate to provide direct support in the field for planning and connections to existing resources. Throughout the year SSoS convenes educators from across districts to learn from each other in networks as well as offering TA to districts through their Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS) Academies. These Academies are designed to aid school and district teams with the implementation of tiered systems of instruction and support. Focus areas include Culturally Responsive Practices Leadership (CRPL), Inclusive Instruction through Universal Design for Learning (UDL), Literacy, Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS), Social, Emotional, and Behavioral and Mental Health Systems (SEB), Systemic Student Support (S3), and Tiered Math. Any district was welcome to apply to these academies, but priority was given to districts in the bottom 10th percentile of the Accountability system, who had "low performing" specific student subgroups, and/or had low high school graduation rates.

MA DESE also provides a coordinated set of guidance documents, technical assistance, and support to LEAs working to improve results for students with IEPs. Specifically, MA DESE uses special education determinations, SPP/APR indicator data, compliance data, and other achievement data to tailor technical assistance (TA) specifically to the needs of LEAs. Conversely, LEAs can and are encouraged to analyze local level data and make requests for technical assistance based on their analyses. Some examples of TA and intervention available to all LEAs include Technical Assistance Advisories (<https://www.doe.mass.edu/sped/advisories/default.html>); Frequently Asked Questions, (e.g., <https://www.doe.mass.edu/sped/osep/determinations-faq.docx>; <https://www.doe.mass.edu/sped/osep/determinations-faq.docx>); MA DESE-facilitated Webinars for Special Education Directors and their staff; and compliance monitoring. Finally, for LEAs with a Special Education Determination of Needs Assistance or Needs Intervention, MA DESE provides direct, one-on-one TA to address the problems and create action plans for improvement, such as the Making Money Matter (M3) grant, which can be found at <https://www.doe.mass.edu/turnaround/redesign/m3/>. This work is done within all programmatic offices at MA DESE and in collaboration with other state agencies and national technical assistance and support centers, including the Early Childhood Technical Assistance Center, the IDEA Data Center (IDC), the Center for IDEA Fiscal Reporting (CIFR), the Positive Behavioral Interventions & Support Technical Assistance Center, the Center on the Social and Emotional Foundations for Early Learning, and the National Center for Systemic Improvement.

#### **Professional Development System:**

**The mechanisms the State has in place to ensure that service providers have the skills to effectively provide services that improve results for children with disabilities.**

MA DESE has a robust and comprehensive system of professional development (PD) for our educators and service providers, designed to support and improve results for all students, including students with disabilities.

MA DESE continues to emphasize the Deeper Learning initiative, <https://www.doe.mass.edu/deeperlearning/>. In this work, MA DESE partners with educators and leaders via professional development, coaching, guidance, tools, and resources, all built on a foundation of educational equity. These partnerships, trainings, and resources deliberately work to cultivate critical consciousness, draw upon culturally sustaining practices, and develop an asset-based, intersectional lens in educators across the state. Furthering this work, MA DESE launched the Kaleidoscope Educator Network for schools and districts to transform their existing use of high-quality instructional materials through the Deeper Learning practices and professional learning.

In partnership with the Center for Applied Special Technology (CAST), the "Students and Families First Coalition" (SFFC) (<https://www.cast.org/our-work/projects/iep-improvement-project-empowering-massachusetts-schools-improve-service>) formed in 2020 and continues to date. It is made up of representatives from the Rennie Center for Ed Research and Policy (<https://www.renniecenter.org/>), the Federation for Students with Special Needs (<https://fcsn.org/>), and Blackprint Educational Consulting (<https://www.theblackprintinc.com/>). SFFC has been working with a group of Early Adopters (EAs) (17 schools from 12 public school districts and 3 approved private special education schools) to achieve the following goals:

- Use data to identify areas for improvement in the IEP process and improve outcomes for SwD.
- Collaborate with stakeholders to create a strategic IEP improvement plan relevant to the school context.
- Strategically implement the new IEP process.
- Use high-leverage practices to ensure that students with disabilities achieve academic success.

EAs have continued to work on identifying systemic problems of practice and applying a Plan-Do-Study-Act (PDSA) cycle of inquiry and improvement which will be included in a "Systems Improvement Playbook" for use by schools and districts across the Commonwealth.

MA DESE continues its work to transform the referral, evaluation, eligibility, and IEP development process guidance and tools. We continue to prioritize student and parent engagement through the creation of accessible resources that are easy to understand and use. Such resources will increase the capacity of diverse groups of parents to participate in the education system as well-informed partners who can fully engage in improvement activities. The MA Referral, Evaluation, and Eligibility Guide (<https://360.articulate.com/review/content/1409ce81-2b9e-437a-9957-a747535ca2b0/review>) is an online learning tool designed to guide the user through the requirements of these processes.

MA DESE has continued to add to our tools and resources on IDEA Equitable Services (<https://www.doe.mass.edu/sped/proshare/>).

#### **Educator Preparation and Professional Development**

A core strategy in MA DESE's Strategic Plan is to promote high quality educator development. MA DESE continues to prepare new teachers and intends to narrow the impact gaps between new and experienced teachers, improve retention rates for LEAs, and improve student outcomes, particularly for our

most vulnerable and underserved populations — inclusive of low-income students, English Learners, students of color, and SwD. MA DESE offers resources and professional learning opportunities to enhance educator effectiveness for early-career educators, including resources for pre-service candidates and resources for in-service educators.

MA DESE continues to streamline and improve processes for state licensure requirements. MA DESE also maintains and updates the Subject-Matter Knowledge Requirements (SMKs) (<https://www.doe.mass.edu/edprep/domains/instruction/>) that define what content educators should know in each license field and that align to the curriculum standards for students as outlined in the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks. Massachusetts licensure tests (MTEL) are based on SMKs and the Frameworks, and educator preparation programs rely on SMKs to guide their programming.

Furthermore, MA DESE reviews the quality of programs offered by educator preparation providers. MA DESE, together with trained evaluators, review and approve sponsoring organizations (including higher education institutions, non-profits, and LEAs) and examine a range of educator preparation program data, including survey data collected from a range of program stakeholders. MA DESE provides organizations with formative feedback based on the performance data of the candidates they prepare and shares data tools with educator preparation providers to improve the educational experience of candidates.

Additionally, MA DESE offers Special Education Leadership Institutes that focus on four key principles of state and federal priorities for student and educator success. These Leadership Institutes are offered to New Special Education Directors (fewer than 5 years of experience), Experienced Special Education Directors (more than 5 years of experience), Educational Team Chairs, and Early Childhood Coordinators. During these Institutes MA DESE focuses on High-Quality Professional Development (HQPD) and focuses on the principles of functional and ongoing assessment, teaming and collaboration, family and student engagement. More information about these Institutes can be found at: <https://www.doe.mass.edu/sped/training/leadership.html>

MA DESE is committed to the cultural responsiveness and diversity of our educator workforce, (<https://www.doe.mass.edu/instruction/culturally-responsive/>). Culturally responsive teaching and leading is great teaching and leading. MA DESE has committed significant resources to support the work of fostering and supporting students' diverse backgrounds, identities, strengths, and challenges to deepen their learning, build their understanding and respect for other cultures, and address systemic inequities. MA DESE is working to diversify our educator workforce so that it reflects our student populations, such as through the InSPIRED Initiative (<https://www.doe.mass.edu/amazingeducators/inspired/>). Our vision is that all children will have the opportunity to see their ethnic, linguistic, and racial backgrounds represented in teachers and leaders within their classrooms and schools. All educators, especially Black, Indigenous, and Educators of Color, will be recognized, supported within, and celebrated by their schools and districts for their value and positive impact on PK–12 students.

MA DESE continues to dedicate resources to helping all educators improve their practice through participation in High Quality Professional Development (<http://www.doe.mass.edu/pd/default.html>). HQPD enables educators to facilitate the learning of students by acquiring and applying knowledge, skills, and abilities that address student needs and improvement goals of the LEA, school, and individual. HQPD conforms to best practices in research, relates to educators' assignments and professional responsibilities, and aligns to the ten Massachusetts Standards for Professional Development. All professional development offered by MA DESE and providers approved by the agency to award Professional Development Points (PDPs) must align with the HQPD standards.

Lastly, the Educator Evaluation Rubric is going through revisions to incorporate these practices within the Standards of Effective Teaching and Administrative Leadership. These rubrics are being revised to ensure that every student in Massachusetts has access to educators who nurture and cultivate their academic achievement, cultural competence, and sociopolitical awareness.

#### **Broad Stakeholder Input:**

**The mechanisms for soliciting broad stakeholder input on the State's targets in the SPP/APR and any subsequent revisions that the State has made to those targets, and the development and implementation of Indicator 17, the State's Systemic Improvement Plan (SSIP).**

MA DESE is committed to a continuous system of engaging stakeholders to develop targets and set priorities for improvement in each of the areas reported in the SPP/APR.

The Special Education Advisory Panel (SEAP) and Special Education State Advisory Council (SAC), comprised of parents, individuals with disabilities, educators, administrators, and representatives from state agencies, higher education, and other stakeholder groups, meets at least four times each school year to review data, discuss policy priorities, and identify unmet needs in the area of special education consistent with state law and IDEA Part B. At each meeting, the group addressed various aspects of the SPP/APR and the State's general supervision systems, as well as relevant policy matters. In FFY2020 MA DESE facilitated discussions with the SEAP and SAC to establish baselines and targets for the performance Indicators. In FFY2021, MA DESE discussed each Indicator's performance and impacts on the LEA Determinations and Accountability and Assistance systems. MA DESE is committed to keep members of the SEAP and SAC up to date on processes and supports provided to LEA's in order to improve outcomes for students with disabilities. MA DESE will continue discussions around and current data, longitudinal targets, historical rates of performance and compliance and the trajectory for improvement for each of the Indicators, and the effectiveness of focused improvement activities within the context of the state's Results Driven Accountability framework.

The SAC is required by Massachusetts General Law (M.G.L. c. 15, § 1G <https://malegislature.gov/Laws/GeneralLaws/PartI/TitleII/Chapter15/Section1G>). The purpose of the SAC is to advise the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education and to make other programmatic recommendations as it deems necessary to fulfill the goals established by the board.

The SEAP is required by IDEA (34 CFR §§ 300.167-300.169 [https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-34/subtitle-B/chapter-III/part-300#sg34.2.300\\_1166.sg15](https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-34/subtitle-B/chapter-III/part-300#sg34.2.300_1166.sg15)). The purpose of the SEAP is to advise the State Education Authority (SEA) of unmet needs within the State regarding the education of children with disabilities. The Panel comments publicly on proposed rules or regulations regarding the education of children with disabilities. The Panel's advisory function to the State Education Authority (SEA) in developing evaluations and reporting 618 data (IDEA data) to USED and in developing corrective action plans to address findings in Federal monitoring reports under IDEA Part B. The Panel also advises the SEA in developing and implementing policies relating to the coordination of services for children with disabilities.

MA DESE has set a high priority on expanding the agency's capacity to solicit broad and diverse stakeholder input to set SPP/APR targets, analyze data, develop improvement strategies, and evaluate progress. For FFY2021, MA DESE sought to continue stakeholder Indicator knowledge that began in FFY2020. A new SPP/APR webpage, previously linked above, was created and posted along with new webpages for Indicators 4, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 15, 16, and 17. Small changes were made to previously created webpages for Indicators 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, 8, and 14 with Quick Reference Guides (QRGs) and PowerPoints for each Indicator. These QRGs and PowerPoints were available in six languages that correspond to the most common languages spoken in Massachusetts: English, Spanish, Portuguese, Chinese, Vietnamese, and Haitian Creole. Narrated versions of each PowerPoint were also available in English on the YouTube page of our partner, the Federation for Children with Special Needs (the Massachusetts Parent Training and Information Center/PTIC). MA DESE hosted six virtual stakeholder information and feedback sessions to broaden stakeholder knowledge on Indicators

4, 9, 10, 11, 12, and 13, while also soliciting feedback for Indicators 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, 8, 14, and 17 and presenting information to stakeholders, such as performance towards the targets set in FFY2020. These informational sessions featured a large group presentation on each topic, that was simultaneously translated into Spanish, Portuguese, Chinese, Vietnamese, and Haitian Creole. After each large group presentation, breakout rooms were opened in each of the previously mentioned languages, where stakeholders would be able to communicate and ask questions, in their native language, to MA DESE staff.

MA DESE also consults regularly, on a monthly or at least quarterly basis, with Massachusetts Administrators of Special Education, <http://www.asepage.org/>, the Federation for Children with Special Needs, <https://fcsn.org/>, Massachusetts Advocates for Children, <https://www.massadvocates.org/>, the Massachusetts Association of Approved Special Education Schools, <https://maaps.org/>, Massachusetts Urban Special Education Leadership Collaborative, and the Special Needs Advocacy Network, [www.spanmass.org](http://www.spanmass.org). In addition, the Massachusetts State Special Education Director at MA DESE gives monthly virtual presentations to statewide special education leaders on a wide array of special education compliance and performance topics. During all of these meetings, MA DESE solicits and receives significant feedback that informs the development of special education policy and guidance.

As needed, MA DESE also convenes stakeholder working groups throughout the year to provide focused input on specific projects and policy priorities. Examples of these focused groups include the Early Childhood Interagency Coordinating Council, with membership that includes community members and state agencies, a Statewide Systemic Improvement Plan (SSIP) leadership team and working group, a family engagement workgroup, an advisory group for the Dropout Prevention and Re-engagement Network, and secondary transition stakeholder groups. MA DESE also consults with educators, parents, advocates, and others on an ad hoc basis to inform policy and practice.

MA DESE engages with stakeholders on the direction of Indicator 17, the State's Systemic Improvement Plan (SSIP), at the state, district, classroom, and community levels. Stakeholders are provided with information about activities and goals, training events and embedded supports statewide, and the availability of resources to support and expand implementation. Stakeholders at the district and school levels participate in ongoing decision making about the direction of the SSIP by providing feedback about the quality of events and supports, observed benefits for their own stakeholders, and needs for moving forward with implementation most successfully. In May of 2022, MA DESE met with stakeholders to discuss revisions to the Theory of Action and the Evaluation Plan for the SSIP. Through frequent communication and input from stakeholders revisions to the Theory of Action and Evaluation Plan were made for incorporation and use during the FFY2022 SPP/APR reporting cycle. For additional information on stakeholder engagement related to Indicator 17, please see the Indicator 17 APR.

Stakeholder engagement is an essential component of MA DESE's special education agenda.

#### **Apply stakeholder involvement from introduction to all Part B results indicators (y/n)**

YES

#### **Number of Parent Members:**

242

#### **Parent Members Engagement:**

#### **Describe how the parent members of the State Advisory Panel, parent center staff, parents from local and statewide advocacy and advisory committees, and individual parents were engaged in setting targets, analyzing data, developing improvement strategies, and evaluating progress.**

MA DESE has a close and collaborative relationship with the state's Massachusetts Special Education Advisory Panel, which meets at least four times each school year to review data, discuss policy priorities, and identify unmet needs in the area of special education consistent with state law and IDEA Part B. Of the Panel's thirty members, twelve are parents of students with disabilities. At every meeting, the group addresses various aspects of the SPP/APR and the State's general supervision systems. For the FFY2021 SPP/APR submission, MA DESE consulted the Panel on targets, data, improvement strategies, and progress over the course of five Panel meetings.

The Federation for Children with Special Needs ("the Federation" or FCSN), which is the Massachusetts Parent Training and Information Center (PTIC), also has a close relationship with MA DESE. Throughout the year, MA DESE and the Federation connect at least monthly. Throughout the year, MA DESE and the Federation met to plan continued statewide outreach and engagement with families regarding the SPP/APR. Together, MA DESE and the Federation convened six virtual stakeholder information and feedback sessions on SPP/APR Indicators, with interpretation in American Sign Language, Spanish, Portuguese, Haitian-Creole, Vietnamese and Mandarin. Families and stakeholders participate in Indicator presentations and panels discussing state specific data on each respective Indicator. Discussions are led by FCSN and MA DESE staff with stakeholder questions and feedback being addressed in whole group format. Dialogue with parents and stakeholders continues with language-based breakout rooms, facilitated by DESE staff and an appropriate translator. Student specific questions were always referred to the Special Education Help Line. Guiding questions were provided as a starting point for conversation.

MA DESE also regularly engages with local and statewide advocacy and advisory committees. In upcoming years, MA DESE will seek to expand its stakeholder engagement activities and make them a continuous process spread throughout the year to ensure the agency is advised by a broad and deep cross-section of stakeholders who accurately represent the demographics of our student population.

#### **Activities to Improve Outcomes for Children with Disabilities:**

#### **The activities conducted to increase the capacity of diverse groups of parents to support the development of implementation activities designed to improve outcomes for children with disabilities.**

MA DESE is undertaking a complete transformation of its referral, evaluation, eligibility, and IEP development process guidance and tools. A major priority in this effort is to promote student and parent engagement through the creation of accessible resources that are easy to understand and use. Such resources will increase the capacity of diverse groups of parents to participate in the education system as well-informed partners who can fully engage in improvement activities. Through the "IEP Improvement Project," MA DESE has made significant progress toward its goal: To improve outcomes for all students with disabilities by providing guidance, technical assistance, and tools on equitable processes to school and district professionals, families, and students so that all students with disabilities have meaningful access to the curriculum frameworks and life of the school.

In the Spring of 2022, DESE released a draft version of the IEP Form (IEP1-8) (<https://www.doe.mass.edu/sped/improveiep/draft-iep-form.docx>). Based on stakeholder feedback collected through a variety of means (see "Soliciting Public Input" section), DESE updated multiple sections of the Draft Form (<https://www.doe.mass.edu/sped/improveiep/early-adopters.docx>) in late summer of 2022 for use by Early Adopters in the Fall of 2022.

In the Fall of 2022, the Early Adopters piloted sections of the Draft IEP with IEP Teams in their schools and districts. Feedback was collected from the Early Adopters via focus groups that occurred mid-way through the pilot and at the end of the pilot. DESE worked collaboratively with the SFFC to guide and support the Early Adopters through the pilot. The feedback will be used to make updates to the Draft IEP Form.

In addition, MA DESE funds the Federation for Children with Special Needs (the Massachusetts PTIC) to conduct:

- Numerous parent workshops on special education topics
- Training for special education parent advisory council (SEPAAC) leaders so that these state-mandated groups can participate in a well-informed way in the planning, development, and evaluation of each local education agency's special education programming
- Train-the-Trainer for educators on the Massachusetts Family Engagement Framework (<https://www.doe.mass.edu/sfs/family-engagement-framework.pdf>), Massachusetts Family, School, and Community Partnership Fundamentals (<https://www.doe.mass.edu/sfs/fscf-fundamentals.docx>), and Positive Solutions (<https://masfec.org/positive-solutions-for-educators-free-training/>).

Since 2011, the Massachusetts Educator Evaluation Framework, <https://www.doe.mass.edu/eval/>, has included Family and Community Engagement as one of the four professional standards against which all Massachusetts educator and administrator performance is measured. This means that each individual LEA and each individual educator and administrator in general and special education is individually and personally responsible for engaging families and supporting their participation in the schools and schooling. This accountability increases the capacity of diverse groups of parents, because educators and administrators are required to engage with them in meaningful ways, such as through culturally proficient, two-way communication around learning expectations and student support.

Furthermore, as part of MA DESE's commitment to cultural responsiveness and diversity of the educator workforce, the Educator Evaluation Rubric is going through revisions to incorporate these practices within the Standards of Effective Teaching and Administrative Leadership. These rubrics are being revised to ensure that every student in Massachusetts has access to educators who nurture and cultivate their academic achievement, cultural competence, and sociopolitical awareness.

As an agency, MA DESE is committed to improving family engagement at the local and state levels. An internal MA DESE Family Engagement Work Group includes members who represent offices across the agency. MA DESE has also worked closely with the National Association for Family, School, and Community Engagement (NAFSCE) to lead work with statewide stakeholders which formed the Family Engagement Coalition that developed the Massachusetts Family Engagement Framework, developing tools, resources, and training. Of note is that the Framework; Massachusetts Family, School, and Community Partnership Fundamentals; and Train-the-Trainer are consistent across agencies.

#### **Soliciting Public Input:**

##### **The mechanisms and timelines for soliciting public input for setting targets, analyzing data, developing improvement strategies, and evaluating progress.**

MA DESE began internal planning for stakeholder engagement for the FFY2021 SPP/APR in March 2022 and discussed Indicator targets, data, improvement strategies, and progress with the Special Education Advisory Panel in May, June, and December of 2022, as well as in January 2023. During the Spring and Summer of 2022, MA DESE developed additional plans which led to creating and updating new webpages for all Indicators with Quick Reference Guides (QRGs) and PowerPoints for each Indicator. These QRGs and PowerPoints were available in six languages that correspond to the most common languages spoken in Massachusetts: English, Spanish, Portuguese, Chinese, Vietnamese, and Haitian Creole. Narrated versions of each PowerPoint are being added and will be available in English on the YouTube page of our partner, the Federation for Children with Special Needs (the Massachusetts Parent Training and Information Center/PTIC). MA DESE presented information and preliminary data on all Indicators from November 2022 – January 2023 during six virtual sessions in partnership with the Federation of Children with Special Needs. These meetings were simultaneously interpreted into American Sign Language, Spanish, Portuguese, and Mandarin. Other languages were available but were not requested.

Mechanisms and timelines for additional Indicator-specific stakeholder engagement are discussed in individual APRs.

During the 2022-2023 school year, MA DESE plans to build upon our FFY2020 and FFY2021 efforts to expand stakeholder engagement, including meeting regularly with a broad and diverse group of stakeholders to solicit input on the SPP/APR. During those meetings, MA DESE will solicit public input for possible revisions to targets, analyzing data, developing improvement strategies, and evaluating progress. Regular meetings will continue to be held with the Special Education Advisory Panel, the Massachusetts Administrators of Special Education, the Federation for Children with Special Needs, Massachusetts Advocates for Children, the Massachusetts Association of Approved Special Education Schools, Massachusetts Urban Special Education Leadership Collaborative, and the Special Needs Advocacy Network. The Massachusetts State Special Education Director continues to give monthly virtual presentations to statewide special education leaders on a wide array of special education compliance and performance topics, using these meetings to solicit and receive significant input. In addition, throughout 2023, MA DESE will expand outreach to additional groups that serve diverse populations who represent the demographics of our student population. MA DESE will also improve our website's capacity to obtain public feedback.

As part of MA DESE's work on the IEP Improvement Project, public input was frequently sought, and the following activities occurred regarding the Draft IEP Form:

- Special Education Leaders were updated during monthly meetings regarding progress toward the development of resources and the Draft IEP (attendance at these monthly meetings is typically 300+);
- Feedback was sought from the public through a survey that was open to the public for 8 weeks. Through this survey MA DESE collected 334 responses, which were thoroughly reviewed by DESE staff. Patterns and trends were collected and used to inform decisions regarding updates to the Draft Form;
- Focus groups were facilitated with a variety of special interest groups to collect feedback on the Draft Form. Notes from these sessions were thoroughly reviewed by DESE staff. Patterns and trends were collected and used to inform decisions regarding updates to the Draft Form;
- Multiple sections of the Draft IEP Form were updated and re-released based on the feedback described above; and
- A Steering Committee was created consisting of a variety of representatives from within and outside of the Department.

#### **Making Results Available to the Public:**

##### **The mechanisms and timelines for making the results of the target setting, data analysis, development of the improvement strategies, and evaluation available to the public.**

MA DESE continues to work with a vendor to significantly improve our SPP/APR website during the 2022 year to include framing questions, current and archived SPP/APRs, information and resources for each Indicator, and links to data displays. An updated SPP/APR webpage was posted in November 2022 (<https://www.doe.mass.edu/sped/spp/maspp.html>). These improvements will enhance MA DESE's ability to make the results of FFY2021 and future target setting, data analysis, development of the improvement strategies, and evaluation available to the public.

MA DESE will continue to post on our website the FFY2021 performance of each LEA located in the state on the targets in the SPP/APR as soon as practicable, but no later than 120 days following the state's submission of its FFY2021 APR. See narrative below for more information.

In addition, MA DESE will continue to meet regularly throughout the year with the Special Education Advisory Panel to share and discuss Indicator data and improvement activities. The Panel operates according to Massachusetts Open Meeting Law; agendas and minutes are posted, and members of the public are invited to attend meetings.

During the 2023 year, MA DESE plans to expand stakeholder engagement efforts, including meeting regularly with a broad and diverse group of stakeholders to solicit input on the SPP/APR. During those meetings, the results of the target setting, data analysis, development of the improvement strategies, and evaluation will be made available to the public.

### **Reporting to the Public**

**How and where the State reported to the public on the FFY 2020 performance of each LEA located in the State on the targets in the SPP/APR as soon as practicable, but no later than 120 days following the State's submission of its FFY 2020 APR, as required by 34 CFR §300.602(b)(1)(i)(A); and a description of where, on its Web site, a complete copy of the State's SPP/APR, including any revision if the State has revised the targets that it submitted with its FFY 2020 APR in 2022, is available.**

Annually, MA DESE makes available the information contained in the state's SPP/APR for review and discussion in a variety of inter- and intra-agency meetings and forums, as well as in communications with external stakeholders and interested parties. This information is the basis for reflection and planning and provides a longitudinal look at statewide performance in various areas.

MA DESE has publicly posted a complete copy of the State's FFY2020 SPP/APR, and all previously submitted SPP/APRs, as well as OSEP's response to the state's submissions, on its website at: <http://www.doe.mass.edu/sped/spp/maspp.html>.

MA DESE also publicly reports annually on LEA results on performance and compliance indicators. Data from FFY2020 and for the preceding ten years may be viewed through LEA and school level reports on MA DESE's website, including the SPP targets for each SPP Indicator: [https://profiles.doe.mass.edu/statereport/special\\_education.aspx](https://profiles.doe.mass.edu/statereport/special_education.aspx). Reports may be selected by LEA or school using the alphabetical drop-down menu on the top right of the webpage. FFY2021 data will be posted at this location in the Winter/Spring of 2023 when all data reports are available.

In accordance with 34 CFR § 300.160(d), MA DESE publicly reports data on the participation of students with IEPs in statewide assessments at the state, LEA, and school levels. State level information is available on the assessment participation webpage: <http://profiles.doe.mass.edu/statereport/participation.aspx>. LEA-level information on the participation of students with IEPs in statewide assessments, with and without accommodations and including students who participate in the MCAS-Alt, may be accessed from the state-level page referenced above by clicking on the LEA name. An example of an LEA-level report is provided here: <https://profiles.doe.mass.edu/mcas/participation.aspx?orgtypecode=5&linkid=26&fycode=2022&orgcode=00090000>. Reports are selected by school year using the arrow button at the top left of the web page.

MA DESE publicly reports performance results for students with IEPs who take the MCAS-Alt in a separate state level report found here: [http://profiles.doe.mass.edu/statereport/mcas\\_alt.aspx](http://profiles.doe.mass.edu/statereport/mcas_alt.aspx). Reports may be selected by type (district/school), school year, and subject by using the drop-down menu at the top of the page. LEA-level information on MCAS-Alt performance results may be accessed from the state level page referenced above by clicking on the name of the LEA. An example of an LEA level report is provided here: [https://profiles.doe.mass.edu/mcas/achievement\\_alt\\_level.aspx?linkid=116&orgcode=00200000&orgtypecode=5&fycode=2022](https://profiles.doe.mass.edu/mcas/achievement_alt_level.aspx?linkid=116&orgcode=00200000&orgtypecode=5&fycode=2022). Reports are selected by school year using the arrow button at the top left of the web page.

MA DESE ensures that it makes available assessment data for students with disabilities with the same frequency and in the same detail as it reports on the assessment of students without disabilities, consistent with 34 CFR 300.160(f). This information is now integrated into the assessment webpages referenced above at: <http://profiles.doe.mass.edu/statereport/participation.aspx> and [http://profiles.doe.mass.edu/statereport/mcas\\_alt.aspx](http://profiles.doe.mass.edu/statereport/mcas_alt.aspx).

MA DESE reports accountability data at the LEA and school levels: <http://www.doe.mass.edu/accountability>.

MA DESE also makes available information about progress, slippage, and related requirements through meetings with stakeholders and professional organizations, and through regional and statewide interest groups, some of which are facilitated by partner agencies and organizations.

### **Intro - Prior FFY Required Actions**

None

### **Intro - OSEP Response**

### **Intro - Required Actions**

# Indicator 1: Graduation

## Instructions and Measurement

**Monitoring Priority:** FAPE in the LRE

**Results indicator:** Percent of youth with Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) exiting special education due to graduating with a regular high school diploma. (20 U.S.C. 1416 (a)(3)(A))

### Data Source

Same data as used for reporting to the Department under section 618 of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), using the definitions in EDFacts file specification FS009.

### Measurement

States must report a percentage using the number of youth with IEPs (ages 14-21) who exited special education due to graduating with a regular high school diploma in the numerator and the number of all youth with IEPs who exited high school (ages 14-21) in the denominator.

### Instructions

*Sampling is not allowed.*

Data for this indicator are "lag" data. Describe the results of the State's examination of the data for the year before the reporting year (e.g., for the FFY 2021 SPP/APR, use data from 2020-2021), and compare the results to the target. Provide the actual numbers used in the calculation.

Include in the denominator the following exiting categories: (a) graduated with a regular high school diploma; (b) graduated with a state-defined alternate diploma; (c) received a certificate; (d) reached maximum age; or (e) dropped out.

Do not include in the denominator the number of youths with IEPs who exited special education due to: (a) transferring to regular education; or (b) who moved but are known to be continuing in an educational program.

Provide a narrative that describes the conditions youth must meet in order to graduate with a regular high school diploma. If the conditions that youth with IEPs must meet in order to graduate with a regular high school diploma are different, please explain.

## 1 - Indicator Data

### Historical Data

Baseline Year	Baseline Data
2019	73.94%

FFY	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Target >=	86.00%	88.00%	72.36%	73.36%	76.33%
Data	71.79%	72.83%	72.36%	73.94%	80.36%

### Targets

FFY	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Target >=	77.33%	78.33%	79.33%	80.33%	81.33%

### Targets: Description of Stakeholder Input

MA DESE is committed to a continuous system of engaging stakeholders to develop targets and set priorities for improvement in each of the areas reported in the SPP/APR.

The Special Education Advisory Panel (SEAP) and Special Education State Advisory Council (SAC), comprised of parents, individuals with disabilities, educators, administrators, and representatives from state agencies, higher education, and other stakeholder groups, meets at least four times each school year to review data, discuss policy priorities, and identify unmet needs in the area of special education consistent with state law and IDEA Part B. At each meeting, the group addressed various aspects of the SPP/APR and the State's general supervision systems, as well as relevant policy matters. In FFY2020 MA DESE facilitated discussions with the SEAP and SAC to establish baselines and targets for the performance Indicators. In FFY2021, MA DESE discussed each Indicator's performance and impacts on the LEA Determinations and Accountability and Assistance systems. MA DESE is committed to keep members of the SEAP and SAC up to date on processes and supports provided to LEA's in order to improve outcomes for students with disabilities. MA DESE will continue discussions around and current data, longitudinal targets, historical rates of performance and compliance and the trajectory for improvement for each of the Indicators, and the effectiveness of focused improvement activities within the context of the state's Results Driven Accountability framework.

The SAC is required by Massachusetts General Law (M.G.L. c. 15, § 1G

<https://malegislature.gov/Laws/GeneralLaws/PartI/TitleII/Chapter15/Section1G>). The purpose of the SAC is to advise the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education and to make other programmatic recommendations as it deems necessary to fulfill the goals established by the board.

The SEAP is required by IDEA (34 CFR §§ 300.167-300.169 [https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-34/subtitle-B/chapter-III/part-300#sg34.2.300\\_1166.sg15](https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-34/subtitle-B/chapter-III/part-300#sg34.2.300_1166.sg15)).

The purpose of the SEAP is to advise the State Education Authority (SEA) of unmet needs within the State regarding the education of children with disabilities. The Panel comments publicly on proposed rules or regulations regarding the education of children with disabilities. The Panel's advisory function to the State Education Authority (SEA) in developing evaluations and reporting 618 data (IDEA data) to USED and in developing corrective action plans to address findings in Federal monitoring reports under IDEA Part B. The Panel also advises the SEA in developing and implementing policies relating to the coordination of services for children with disabilities.

MA DESE has set a high priority on expanding the agency's capacity to solicit broad and diverse stakeholder input to set SPP/APR targets, analyze data, develop improvement strategies, and evaluate progress. For FFY2021, MA DESE sought to continue stakeholder Indicator knowledge that began

in FFY2020. A new SPP/APR webpage, previously linked above, was created and posted along with new webpages for Indicators 4, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 15, 16, and 17. Small changes were made to previously created webpages for Indicators 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, 8, and 14 with Quick Reference Guides (QRGs) and PowerPoints for each Indicator. These QRGs and PowerPoints were available in six languages that correspond to the most common languages spoken in Massachusetts: English, Spanish, Portuguese, Chinese, Vietnamese, and Haitian Creole. Narrated versions of each PowerPoint were also available in English on the YouTube page of our partner, the Federation for Children with Special Needs (the Massachusetts Parent Training and Information Center/PTIC). MA DESE hosted six virtual stakeholder information and feedback sessions to broaden stakeholder knowledge on Indicators 4, 9, 10, 11, 12, and 13, while also soliciting feedback for Indicators 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, 8, 14, and 17 and presenting information to stakeholders, such as performance towards the targets set in FFY2020. These informational sessions featured a large group presentation on each topic, that was simultaneously translated into Spanish, Portuguese, Chinese, Vietnamese, and Haitian Creole. After each large group presentation, breakout rooms were opened in each of the previously mentioned languages, where stakeholders would be able to communicate and ask questions, in their native language, to MA DESE staff.

MA DESE also consults regularly, on a monthly or at least quarterly basis, with Massachusetts Administrators of Special Education, <http://www.asepage.org/>, the Federation for Children with Special Needs, <https://fcsn.org/>, Massachusetts Advocates for Children, <https://www.massadvocates.org/>, the Massachusetts Association of Approved Special Education Schools, <https://maaps.org/>, Massachusetts Urban Special Education Leadership Collaborative, and the Special Needs Advocacy Network, [www.spanmass.org](http://www.spanmass.org). In addition, the Massachusetts State Special Education Director at MA DESE gives monthly virtual presentations to statewide special education leaders on a wide array of special education compliance and performance topics. During all of these meetings, MA DESE solicits and receives significant feedback that informs the development of special education policy and guidance.

As needed, MA DESE also convenes stakeholder working groups throughout the year to provide focused input on specific projects and policy priorities. Examples of these focused groups include the Early Childhood Interagency Coordinating Council, with membership that includes community members and state agencies, a Statewide Systemic Improvement Plan (SSIP) leadership team and working group, a family engagement workgroup, an advisory group for the Dropout Prevention and Re-engagement Network, and secondary transition stakeholder groups. MA DESE also consults with educators, parents, advocates, and others on an ad hoc basis to inform policy and practice.

MA DESE engages with stakeholders on the direction of Indicator 17, the State's Systemic Improvement Plan (SSIP), at the state, district, classroom, and community levels. Stakeholders are provided with information about activities and goals, training events and embedded supports statewide, and the availability of resources to support and expand implementation. Stakeholders at the district and school levels participate in ongoing decision making about the direction of the SSIP by providing feedback about the quality of events and supports, observed benefits for their own stakeholders, and needs for moving forward with implementation most successfully. In May of 2022, MA DESE met with stakeholders to discuss revisions to the Theory of Action and the Evaluation Plan for the SSIP. Through frequent communication and input from stakeholders revisions to the Theory of Action and Evaluation Plan were made for incorporation and use during the FFY2022 SPP/APR reporting cycle. For additional information on stakeholder engagement related to Indicator 17, please see the Indicator 17 APR.

Stakeholder engagement is an essential component of MA DESE's special education agenda.

**Prepopulated Data**

Source	Date	Description	Data
SY 2020-21 Exiting Data Groups (EDFacts file spec FS009; Data Group 85)	05/25/2022	Number of youth with IEPs (ages 14-21) who exited special education by graduating with a regular high school diploma (a)	9,364
SY 2020-21 Exiting Data Groups (EDFacts file spec FS009; Data Group 85)	05/25/2022	Number of youth with IEPs (ages 14-21) who exited special education by graduating with a state-defined alternate diploma (b)	
SY 2020-21 Exiting Data Groups (EDFacts file spec FS009; Data Group 85)	05/25/2022	Number of youth with IEPs (ages 14-21) who exited special education by receiving a certificate (c)	326
SY 2020-21 Exiting Data Groups (EDFacts file spec FS009; Data Group 85)	05/25/2022	Number of youth with IEPs (ages 14-21) who exited special education by reaching maximum age (d)	422
SY 2020-21 Exiting Data Groups (EDFacts file spec FS009; Data Group 85)	05/25/2022	Number of youth with IEPs (ages 14-21) who exited special education due to dropping out (e)	1,299

**FFY 2021 SPP/APR Data**

Number of youth with IEPs (ages 14-21) who exited special education due to graduating with a regular high school diploma	Number of all youth with IEPs who exited special education (ages 14-21)	FFY 2020 Data	FFY 2021 Target	FFY 2021 Data	Status	Slippage
9,364	11,411	80.36%	77.33%	82.06%	Met target	No Slippage

**Graduation Conditions**

Provide a narrative that describes the conditions youth must meet in order to graduate with a regular high school diploma.

To earn a diploma from a public high school in Massachusetts, a student must:

- 1) Earn a Competency Determination (CD) which means achieving a specific level of proficiency on Grade 10 English Language Arts (ELA); Mathematics; and Science, Technology, and Engineering (STE) statewide assessments administered through the Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS). Students may fulfill the CD requirements through the standard MCAS tests or by submitting an MCAS cohort appeal or MCAS competency portfolio, which is an alternative method of student assessment that uses a collection of a student's work samples to measure the educational performance of a small number of students who possess skills at or near grade level, but who cannot demonstrate those skills on the standard MCAS tests, even with accommodations, due to a significant disability; and
- 2) Meet local graduation requirements for the LEA that is awarding the diploma; and
- 3) Received a Free and Appropriate Public Education (FAPE)

**Are the conditions that youth with IEPs must meet to graduate with a regular high school diploma different from the conditions noted above? (yes/no)**

NO

**Provide additional information about this indicator (optional)**

To mitigate the impact of Covid on student performance, the MA Board of Elementary and Secondary Education (BESE), for students graduating in this reporting year, continued the modification of the Competency Determination requirement for students in grade 12 due to the ongoing disruptions caused by Covid 19. By modifying the CD requirement students who had not yet taken and received a proficient or higher score on the MCAS tests could earn their diploma by taking a course aligned to the curriculum frameworks in the relevant subject matter and demonstrating competency in that subject. MA DESE provided a list of the acceptable courses for ELA, Mathematics, and STE. The superintendent of the LEA was responsible for certifying the successful completion of said courses.

MA DESE continues to engage in ongoing data analysis to inform the design of technical assistance that will support LEAs in their continuing efforts to improve graduation rates.

In response to the FFY2020 SPP/APR comments from OSEP, the baseline for Indicator 1 has been updated to reflect the actual data submitted in FFY2019. The targets set in FFY2020 reflect an improvement over the baseline data of 73.94%. This change is reflective of OSEP's offer to allow for the use of 2019 data for the baseline due to the COVID-19 pandemic and changes to the measurement of Indicator 1 in FFY2020.

**1 - Prior FFY Required Actions**

The State did not report baseline data for this indicator. The State must report the required baseline data in the FFY 2021 SPP/APR.

The State did not provide targets, as required by the measurement table. The State must provide the required targets for FFY 2020 through FFY 2025 in the FFY 2021 SPP/APR.

**Response to actions required in FFY 2020 SPP/APR**

Please see above for an explanation of the baseline update and the targets that were set in FFY2020 for Indicator 1.

**1 - OSEP Response**

The State has revised the baseline for this indicator, using data from FFY 2019, and OSEP accepts that revision.

The State revised targets for FFYs 2021 through 2025 for this indicator, and OSEP accepts those targets.

In its narrative, the State provided information regarding the conditions youth with IEPs must meet to graduate with a regular high school diploma. However, the State must provide a description of the conditions ALL youth must meet in order to graduate with a regular high school diploma, and also report if the conditions youth with IEPs must meet to graduate with a regular high school diploma are different, as required by the Measurement Table.

**1 - Required Actions**

## Indicator 2: Drop Out

### Instructions and Measurement

**Monitoring Priority:** FAPE in the LRE

**Results indicator:** Percent of youth with IEPs who exited special education due to dropping out. (20 U.S.C. 1416 (a)(3)(A))

#### Data Source

Same data as used for reporting to the Department under section 618 of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), using the definitions in EDFacts file specification FS009.

Use same data source and measurement that the State used to report in its FFY 2010 SPP/APR that was submitted on February 1, 2012.

#### Measurement

States must report a percentage using the number of youth with IEPs (ages 14-21) who exited special education due to dropping out in the numerator and the number of all youth with IEPs who exited special education (ages 14-21) in the denominator.

#### Instructions

*Sampling is not allowed.*

Data for this indicator are "lag" data. Describe the results of the State's examination of the data for the year before the reporting year (e.g., for the FFY 2021 SPP/APR, use data from 2020-2021), and compare the results to the target.

Include in the denominator the following exiting categories: (a) graduated with a regular high school diploma; (b) graduated with a state-defined alternate diploma; (c) received a certificate; (d) reached maximum age; or (e) dropped out.

Do not include in the denominator the number of youths with IEPs who exited special education due to: (a) transferring to regular education; or (b) who moved but are known to be continuing in an educational program.

Use the annual event school dropout rate for students leaving a school in a single year determined in accordance with the National Center for Education Statistic's Common Core of Data.

Provide a narrative that describes what counts as dropping out for all youth. Please explain if there is a difference between what counts as dropping out for all students and what counts as dropping out for students with IEPs.

## 2 - Indicator Data

### Historical Data

Baseline Year	Baseline Data
2019	13.97%

FFY	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Target <=	2.40%	2.10%	1.70%	1.70%	13.97%
Data	3.13%	3.29%	3.36%	3.43%	10.38%

### Targets

FFY	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Target <=	13.47%	12.97%	12.47%	11.97%	11.47%

### Targets: Description of Stakeholder Input

MA DESE is committed to a continuous system of engaging stakeholders to develop targets and set priorities for improvement in each of the areas reported in the SPP/APR.

The Special Education Advisory Panel (SEAP) and Special Education State Advisory Council (SAC), comprised of parents, individuals with disabilities, educators, administrators, and representatives from state agencies, higher education, and other stakeholder groups, meets at least four times each school year to review data, discuss policy priorities, and identify unmet needs in the area of special education consistent with state law and IDEA Part B. At each meeting, the group addressed various aspects of the SPP/APR and the State's general supervision systems, as well as relevant policy matters. In FFY2020 MA DESE facilitated discussions with the SEAP and SAC to establish baselines and targets for the performance Indicators. In FFY2021, MA DESE discussed each Indicator's performance and impacts on the LEA Determinations and Accountability and Assistance systems. MA DESE is committed to keep members of the SEAP and SAC up to date on processes and supports provided to LEA's in order to improve outcomes for students with disabilities. MA DESE will continue discussions around and current data, longitudinal targets, historical rates of performance and compliance and the trajectory for improvement for each of the Indicators, and the effectiveness of focused improvement activities within the context of the state's Results Driven Accountability framework.

The SAC is required by Massachusetts General Law (M.G.L. c. 15, § 1G

<https://malegislature.gov/Laws/GeneralLaws/PartI/TitleII/Chapter15/Section1G>). The purpose of the SAC is to advise the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education and to make other programmatic recommendations as it deems necessary to fulfill the goals established by the board.

The SEAP is required by IDEA (34 CFR §§ 300.167-300.169 [https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-34/subtitle-B/chapter-III/part-300#sg34.2.300\\_1166.sg15](https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-34/subtitle-B/chapter-III/part-300#sg34.2.300_1166.sg15)). The purpose of the SEAP is to advise the State Education Authority (SEA) of unmet needs within the State regarding the education of children with disabilities. The Panel comments publicly on proposed rules or regulations regarding the education of children with disabilities. The Panel's advisory function to the State Education Authority (SEA) in developing evaluations and reporting 618 data (IDEA data) to USED and in developing corrective action plans to address findings in Federal monitoring reports under IDEA Part B. The Panel also advises the SEA in developing and implementing policies relating to the coordination of services for children with disabilities.

MA DESE has set a high priority on expanding the agency's capacity to solicit broad and diverse stakeholder input to set SPP/APR targets, analyze data, develop improvement strategies, and evaluate progress. For FFY2021, MA DESE sought to continue stakeholder Indicator knowledge that began in FFY2020. A new SPP/APR webpage, previously linked above, was created and posted along with new webpages for Indicators 4, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 15, 16, and 17. Small changes were made to previously created webpages for Indicators 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, 8, and 14 with Quick Reference Guides (QRGs) and PowerPoints for each Indicator. These QRGs and PowerPoints were available in six languages that correspond to the most common languages spoken in Massachusetts: English, Spanish, Portuguese, Chinese, Vietnamese, and Haitian Creole. Narrated versions of each PowerPoint were also available in English on the YouTube page of our partner, the Federation for Children with Special Needs (the Massachusetts Parent Training and Information Center/PTIC). MA DESE hosted six virtual stakeholder information and feedback sessions to broaden stakeholder knowledge on Indicators 4, 9, 10, 11, 12, and 13, while also soliciting feedback for Indicators 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, 8, 14, and 17 and presenting information to stakeholders, such as performance towards the targets set in FFY2020. These informational sessions featured a large group presentation on each topic, that was simultaneously translated into Spanish, Portuguese, Chinese, Vietnamese, and Haitian Creole. After each large group presentation, breakout rooms were opened in each of the previously mentioned languages, where stakeholders would be able to communicate and ask questions, in their native language, to MA DESE staff.

MA DESE also consults regularly, on a monthly or at least quarterly basis, with Massachusetts Administrators of Special Education, <http://www.asepage.org/>, the Federation for Children with Special Needs, <https://fcsn.org/>, Massachusetts Advocates for Children, <https://www.massadvocates.org/>, the Massachusetts Association of Approved Special Education Schools, <https://maaps.org/>, Massachusetts Urban Special Education Leadership Collaborative, and the Special Needs Advocacy Network, [www.spanmass.org](http://www.spanmass.org). In addition, the Massachusetts State Special Education Director at MA DESE gives monthly virtual presentations to statewide special education leaders on a wide array of special education compliance and performance topics. During all of these meetings, MA DESE solicits and receives significant feedback that informs the development of special education policy and guidance.

As needed, MA DESE also convenes stakeholder working groups throughout the year to provide focused input on specific projects and policy priorities. Examples of these focused groups include the Early Childhood Interagency Coordinating Council, with membership that includes community members and state agencies, a Statewide Systemic Improvement Plan (SSIP) leadership team and working group, a family engagement workgroup, an advisory group for the Dropout Prevention and Re-engagement Network, and secondary transition stakeholder groups. MA DESE also consults with educators, parents, advocates, and others on an ad hoc basis to inform policy and practice.

MA DESE engages with stakeholders on the direction of Indicator 17, the State's Systemic Improvement Plan (SSIP), at the state, district, classroom, and community levels. Stakeholders are provided with information about activities and goals, training events and embedded supports statewide, and the availability of resources to support and expand implementation. Stakeholders at the district and school levels participate in ongoing decision making about the direction of the SSIP by providing feedback about the quality of events and supports, observed benefits for their own stakeholders, and needs for moving forward with implementation most successfully. In May of 2022, MA DESE met with stakeholders to discuss revisions to the Theory of Action and the Evaluation Plan for the SSIP. Through frequent communication and input from stakeholders revisions to the Theory of Action and Evaluation Plan were made for incorporation and use during the FFY2022 SPP/APR reporting cycle. For additional information on stakeholder engagement related to Indicator 17, please see the Indicator 17 APR.

Stakeholder engagement is an essential component of MA DESE's special education agenda.

**Prepopulated Data**

Source	Date	Description	Data
SY 2020-21 Exiting Data Groups (EDFacts file spec FS009; Data Group 85)	05/25/2022	Number of youth with IEPs (ages 14-21) who exited special education by graduating with a regular high school diploma (a)	9,364
SY 2020-21 Exiting Data Groups (EDFacts file spec FS009; Data Group 85)	05/25/2022	Number of youth with IEPs (ages 14-21) who exited special education by graduating with a state-defined alternate diploma (b)	
SY 2020-21 Exiting Data Groups (EDFacts file spec FS009; Data Group 85)	05/25/2022	Number of youth with IEPs (ages 14-21) who exited special education by receiving a certificate (c)	326
SY 2020-21 Exiting Data Groups (EDFacts file spec FS009; Data Group 85)	05/25/2022	Number of youth with IEPs (ages 14-21) who exited special education by reaching maximum age (d)	422
SY 2020-21 Exiting Data Groups (EDFacts file spec FS009; Data Group 85)	05/25/2022	Number of youth with IEPs (ages 14-21) who exited special education due to dropping out (e)	1,299

**FFY 2021 SPP/APR Data**

Number of youth with IEPs (ages 14-21) who exited special education due to dropping out	Number of all youth with IEPs who exited special education (ages 14-21)	FFY 2020 Data	FFY 2021 Target	FFY 2021 Data	Status	Slippage
1,299	11,411	10.38%	13.47%	11.38%	Met target	No Slippage

**Provide a narrative that describes what counts as dropping out for all youth**

In Massachusetts, a dropout- regardless of disability status - is defined as a student in grades 9-12 enrolled in a public school who, prior to graduation, leaves school for reasons other than to transfer to another public school and who does not re-enroll before the October 1 reporting date. To calculate

this rate MA DESE uses dropout data obtained through the Student Information Management System (SIMS) October 1 enrollment report. Students who may have been reported as dropped out at the end of the previous year and then who re-enroll prior to the October 1 reporting date are removed from the dropout count. MA DESE also removes from the data set any student who dropped out of high school but earned a GED/HISET certificate.

**Is there a difference in what counts as dropping out for youth with IEPs? (yes/no)**

NO

**If yes, explain the difference in what counts as dropping out for youth with IEPs.**

**Provide additional information about this indicator (optional)**

## **2 - Prior FFY Required Actions**

None

## **2 - OSEP Response**

## **2 - Required Actions**

## Indicator 3A: Participation for Children with IEPs

### Instructions and Measurement

**Monitoring Priority:** FAPE in the LRE

**Results indicator:** Participation and performance of children with IEPs on statewide assessments:

- A. Participation rate for children with IEPs.
- B. Proficiency rate for children with IEPs against grade level academic achievement standards.
- C. Proficiency rate for children with IEPs against alternate academic achievement standards.
- D. Gap in proficiency rates for children with IEPs and all students against grade level academic achievement standards.

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

#### Data Source

3A. Same data as used for reporting to the Department under Title I of the ESEA, using EDFacts file specifications FS185 and 188.

#### Measurement

A. Participation rate percent = [(# of children with IEPs participating in an assessment) divided by the (total # of children with IEPs enrolled during the testing window)]. Calculate separately for reading and math. Calculate separately for grades 4, 8, and high school. The participation rate is based on all children with IEPs, including both children with IEPs enrolled for a full academic year and those not enrolled for a full academic year.

#### Instructions

Describe the results of the calculations and compare the results to the targets. Provide the actual numbers used in the calculation.

Include information regarding where to find public reports of assessment participation and performance results, as required by 34 CFR §300.160(f), *i.e.*, a link to the Web site where these data are reported.

Indicator 3A: Provide separate reading/language arts and mathematics participation rates for children with IEPs for each of the following grades: 4, 8, & high school. Account for ALL children with IEPs, in grades 4, 8, and high school, including children not participating in assessments and those not enrolled for a full academic year. Only include children with disabilities who had an IEP at the time of testing.

### 3A - Indicator Data

#### Historical Data:

Subject	Group	Group Name	Baseline Year	Baseline Data
Reading	A	Grade 4	2020	95.33%
Reading	B	Grade 8	2020	90.28%
Reading	C	Grade HS	2020	92.25%
Math	A	Grade 4	2020	95.21%
Math	B	Grade 8	2020	90.12%
Math	C	Grade HS	2020	91.94%

#### Targets

Subject	Group	Group Name	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Reading	A >=	Grade 4	95.00%	95.00%	95.00%	95.00%	95.00%
Reading	B >=	Grade 8	95.00%	95.00%	95.00%	95.00%	95.00%
Reading	C >=	Grade HS	95.00%	95.00%	95.00%	95.00%	95.00%
Math	A >=	Grade 4	95.00%	95.00%	95.00%	95.00%	95.00%
Math	B >=	Grade 8	95.00%	95.00%	95.00%	95.00%	95.00%
Math	C >=	Grade HS	95.00%	95.00%	95.00%	95.00%	95.00%

## Targets: Description of Stakeholder Input

MA DESE is committed to a continuous system of engaging stakeholders to develop targets and set priorities for improvement in each of the areas reported in the SPP/APR.

The Special Education Advisory Panel (SEAP) and Special Education State Advisory Council (SAC), comprised of parents, individuals with disabilities, educators, administrators, and representatives from state agencies, higher education, and other stakeholder groups, meets at least four times each school year to review data, discuss policy priorities, and identify unmet needs in the area of special education consistent with state law and IDEA Part B. At each meeting, the group addressed various aspects of the SPP/APR and the State's general supervision systems, as well as relevant policy matters. In FFY2020 MA DESE facilitated discussions with the SEAP and SAC to establish baselines and targets for the performance Indicators. In FFY2021, MA DESE discussed each Indicator's performance and impacts on the LEA Determinations and Accountability and Assistance systems. MA DESE is committed to keep members of the SEAP and SAC up to date on processes and supports provided to LEA's in order to improve outcomes for students with disabilities. MA DESE will continue discussions around and current data, longitudinal targets, historical rates of performance and compliance and the trajectory for improvement for each of the Indicators, and the effectiveness of focused improvement activities within the context of the state's Results Driven Accountability framework.

The SAC is required by Massachusetts General Law (M.G.L. c. 15, § 1G <https://malegislature.gov/Laws/GeneralLaws/PartI/TitleII/Chapter15/Section1G>). The purpose of the SAC is to advise the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education and to make other programmatic recommendations as it deems necessary to fulfill the goals established by the board.

The SEAP is required by IDEA (34 CFR §§ 300.167-300.169 [https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-34/subtitle-B/chapter-III/part-300#sg34.2.300\\_1166.sg15](https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-34/subtitle-B/chapter-III/part-300#sg34.2.300_1166.sg15)). The purpose of the SEAP is to advise the State Education Authority (SEA) of unmet needs within the State regarding the education of children with disabilities. The Panel comments publicly on proposed rules or regulations regarding the education of children with disabilities. The Panel's advisory function to the State Education Authority (SEA) in developing evaluations and reporting 618 data (IDEA data) to USED and in developing corrective action plans to address findings in Federal monitoring reports under IDEA Part B. The Panel also advises the SEA in developing and implementing policies relating to the coordination of services for children with disabilities.

MA DESE has set a high priority on expanding the agency's capacity to solicit broad and diverse stakeholder input to set SPP/APR targets, analyze data, develop improvement strategies, and evaluate progress. For FFY2021, MA DESE sought to continue stakeholder Indicator knowledge that began in FFY2020. A new SPP/APR webpage, previously linked above, was created and posted along with new webpages for Indicators 4, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 15, 16, and 17. Small changes were made to previously created webpages for Indicators 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, 8, and 14 with Quick Reference Guides (QRGs) and PowerPoints for each Indicator. These QRGs and PowerPoints were available in six languages that correspond to the most common languages spoken in Massachusetts: English, Spanish, Portuguese, Chinese, Vietnamese, and Haitian Creole. Narrated versions of each PowerPoint were also available in English on the YouTube page of our partner, the Federation for Children with Special Needs (the Massachusetts Parent Training and Information Center/PTIC). MA DESE hosted six virtual stakeholder information and feedback sessions to broaden stakeholder knowledge on Indicators 4, 9, 10, 11, 12, and 13, while also soliciting feedback for Indicators 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, 8, 14, and 17 and presenting information to stakeholders, such as performance towards the targets set in FFY2020. These informational sessions featured a large group presentation on each topic, that was simultaneously translated into Spanish, Portuguese, Chinese, Vietnamese, and Haitian Creole. After each large group presentation, breakout rooms were opened in each of the previously mentioned languages, where stakeholders would be able to communicate and ask questions, in their native language, to MA DESE staff.

MA DESE also consults regularly, on a monthly or at least quarterly basis, with Massachusetts Administrators of Special Education, <http://www.asepage.org/>, the Federation for Children with Special Needs, <https://fcsn.org/>, Massachusetts Advocates for Children, <https://www.massadvocates.org/>, the Massachusetts Association of Approved Special Education Schools, <https://maaps.org/>, Massachusetts Urban Special Education Leadership Collaborative, and the Special Needs Advocacy Network, [www.spanmass.org](http://www.spanmass.org). In addition, the Massachusetts State Special Education Director at MA DESE gives monthly virtual presentations to statewide special education leaders on a wide array of special education compliance and performance topics. During all of these meetings, MA DESE solicits and receives significant feedback that informs the development of special education policy and guidance.

As needed, MA DESE also convenes stakeholder working groups throughout the year to provide focused input on specific projects and policy priorities. Examples of these focused groups include the Early Childhood Interagency Coordinating Council, with membership that includes community members and state agencies, a Statewide Systemic Improvement Plan (SSIP) leadership team and working group, a family engagement workgroup, an advisory group for the Dropout Prevention and Re-engagement Network, and secondary transition stakeholder groups. MA DESE also consults with educators, parents, advocates, and others on an ad hoc basis to inform policy and practice.

MA DESE engages with stakeholders on the direction of Indicator 17, the State's Systemic Improvement Plan (SSIP), at the state, district, classroom, and community levels. Stakeholders are provided with information about activities and goals, training events and embedded supports statewide, and the availability of resources to support and expand implementation. Stakeholders at the district and school levels participate in ongoing decision making about the direction of the SSIP by providing feedback about the quality of events and supports, observed benefits for their own stakeholders, and needs for moving forward with implementation most successfully. In May of 2022, MA DESE met with stakeholders to discuss revisions to the Theory of Action and the Evaluation Plan for the SSIP. Through frequent communication and input from stakeholders revisions to the Theory of Action and Evaluation Plan were made for incorporation and use during the FFY2022 SPP/APR reporting cycle. For additional information on stakeholder engagement related to Indicator 17, please see the Indicator 17 APR.

Stakeholder engagement is an essential component of MA DESE's special education agenda.

MA DESE, in consultation with the stakeholder groups, set Indicator 3 targets through FFY 2025. In setting these targets, the stakeholder groups reviewed statewide longitudinal data, improvement activities, and State policies, including the ESEA waiver granted by the U.S. Department of Education. At its May and June 2021 meetings, the Advisory Panel reviewed the data and endorsed the proposal of maintaining a 95% target participation for reading and math assessments through FFY 2025 for grades 4, 8, and 10, as did parents participating in December 2021 focus groups convened by the Federation for Children with Special Needs.

Moving forward, MA DESE will continue to engage its special education stakeholders in discussions around proficiency on the Next-Generation MCAS. As more years of assessment results are available, allowing for year-over-year comparison, MA DESE, with support from the IDEA Data Center and in collaboration with the Advisory Panel and other stakeholders, will continue to update targets that are rigorous yet reflective of actual and anticipated growth.

**FFY 2021 Data Disaggregation from EDFacts**

**Data Source:**

SY 2021-22 Assessment Data Groups - Reading (EDFacts file spec FS188; Data Group: 589)

**Date:**

04/05/2023

**Reading Assessment Participation Data by Grade**

Group	Grade 4	Grade 8	Grade HS
a. Children with IEPs*	14,431	14,696	13,123
b. Children with IEPs in regular assessment with no accommodations	3,618	2,335	2,379
c. Children with IEPs in regular assessment with accommodations	9,713	10,985	9,339
d. Children with IEPs in alternate assessment against alternate standards	877	811	811

**Data Source:**

SY 2021-22 Assessment Data Groups - Math (EDFacts file spec FS185; Data Group: 588)

**Date:**

04/05/2023

**Math Assessment Participation Data by Grade**

Group	Grade 4	Grade 8	Grade HS
a. Children with IEPs*	14,440	14,683	13,087
b. Children with IEPs in regular assessment with no accommodations	2,870	2,055	2,194
c. Children with IEPs in regular assessment with accommodations	10,475	11,246	9,464
d. Children with IEPs in alternate assessment against alternate standards	885	822	828

\*The children with IEPs count excludes children with disabilities who were reported as exempt due to significant medical emergency in row a for all the prefilled data in this indicator.

**FFY 2021 SPP/APR Data: Reading Assessment**

Group	Group Name	Number of Children with IEPs Participating	Number of Children with IEPs	FFY 2020 Data	FFY 2021 Target	FFY 2021 Data	Status	Slippage
A	Grade 4	14,208	14,431	95.33%	95.00%	98.45%	Met target	No Slippage
B	Grade 8	14,131	14,696	90.28%	95.00%	96.16%	Met target	No Slippage
C	Grade HS	12,529	13,123	92.25%	95.00%	95.47%	Met target	No Slippage

**FFY 2021 SPP/APR Data: Math Assessment**

Group	Group Name	Number of Children with IEPs Participating	Number of Children with IEPs	FFY 2020 Data	FFY 2021 Target	FFY 2021 Data	Status	Slippage
A	Grade 4	14,230	14,440	95.21%	95.00%	98.55%	Met target	No Slippage
B	Grade 8	14,123	14,683	90.12%	95.00%	96.19%	Met target	No Slippage
C	Grade HS	12,486	13,087	91.94%	95.00%	95.41%	Met target	No Slippage

### **Regulatory Information**

The SEA, (or, in the case of a district-wide assessment, LEA) must make available to the public, and report to the public with the same frequency and in the same detail as it reports on the assessment of nondisabled children: (1) the number of children with disabilities participating in: (a) regular assessments, and the number of those children who were provided accommodations in order to participate in those assessments; and (b) alternate assessments aligned with alternate achievement standards; and (2) the performance of children with disabilities on regular assessments and on alternate assessments, compared with the achievement of all children, including children with disabilities, on those assessments. [20 U.S.C. 1412 (a)(16)(D); 34 CFR §300.160(f)]

### **Public Reporting Information**

**Provide links to the page(s) where you provide public reports of assessment results.**

Student Participation and Performance on Statewide Assessments (Indicator 3) Comprehensive reports on state and LEA performance are found at: <https://profiles.doe.mass.edu/mcas/participation.aspx?linkid=26&orgcode=00000000&fycode=2021&orgtypecode=0&>

**Provide additional information about this indicator (optional)**

The 1993 Massachusetts Education Reform Law, M.G.L. c. 69, § 11, mandates that all students educated with Massachusetts public funds participate in MCAS testing. MA DESE regularly updates its student participation requirements at <http://www.doe.mass.edu/mcas/participation.html?section=gr3-8and10>.

This report displays the most current data compared with the goals set by federal and state accountability requirements.

In 2022, higher rates of student absenteeism were seen in all grades and student groups. This suggests that the impact of COVID-19 continued to interrupt opportunities for student learning.

For more information, visit our Accountability Lists, Materials, and Tools website: <http://www.doe.mass.edu/accountability/lists-tools/>

### **3A - Prior FFY Required Actions**

None

### **3A - OSEP Response**

### **3A - Required Actions**

## Indicator 3B: Proficiency for Children with IEPs (Grade Level Academic Achievement Standards)

### Instructions and Measurement

**Monitoring Priority:** FAPE in the LRE

**Results indicator:** Participation and performance of children with IEPs on statewide assessments:

- A. Participation rate for children with IEPs.
- B. Proficiency rate for children with IEPs against grade level academic achievement standards.
- C. Proficiency rate for children with IEPs against alternate academic achievement standards.
- D. Gap in proficiency rates for children with IEPs and all students against grade level academic achievement standards.

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

#### Data Source

3B. Same data as used for reporting to the Department under Title I of the ESEA, using EDFacts file specifications FS175 and 178.

#### Measurement

B. Proficiency rate percent = [(# of children with IEPs scoring at or above proficient against grade level academic achievement standards) divided by the (total # of children with IEPs who received a valid score and for whom a proficiency level was assigned for the regular assessment)]. Calculate separately for reading and math. Calculate separately for grades 4, 8, and high school. The proficiency rate includes both children with IEPs enrolled for a full academic year and those not enrolled for a full academic year.

#### Instructions

Describe the results of the calculations and compare the results to the targets. Provide the actual numbers used in the calculation.

Include information regarding where to find public reports of assessment participation and performance results, as required by 34 CFR §300.160(f), i.e., a link to the Web site where these data are reported.

Indicator 3B: Proficiency calculations in this SPP/APR must result in proficiency rates for children with IEPs on the regular assessment in reading/language arts and mathematics assessments (separately) in each of the following grades: 4, 8, and high school, including both children with IEPs enrolled for a full academic year and those not enrolled for a full academic year. Only include children with disabilities who had an IEP at the time of testing.

### 3B - Indicator Data

#### Historical Data:

Subject	Group	Group Name	Baseline Year	Baseline Data
Reading	A	Grade 4	2020	20.40%
Reading	B	Grade 8	2020	11.16%
Reading	C	Grade HS	2020	26.99%
Math	A	Grade 4	2020	11.77%
Math	B	Grade 8	2020	7.24%
Math	C	Grade HS	2020	15.41%

#### Targets

Subject	Group	Group Name	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Reading	A >=	Grade 4	21.00%	22.00%	23.00%	24.00%	25.00%
Reading	B >=	Grade 8	12.00%	13.00%	14.00%	15.00%	16.00%
Reading	C >=	Grade HS	27.00%	28.00%	29.00%	30.00%	31.00%
Math	A >=	Grade 4	12.00%	13.00%	14.00%	15.00%	16.00%
Math	B >=	Grade 8	8.00%	9.00%	10.00%	11.00%	12.00%
Math	C >=	Grade HS	16.00%	17.00%	18.00%	19.00%	20.00%

#### Targets: Description of Stakeholder Input

MA DESE is committed to a continuous system of engaging stakeholders to develop targets and set priorities for improvement in each of the areas reported in the SPP/APR.

The Special Education Advisory Panel (SEAP) and Special Education State Advisory Council (SAC), comprised of parents, individuals with disabilities, educators, administrators, and representatives from state agencies, higher education, and other stakeholder groups, meets at least four times each school year to review data, discuss policy priorities, and identify unmet needs in the area of special education consistent with state law and IDEA Part B. At each meeting, the group addressed various aspects of the SPP/APR and the State's general supervision systems, as well as relevant policy matters. In FFY2020 MA DESE facilitated discussions with the SEAP and SAC to establish baselines and targets for the performance Indicators. In FFY2021, MA DESE discussed each Indicator's performance and impacts on the LEA Determinations and Accountability and Assistance systems. MA DESE is committed to keep members of the SEAP and SAC up to date on processes and supports provided to LEA's in order to improve outcomes for students with disabilities. MA DESE will continue discussions around and current data, longitudinal targets, historical rates of performance and compliance and

the trajectory for improvement for each of the Indicators, and the effectiveness of focused improvement activities within the context of the state's Results Driven Accountability framework.

The SAC is required by Massachusetts General Law (M.G.L. c. 15, § 1G <https://malegislature.gov/Laws/GeneralLaws/PartI/TitleII/Chapter15/Section1G>). The purpose of the SAC is to advise the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education and to make other programmatic recommendations as it deems necessary to fulfill the goals established by the board.

The SEAP is required by IDEA (34 CFR §§ 300.167-300.169 [https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-34/subtitle-B/chapter-III/part-300#sg34.2.300\\_1166.sg15](https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-34/subtitle-B/chapter-III/part-300#sg34.2.300_1166.sg15)). The purpose of the SEAP is to advise the State Education Authority (SEA) of unmet needs within the State regarding the education of children with disabilities. The Panel comments publicly on proposed rules or regulations regarding the education of children with disabilities. The Panel's advisory function to the State Education Authority (SEA) in developing evaluations and reporting 618 data (IDEA data) to USED and in developing corrective action plans to address findings in Federal monitoring reports under IDEA Part B. The Panel also advises the SEA in developing and implementing policies relating to the coordination of services for children with disabilities.

MA DESE has set a high priority on expanding the agency's capacity to solicit broad and diverse stakeholder input to set SPP/APR targets, analyze data, develop improvement strategies, and evaluate progress. For FFY2021, MA DESE sought to continue stakeholder Indicator knowledge that began in FFY2020. A new SPP/APR webpage, previously linked above, was created and posted along with new webpages for Indicators 4, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 15, 16, and 17. Small changes were made to previously created webpages for Indicators 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, 8, and 14 with Quick Reference Guides (QRGs) and PowerPoints for each Indicator. These QRGs and PowerPoints were available in six languages that correspond to the most common languages spoken in Massachusetts: English, Spanish, Portuguese, Chinese, Vietnamese, and Haitian Creole. Narrated versions of each PowerPoint were also available in English on the YouTube page of our partner, the Federation for Children with Special Needs (the Massachusetts Parent Training and Information Center/PTIC). MA DESE hosted six virtual stakeholder information and feedback sessions to broaden stakeholder knowledge on Indicators 4, 9, 10, 11, 12, and 13, while also soliciting feedback for Indicators 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, 8, 14, and 17 and presenting information to stakeholders, such as performance towards the targets set in FFY2020. These informational sessions featured a large group presentation on each topic, that was simultaneously translated into Spanish, Portuguese, Chinese, Vietnamese, and Haitian Creole. After each large group presentation, breakout rooms were opened in each of the previously mentioned languages, where stakeholders would be able to communicate and ask questions, in their native language, to MA DESE staff.

MA DESE also consults regularly, on a monthly or at least quarterly basis, with Massachusetts Administrators of Special Education, <http://www.asepage.org/>, the Federation for Children with Special Needs, <https://fcsn.org/>, Massachusetts Advocates for Children, <https://www.massadvocates.org/>, the Massachusetts Association of Approved Special Education Schools, <https://maaps.org/>, Massachusetts Urban Special Education Leadership Collaborative, and the Special Needs Advocacy Network, [www.spanmass.org](http://www.spanmass.org). In addition, the Massachusetts State Special Education Director at MA DESE gives monthly virtual presentations to statewide special education leaders on a wide array of special education compliance and performance topics. During all of these meetings, MA DESE solicits and receives significant feedback that informs the development of special education policy and guidance.

As needed, MA DESE also convenes stakeholder working groups throughout the year to provide focused input on specific projects and policy priorities. Examples of these focused groups include the Early Childhood Interagency Coordinating Council, with membership that includes community members and state agencies, a Statewide Systemic Improvement Plan (SSIP) leadership team and working group, a family engagement workgroup, an advisory group for the Dropout Prevention and Re-engagement Network, and secondary transition stakeholder groups. MA DESE also consults with educators, parents, advocates, and others on an ad hoc basis to inform policy and practice.

MA DESE engages with stakeholders on the direction of Indicator 17, the State's Systemic Improvement Plan (SSIP), at the state, district, classroom, and community levels. Stakeholders are provided with information about activities and goals, training events and embedded supports statewide, and the availability of resources to support and expand implementation. Stakeholders at the district and school levels participate in ongoing decision making about the direction of the SSIP by providing feedback about the quality of events and supports, observed benefits for their own stakeholders, and needs for moving forward with implementation most successfully. In May of 2022, MA DESE met with stakeholders to discuss revisions to the Theory of Action and the Evaluation Plan for the SSIP. Through frequent communication and input from stakeholders revisions to the Theory of Action and Evaluation Plan were made for incorporation and use during the FFY2022 SPP/APR reporting cycle. For additional information on stakeholder engagement related to Indicator 17, please see the Indicator 17 APR.

Stakeholder engagement is an essential component of MA DESE's special education agenda.

MA DESE, in consultation with the stakeholder groups, set Indicator 3 targets through FFY 2025. In setting these targets, the stakeholder groups reviewed statewide longitudinal data, improvement activities, and State policies, including the ESEA waiver granted by the U.S. Department of Education. The stakeholder groups recommended Indicator 3 targets based on the ESEA waiver and supported setting ambitious targets for Indicator 3, as this reflects the State's commitment that all students, regardless of disability, participate in the State's assessment system.

At its May and June 2021 meetings, the Advisory Panel reviewed the data and endorsed the proposed targets for Indicator 3B, as did parents participating in December 2021 focus groups convened by the Federation for Children with Special Needs.

For Reading, (English Language Arts) Massachusetts set targets for 3B using FFY 2020 as the baseline year, with a 1 percentage point increase each year through FFY 2025 to ensure rigorous yet attainable goals.

For Mathematics, Massachusetts set targets for 3B using FFY 2020 as the baseline year, with a 1 percentage point increase each year through FFY 2025 to ensure rigorous yet attainable goals.

Moving forward, MA DESE will continue to engage its special education stakeholders in discussions around proficiency on the Next-Generation MCAS. As more years of assessment results are available, allowing for year-over-year comparison, MA DESE, with support from the IDEA Data Center and in collaboration with the Advisory Panel and other stakeholders, will continue to update targets that are rigorous yet reflective of actual and anticipated growth.

## FFY 2021 Data Disaggregation from EDFacts

### Data Source:

SY 2021-22 Assessment Data Groups - Reading (EDFacts file spec FS178; Data Group: 584)

### Date:

04/05/2023

### Reading Assessment Proficiency Data by Grade

Group	Grade 4	Grade 8	Grade HS
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a. Children with IEPs who received a valid score and a proficiency level was assigned for the regular assessment	13,342	13,344	11,787
b. Children with IEPs in regular assessment with no accommodations scored at or above proficient against grade level	752	448	726
c. Children with IEPs in regular assessment with accommodations scored at or above proficient against grade level	768	896	1,817

**Data Source:**

SY 2021-22 Assessment Data Groups - Math (EDFacts file spec FS175; Data Group: 583)

**Date:**

04/05/2023

**Math Assessment Proficiency Data by Grade**

Group	Grade 4	Grade 8	Grade HS
a. Children with IEPs who received a valid score and a proficiency level was assigned for the regular assessment	13,315	13,287	11,653
b. Children with IEPs in regular assessment with no accommodations scored at or above proficient against grade level	910	396	630
c. Children with IEPs in regular assessment with accommodations scored at or above proficient against grade level	1,206	755	1,193

**FFY 2021 SPP/APR Data: Reading Assessment**

Group	Group Name	Number of Children with IEPs Scoring At or Above Proficient Against Grade Level Academic Achievement Standards	Number of Children with IEPs who Received a Valid Score and for whom a Proficiency Level was Assigned for the Regular Assessment	FFY 2020 Data	FFY 2021 Target	FFY 2021 Data	Status	Slippage
A	Grade 4	1,520	13,342	20.40%	21.00%	11.39%	Did not meet target	Slippage
B	Grade 8	1,344	13,344	11.16%	12.00%	10.07%	Did not meet target	Slippage
C	Grade HS	2,543	11,787	26.99%	27.00%	21.57%	Did not meet target	Slippage

**Provide reasons for slippage for Group A, if applicable**

The 2022 MCAS showed mixed results compared with the 2021 scores.

The 2022 school year was the first full MCAS administration for grades 3-8 since 2019. Grade 4 students in 2022 had never taken a full administration of an MCAS test. In the year 2020, the tests were not administered. In 2021, during their third grade year, a half-test was administered for grades 3 and 8, and the full test was administered for grade 10. The year 2022 is the first year after COVID that the tests were fully administered. A comparison of these scores to pre-pandemic scores indicate that we have continued work in all subject areas to return to pre-pandemic levels.

Each ELA test contains a required essay, and the 2022 writing results declined significantly. The average points scored per essay decreased in grades 3-8.

Student absenteeism remains a challenge: Student attendance has yet to return to pre-pandemic levels as students are still missing school due to pandemic-related issues. On average, students in MA missed 11 days in 2021 and 15 days in 2022. Chronic absenteeism for students in grades 3-8 increased in 2022 by 138% (41K vs 98K students) as compared to 2019. 18% of all students missed 18+ days in 2021 and 28% missed 18+ days in

2022. 39% of students in urban school districts missed 18+ school days in 2022. In total, students in MA missed 1.7 million days of school because of positive COVID-19 cases in 2022.

**Provide reasons for slippage for Group B, if applicable**

The 2022 MCAS showed mixed results compared with the 2021 scores.

The 2022 school year was the first full MCAS administration for grades 3-8 since 2019. Grade 8 students in 2022 had not taken an MCAS test since 2019 (grade 5). In the year 2020, the tests were not administered. In 2021 half-test was administered for grades 3 and 8, and the full test was administered for grade 10. The year 2022 is the first year after COVID that the tests were fully administered. A comparison of these scores to pre-pandemic scores indicate that we have continued work in all subject areas to return to pre-pandemic levels. Each ELA test contains a required essay, and the 2022 writing results declined significantly. The average points scored per essay decreased in grades 3-8.

Student absenteeism remains a challenge: Student attendance has yet to return to pre-pandemic levels as students are still missing school due to pandemic-related issues. On average, students in MA missed 11 days in 2021 and 15 days in 2022. Chronic absenteeism for students in grades 3-8 increased in 2022 by 138% (41K vs 98K students) as compared to 2019. 18% of all students missed 18+ days in 2021 and 28% missed 18+ days in 2022. 39% of students in urban school districts missed 18+ school days in 2022. In total, students in MA missed 1.7 million days of school because of positive COVID-19 cases in 2022.

**Provide reasons for slippage for Group C, if applicable**

The 2022 MCAS showed mixed results compared with the 2021 scores.

The 2022 school year was the first full MCAS administration for grades 3-8 since 2019. Grade 10 students in 2022 had not taken an MCAS test since 2019 (grade 7). In the year 2020, the tests were not administered. In 2021 half-test was administered for grades 3 and 8, and the full test was administered for grade 10. The year 2022 is the first year after COVID that the tests were fully administered. A comparison of these scores to pre-pandemic scores indicate that we have continued work in all subject areas to return to pre-pandemic levels. Each ELA test contains a required essay, and the 2022 writing results declined significantly. The average points scored per essay decreased in grades 3-8.

Student absenteeism remains a challenge: Student attendance has yet to return to pre-pandemic levels as students are still missing school due to pandemic-related issues. On average, students in MA missed 11 days in 2021 and 15 days in 2022. Chronic absenteeism for students in grades 3-8 increased in 2022 by 138% (41K vs 98K students) as compared to 2019. 18% of all students missed 18+ days in 2021 and 28% missed 18+ days in 2022. 39% of students in urban school districts missed 18+ school days in 2022. In total, students in MA missed 1.7 million days of school because of positive COVID-19 cases in 2022.

**FFY 2021 SPP/APR Data: Math Assessment**

Group	Group Name	Number of Children with IEPs Scoring At or Above Proficient Against Grade Level Academic Achievement Standards	Number of Children with IEPs who Received a Valid Score and for whom a Proficiency Level was Assigned for the Regular Assessment	FFY 2020 Data	FFY 2021 Target	FFY 2021 Data	Status	Slippage
A	Grade 4	2,116	13,315	11.77%	12.00%	15.89%	Met target	No Slippage
B	Grade 8	1,151	13,287	7.24%	8.00%	8.66%	Met target	No Slippage
C	Grade HS	1,823	11,653	15.41%	16.00%	15.64%	Did not meet target	No Slippage

## Regulatory Information

The SEA, (or, in the case of a district-wide assessment, LEA) must make available to the public, and report to the public with the same frequency and in the same detail as it reports on the assessment of nondisabled children: (1) the number of children with disabilities participating in: (a) regular assessments, and the number of those children who were provided accommodations in order to participate in those assessments; and (b) alternate assessments aligned with alternate achievement standards; and (2) the performance of children with disabilities on regular assessments and on alternate assessments, compared with the achievement of all children, including children with disabilities, on those assessments. [20 U.S.C. 1412 (a)(16)(D); 34 CFR §300.160(f)]

## Public Reporting Information

**Provide links to the page(s) where you provide public reports of assessment results.**

Student Participation and Performance on Statewide Assessments (Indicator 3) Comprehensive reports on state and LEA performance are found at <https://profiles.doe.mass.edu/mcas/participation.aspx?linkid=26&orgcode=00000000&fycode=2021&orgtypecode=0&>

**Provide additional information about this indicator (optional)**

Over the last few years, MA DESE has gradually implemented a new statewide assessment, called the Next-Generation MCAS. Compared to the legacy MCAS, the new assessment better aligns to the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks and better measures students' preparation for the next grade level and college/career readiness. The Next-Generation MCAS also incorporates new, more rigorous test content that is aligned to standards that reflect higher expectations for college readiness and proficiency at the next grade level. In March 2017, the Massachusetts Board of Elementary and Secondary Education adopted new achievement levels for the next-generation tests. Grades 3-8 were introduced to the Next Generation MCAS in 2017, and grade 10 was introduced to the Next Generation MCAS in 2019. These Next-Generation achievement levels differ from the legacy MCAS achievement levels and are reported using a different scale. The next-generation achievement levels are designed to provide an indication of whether a student is on track to succeed in the subject matter and whether extra academic assistance may be needed for the student.

Beginning in the spring of 2019, all students in grades 3-8 and grade 10 now take the Next-Generation MCAS in reading (English Language Arts (ELA) and math. For reporting purposes as required by the SPP/APR, MA DESE reports student scores of Meeting Expectations and Exceeding Expectations as proficient.

This report displays the most current data compared with the goals set by federal and state accountability requirements.

In 2022, higher rates of student absenteeism were seen in all grades and student groups. This suggests that the impact of COVID-19 continued to interrupt opportunities for student learning.

For more information, visit our Accountability Lists, Materials, and Tools website: <http://www.doe.mass.edu/accountability/lists-tools/>

## 3B - Prior FFY Required Actions

None

## 3B - OSEP Response

## 3B - Required Actions

## Indicator 3C: Proficiency for Children with IEPs (Alternate Academic Achievement Standards)

### Instructions and Measurement

**Monitoring Priority:** FAPE in the LRE

**Results indicator:** Participation and performance of children with IEPs on statewide assessments:

- A. Participation rate for children with IEPs.
- B. Proficiency rate for children with IEPs against grade level academic achievement standards.
- C. Proficiency rate for children with IEPs against alternate academic achievement standards.
- D. Gap in proficiency rates for children with IEPs and all students against grade level academic achievement standards.

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

#### Data Source

3C. Same data as used for reporting to the Department under Title I of the ESEA, using EDFacts file specifications FS175 and 178.

#### Measurement

C. Proficiency rate percent = [(# of children with IEPs scoring at or above proficient against alternate academic achievement standards) divided by the (total # of children with IEPs who received a valid score and for whom a proficiency level was assigned for the alternate assessment)]. Calculate separately for reading and math. Calculate separately for grades 4, 8, and high school. The proficiency rate includes both children with IEPs enrolled for a full academic year and those not enrolled for a full academic year.

#### Instructions

Describe the results of the calculations and compare the results to the targets. Provide the actual numbers used in the calculation.

Include information regarding where to find public reports of assessment participation and performance results, as required by 34 CFR §300.160(f), i.e., a link to the Web site where these data are reported.

Indicator 3C: Proficiency calculations in this SPP/APR must result in proficiency rates for children with IEPs on the alternate assessment in reading/language arts and mathematics assessments (separately) in each of the following grades: 4, 8, and high school, including both children with IEPs enrolled for a full academic year and those not enrolled for a full academic year. Only include children with disabilities who had an IEP at the time of testing.

### 3C - Indicator Data

#### Historical Data:

Subject	Group	Group Name	Baseline Year	Baseline Data
Reading	A	Grade 4	2020	0.00%
Reading	B	Grade 8	2020	0.00%
Reading	C	Grade HS	2020	0.00%
Math	A	Grade 4	2020	0.00%
Math	B	Grade 8	2020	0.00%
Math	C	Grade HS	2020	0.00%

#### Targets

Subject	Group	Group Name	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Reading	A >=	Grade 4	46.00%	47.00%	48.00%	49.00%	50.00%
Reading	B >=	Grade 8	48.00%	49.00%	50.00%	51.00%	52.00%
Reading	C >=	Grade HS	46.00%	47.00%	48.00%	49.00%	50.00%
Math	A >=	Grade 4	72.00%	73.00%	74.00%	75.00%	76.00%
Math	B >=	Grade 8	68.00%	69.00%	70.00%	71.00%	72.00%
Math	C >=	Grade HS	66.00%	67.00%	68.00%	69.00%	70.00%

## Targets: Description of Stakeholder Input

MA DESE is committed to a continuous system of engaging stakeholders to develop targets and set priorities for improvement in each of the areas reported in the SPP/APR.

The Special Education Advisory Panel (SEAP) and Special Education State Advisory Council (SAC), comprised of parents, individuals with disabilities, educators, administrators, and representatives from state agencies, higher education, and other stakeholder groups, meets at least four times each school year to review data, discuss policy priorities, and identify unmet needs in the area of special education consistent with state law and IDEA Part B. At each meeting, the group addressed various aspects of the SPP/APR and the State's general supervision systems, as well as relevant policy matters. In FFY2020 MA DESE facilitated discussions with the SEAP and SAC to establish baselines and targets for the performance Indicators. In FFY2021, MA DESE discussed each Indicator's performance and impacts on the LEA Determinations and Accountability and Assistance systems. MA DESE is committed to keep members of the SEAP and SAC up to date on processes and supports provided to LEA's in order to improve outcomes for students with disabilities. MA DESE will continue discussions around and current data, longitudinal targets, historical rates of performance and compliance and the trajectory for improvement for each of the Indicators, and the effectiveness of focused improvement activities within the context of the state's Results Driven Accountability framework.

The SAC is required by Massachusetts General Law (M.G.L. c. 15, § 1G <https://malegislature.gov/Laws/GeneralLaws/PartI/TitleII/Chapter15/Section1G>). The purpose of the SAC is to advise the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education and to make other programmatic recommendations as it deems necessary to fulfill the goals established by the board.

The SEAP is required by IDEA (34 CFR §§ 300.167-300.169 [https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-34/subtitle-B/chapter-III/part-300#sg34.2.300\\_1166.sg15](https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-34/subtitle-B/chapter-III/part-300#sg34.2.300_1166.sg15)). The purpose of the SEAP is to advise the State Education Authority (SEA) of unmet needs within the State regarding the education of children with disabilities. The Panel comments publicly on proposed rules or regulations regarding the education of children with disabilities. The Panel's advisory function to the State Education Authority (SEA) in developing evaluations and reporting 618 data (IDEA data) to USED and in developing corrective action plans to address findings in Federal monitoring reports under IDEA Part B. The Panel also advises the SEA in developing and implementing policies relating to the coordination of services for children with disabilities.

MA DESE has set a high priority on expanding the agency's capacity to solicit broad and diverse stakeholder input to set SPP/APR targets, analyze data, develop improvement strategies, and evaluate progress. For FFY2021, MA DESE sought to continue stakeholder Indicator knowledge that began in FFY2020. A new SPP/APR webpage, previously linked above, was created and posted along with new webpages for Indicators 4, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 15, 16, and 17. Small changes were made to previously created webpages for Indicators 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, 8, and 14 with Quick Reference Guides (QRGs) and PowerPoints for each Indicator. These QRGs and PowerPoints were available in six languages that correspond to the most common languages spoken in Massachusetts: English, Spanish, Portuguese, Chinese, Vietnamese, and Haitian Creole. Narrated versions of each PowerPoint were also available in English on the YouTube page of our partner, the Federation for Children with Special Needs (the Massachusetts Parent Training and Information Center/PTIC). MA DESE hosted six virtual stakeholder information and feedback sessions to broaden stakeholder knowledge on Indicators 4, 9, 10, 11, 12, and 13, while also soliciting feedback for Indicators 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, 8, 14, and 17 and presenting information to stakeholders, such as performance towards the targets set in FFY2020. These informational sessions featured a large group presentation on each topic, that was simultaneously translated into Spanish, Portuguese, Chinese, Vietnamese, and Haitian Creole. After each large group presentation, breakout rooms were opened in each of the previously mentioned languages, where stakeholders would be able to communicate and ask questions, in their native language, to MA DESE staff.

MA DESE also consults regularly, on a monthly or at least quarterly basis, with Massachusetts Administrators of Special Education, <http://www.asepage.org/>, the Federation for Children with Special Needs, <https://fcsn.org/>, Massachusetts Advocates for Children, <https://www.massadvocates.org/>, the Massachusetts Association of Approved Special Education Schools, <https://maaps.org/>, Massachusetts Urban Special Education Leadership Collaborative, and the Special Needs Advocacy Network, [www.spanmass.org](http://www.spanmass.org). In addition, the Massachusetts State Special Education Director at MA DESE gives monthly virtual presentations to statewide special education leaders on a wide array of special education compliance and performance topics. During all of these meetings, MA DESE solicits and receives significant feedback that informs the development of special education policy and guidance.

As needed, MA DESE also convenes stakeholder working groups throughout the year to provide focused input on specific projects and policy priorities. Examples of these focused groups include the Early Childhood Interagency Coordinating Council, with membership that includes community members and state agencies, a Statewide Systemic Improvement Plan (SSIP) leadership team and working group, a family engagement workgroup, an advisory group for the Dropout Prevention and Re-engagement Network, and secondary transition stakeholder groups. MA DESE also consults with educators, parents, advocates, and others on an ad hoc basis to inform policy and practice.

MA DESE engages with stakeholders on the direction of Indicator 17, the State's Systemic Improvement Plan (SSIP), at the state, district, classroom, and community levels. Stakeholders are provided with information about activities and goals, training events and embedded supports statewide, and the availability of resources to support and expand implementation. Stakeholders at the district and school levels participate in ongoing decision making about the direction of the SSIP by providing feedback about the quality of events and supports, observed benefits for their own stakeholders, and needs for moving forward with implementation most successfully. In May of 2022, MA DESE met with stakeholders to discuss revisions to the Theory of Action and the Evaluation Plan for the SSIP. Through frequent communication and input from stakeholders revisions to the Theory of Action and Evaluation Plan were made for incorporation and use during the FFY2022 SPP/APR reporting cycle. For additional information on stakeholder engagement related to Indicator 17, please see the Indicator 17 APR.

Stakeholder engagement is an essential component of MA DESE's special education agenda.

MA DESE, in consultation with the stakeholder groups, set Indicator 3 targets through FFY 2025. In setting these targets, the stakeholder groups reviewed statewide longitudinal data, improvement activities, and State policies, including the ESEA waiver granted by the U.S. Department of Education. The stakeholder groups recommended Indicator 3 targets based on the ESEA waiver and supported setting ambitious targets for Indicator 3, as this reflects the State's commitment that all students, regardless of disability, participate in the State's assessment system.

At its May and June 2021 meetings, the Advisory Panel reviewed the data and endorsed the proposed targets for Indicator 3C, as did parents participating in December 2021 focus groups convened by the Federation for Children with Special Needs.

For Reading, (English Language Arts) Massachusetts set targets for 3C using FFY 2020 as the baseline year, with a 1 percentage point increase each year through FFY 2025 to ensure rigorous yet attainable goals.

For Mathematics, Massachusetts set targets for 3C using FFY 2020 as the baseline year, with a 1 percentage point increase each year through FFY2025 to ensure rigorous yet attainable goals.

Moving forward, MA DESE will continue to engage its special education stakeholders in discussions around proficiency on the Next-Generation MCAS. As more years of assessment results are available, allowing for year over year comparison, MA DESE, with support from the IDEA Data Center and in

collaboration with the Advisory Panel and other stakeholders, will continue to update targets that are rigorous yet reflective of actual and anticipated growth.

**FFY 2021 Data Disaggregation from EDFacts**

**Data Source:**

SY 2021-22 Assessment Data Groups - Reading (EDFacts file spec FS178; Data Group: 584)

**Date:**

04/05/2023

**Reading Assessment Proficiency Data by Grade**

Group	Grade 4	Grade 8	Grade HS
a. Children with IEPs who received a valid score and a proficiency level was assigned for the alternate assessment	879	822	826
b. Children with IEPs in alternate assessment against alternate standards scored at or above proficient	0	0	0

**Data Source:**

SY 2021-22 Assessment Data Groups - Math (EDFacts file spec FS175; Data Group: 583)

**Date:**

04/05/2023

**Math Assessment Proficiency Data by Grade**

Group	Grade 4	Grade 8	Grade HS
a. Children with IEPs who received a valid score and a proficiency level was assigned for the alternate assessment	883	820	827
b. Children with IEPs in alternate assessment against alternate standards scored at or above proficient	0	0	0

**FFY 2021 SPP/APR Data: Reading Assessment**

Group	Group Name	Number of Children with IEPs Scoring At or Above Proficient Against Alternate Academic Achievement Standards	Number of Children with IEPs who Received a Valid Score and for whom a Proficiency Level was Assigned for the Alternate Assessment	FFY 2020 Data	FFY 2021 Target	FFY 2021 Data	Status	Slippage
A	Grade 4	0	879	0.00%	46.00%	0.00%	Did not meet target	No Slippage
B	Grade 8	0	822	0.00%	48.00%	0.00%	Did not meet target	No Slippage
C	Grade HS	0	826	0.00%	46.00%	0.00%	Did not meet target	No Slippage

**FFY 2021 SPP/APR Data: Math Assessment**

Group	Group Name	Number of Children with IEPs Scoring At or Above Proficient Against Alternate Academic Achievement Standards	Number of Children with IEPs who Received a Valid Score and for whom a Proficiency Level was Assigned for the Alternate Assessment	FFY 2020 Data	FFY 2021 Target	FFY 2021 Data	Status	Slippage
A	Grade 4	0	883	0.00%	72.00%	0.00%	Did not meet target	No Slippage
B	Grade 8	0	820	0.00%	68.00%	0.00%	Did not meet target	No Slippage
C	Grade HS	0	827	0.00%	66.00%	0.00%	Did not meet target	No Slippage

**Regulatory Information**

The SEA, (or, in the case of a district-wide assessment, LEA) must make available to the public, and report to the public with the same frequency and in the same detail as it reports on the assessment of nondisabled children: (1) the number of children with disabilities participating in: (a) regular assessments, and the number of those children who were provided accommodations in order to participate in those assessments; and (b) alternate assessments aligned with alternate achievement standards; and (2) the performance of children with disabilities on regular assessments and on alternate assessments, compared with the achievement of all children, including children with disabilities, on those assessments. [20 U.S.C. 1412 (a)(16)(D); 34 CFR §300.160(f)]

**Public Reporting Information**

**Provide links to the page(s) where you provide public reports of assessment results.**

Student Participation and Performance on Statewide Assessments (Indicator 3) Comprehensive reports on state and LEA performance are found at <https://profiles.doe.mass.edu/mcas/participation.aspx?linkid=26&orgcode=00000000&fycode=2021&orgtypecode=0&>

**Provide additional information about this indicator (optional)**

It is important to note that in Massachusetts, students are considered proficient if they receive a score of Progressing, the highest possible score on the MCAS-Alt, the state's alternate assessment. The Data for the "Number of Children with IEPs Scoring At or Above Proficient Against Alternate Academic Achievement Standards" is 'zero'.

In 2022, higher rates of student absenteeism were seen in all grades and student groups. This suggests that the impact of COVID-19 continued to interrupt opportunities for student learning.

This report displays the most current data compared with the goals set by federal and state accountability requirements.

For more information, visit our Accountability Lists, Materials, and Tools website: <http://www.doe.mass.edu/accountability/lists-tools/>

**3C - Prior FFY Required Actions**

None

**3C - OSEP Response**

**3C - Required Actions**

## Indicator 3D: Gap in Proficiency Rates (Grade Level Academic Achievement Standards)

### Instructions and Measurement

**Monitoring Priority:** FAPE in the LRE

**Results indicator:** Participation and performance of children with IEPs on statewide assessments:

- A. Participation rate for children with IEPs.
- B. Proficiency rate for children with IEPs against grade level academic achievement standards.
- C. Proficiency rate for children with IEPs against alternate academic achievement standards.
- D. Gap in proficiency rates for children with IEPs and all students against grade level academic achievement standards.

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

#### Data Source

3D. Same data as used for reporting to the Department under Title I of the ESEA, using EDFacts file specifications FS175 and 178.

#### Measurement

D. Proficiency rate gap = [(proficiency rate for children with IEPs scoring at or above proficient against grade level academic achievement standards for the 2021-2022 school year) subtracted from the (proficiency rate for all students scoring at or above proficient against grade level academic achievement standards for the 2021-2022 school year)]. Calculate separately for reading and math. Calculate separately for grades 4, 8, and high school. The proficiency rate includes all children enrolled for a full academic year and those not enrolled for a full academic year.

#### Instructions

Describe the results of the calculations and compare the results to the targets. Provide the actual numbers used in the calculation.

Include information regarding where to find public reports of assessment participation and performance results, as required by 34 CFR §300.160(f), *i.e.*, a link to the Web site where these data are reported.

Indicator 3D: Gap calculations in this SPP/APR must result in the proficiency rate for children with IEPs were proficient against grade level academic achievement standards for the 2021-2022 school year compared to the proficiency rate for all students who were proficient against grade level academic achievement standards for the 2021-2022 school year. Calculate separately for reading/language arts and math in each of the following grades: 4, 8, and high school, including both children enrolled for a full academic year and those not enrolled for a full academic year. Only include children with disabilities who had an IEP at the time of testing.

### 3D - Indicator Data

#### Historical Data:

Subject	Group	Group Name	Baseline Year	Baseline Data
Reading	A	Grade 4	2020	29.30
Reading	B	Grade 8	2020	29.93
Reading	C	Grade HS	2020	37.57
Math	A	Grade 4	2020	21.96
Math	B	Grade 8	2020	25.24
Math	C	Grade HS	2020	37.28

#### Targets

Subject	Group	Group Name	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Reading	A <=	Grade 4	29.40	28.90	28.40	27.90	27.40
Reading	B <=	Grade 8	29.60	29.10	28.60	28.10	27.60
Reading	C <=	Grade HS	38.10	37.60	37.10	36.60	36.10
Math	A <=	Grade 4	21.80	21.30	20.80	20.30	19.80
Math	B <=	Grade 8	24.80	24.30	23.80	23.30	22.80
Math	C <=	Grade HS	37.20	36.70	36.20	35.70	35.20

#### Targets: Description of Stakeholder Input

MA DESE is committed to a continuous system of engaging stakeholders to develop targets and set priorities for improvement in each of the areas reported in the SPP/APR.

The Special Education Advisory Panel (SEAP) and Special Education State Advisory Council (SAC), comprised of parents, individuals with disabilities, educators, administrators, and representatives from state agencies, higher education, and other stakeholder groups, meets at least four times each school year to review data, discuss policy priorities, and identify unmet needs in the area of special education consistent with state law and IDEA Part B. At each meeting, the group addressed various aspects of the SPP/APR and the State's general supervision systems, as well as relevant policy matters.

In FFY2020 MA DESE facilitated discussions with the SEAP and SAC to establish baselines and targets for the performance Indicators. In FFY2021, MA DESE discussed each Indicator's performance and impacts on the LEA Determinations and Accountability and Assistance systems. MA DESE is committed to keep members of the SEAP and SAC up to date on processes and supports provided to LEA's in order to improve outcomes for students with disabilities. MA DESE will continue discussions around and current data, longitudinal targets, historical rates of performance and compliance and the trajectory for improvement for each of the Indicators, and the effectiveness of focused improvement activities within the context of the state's Results Driven Accountability framework.

The SAC is required by Massachusetts General Law (M.G.L. c. 15, § 1G <https://malegislature.gov/Laws/GeneralLaws/PartI/TitleI/Chapter15/Section1G>). The purpose of the SAC is to advise the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education and to make other programmatic recommendations as it deems necessary to fulfill the goals established by the board.

The SEAP is required by IDEA (34 CFR §§ 300.167-300.169 [https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-34/subtitle-B/chapter-III/part-300#sg34.2.300\\_1166.sg15](https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-34/subtitle-B/chapter-III/part-300#sg34.2.300_1166.sg15)). The purpose of the SEAP is to advise the State Education Authority (SEA) of unmet needs within the State regarding the education of children with disabilities. The Panel comments publicly on proposed rules or regulations regarding the education of children with disabilities. The Panel's advisory function to the State Education Authority (SEA) in developing evaluations and reporting 618 data (IDEA data) to USED and in developing corrective action plans to address findings in Federal monitoring reports under IDEA Part B. The Panel also advises the SEA in developing and implementing policies relating to the coordination of services for children with disabilities.

MA DESE has set a high priority on expanding the agency's capacity to solicit broad and diverse stakeholder input to set SPP/APR targets, analyze data, develop improvement strategies, and evaluate progress. For FFY2021, MA DESE sought to continue stakeholder Indicator knowledge that began in FFY2020. A new SPP/APR webpage, previously linked above, was created and posted along with new webpages for Indicators 4, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 15, 16, and 17. Small changes were made to previously created webpages for Indicators 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, 8, and 14 with Quick Reference Guides (QRGs) and PowerPoints for each Indicator. These QRGs and PowerPoints were available in six languages that correspond to the most common languages spoken in Massachusetts: English, Spanish, Portuguese, Chinese, Vietnamese, and Haitian Creole. Narrated versions of each PowerPoint were also available in English on the YouTube page of our partner, the Federation for Children with Special Needs (the Massachusetts Parent Training and Information Center/PTIC). MA DESE hosted six virtual stakeholder information and feedback sessions to broaden stakeholder knowledge on Indicators 4, 9, 10, 11, 12, and 13, while also soliciting feedback for Indicators 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, 8, 14, and 17 and presenting information to stakeholders, such as performance towards the targets set in FFY2020. These informational sessions featured a large group presentation on each topic, that was simultaneously translated into Spanish, Portuguese, Chinese, Vietnamese, and Haitian Creole. After each large group presentation, breakout rooms were opened in each of the previously mentioned languages, where stakeholders would be able to communicate and ask questions, in their native language, to MA DESE staff.

MA DESE also consults regularly, on a monthly or at least quarterly basis, with Massachusetts Administrators of Special Education, <http://www.asepage.org/>, the Federation for Children with Special Needs, <https://fcsn.org/>, Massachusetts Advocates for Children, <https://www.massadvocates.org/>, the Massachusetts Association of Approved Special Education Schools, <https://maaps.org/>, Massachusetts Urban Special Education Leadership Collaborative, and the Special Needs Advocacy Network, [www.spanmass.org](http://www.spanmass.org). In addition, the Massachusetts State Special Education Director at MA DESE gives monthly virtual presentations to statewide special education leaders on a wide array of special education compliance and performance topics. During all of these meetings, MA DESE solicits and receives significant feedback that informs the development of special education policy and guidance.

As needed, MA DESE also convenes stakeholder working groups throughout the year to provide focused input on specific projects and policy priorities. Examples of these focused groups include the Early Childhood Interagency Coordinating Council, with membership that includes community members and state agencies, a Statewide Systemic Improvement Plan (SSIP) leadership team and working group, a family engagement workgroup, an advisory group for the Dropout Prevention and Re-engagement Network, and secondary transition stakeholder groups. MA DESE also consults with educators, parents, advocates, and others on an ad hoc basis to inform policy and practice.

MA DESE engages with stakeholders on the direction of Indicator 17, the State's Systemic Improvement Plan (SSIP), at the state, district, classroom, and community levels. Stakeholders are provided with information about activities and goals, training events and embedded supports statewide, and the availability of resources to support and expand implementation. Stakeholders at the district and school levels participate in ongoing decision making about the direction of the SSIP by providing feedback about the quality of events and supports, observed benefits for their own stakeholders, and needs for moving forward with implementation most successfully. In May of 2022, MA DESE met with stakeholders to discuss revisions to the Theory of Action and the Evaluation Plan for the SSIP. Through frequent communication and input from stakeholders revisions to the Theory of Action and Evaluation Plan were made for incorporation and use during the FFY2022 SPP/APR reporting cycle. For additional information on stakeholder engagement related to Indicator 17, please see the Indicator 17 APR.

Stakeholder engagement is an essential component of MA DESE's special education agenda.

MA DESE, in consultation with the stakeholder groups, set Indicator 3 targets through FFY 2025. In setting these targets, the stakeholder groups reviewed statewide longitudinal data, improvement activities, and State policies, including the ESEA waiver granted by the U.S. Department of Education. The stakeholder groups recommended Indicator 3 targets based on the ESEA waiver and supported setting ambitious targets for Indicator 3, as this reflects the State's commitment that all students, regardless of disability, participate in the State's assessment system.

At its May, and June 2021 meetings, the Advisory Panel reviewed the data and endorsed the proposed targets for Indicator 3D, as did parents participating in December 2021 focus groups convened by the Federation for Children with Special Needs.

For Reading, (English Language Arts) Massachusetts set targets for Indicator 3D using FFY 2020 as the baseline year, with a 0.5 percentage point decrease each year through FFY2025 to ensure rigorous yet attainable goals.

For Mathematics, Massachusetts set targets for Indicator 3D using FFY 2020 as the baseline year, with a 0.5 percentage point decrease each year through FFY2025 to ensure rigorous yet attainable goals.

Moving forward, MA DESE will continue to engage its special education stakeholders in discussions around proficiency on the Next-Generation MCAS. As more years of assessment results are available, allowing for year-over-year comparison, MA DESE, with support from the IDEA Data Center and in collaboration with the Advisory Panel and other stakeholders, will continue to update targets that are rigorous yet reflective of actual and anticipated growth.

## **FFY 2021 Data Disaggregation from EDFacts**

### **Data Source:**

SY 2021-22 Assessment Data Groups - Reading (EDFacts file spec FS178; Data Group: 584)

### **Date:**

**Reading Assessment Proficiency Data by Grade**

Group	Grade 4	Grade 8	Grade HS
a. All Students who received a valid score and a proficiency was assigned for the regular assessment	64,134	69,338	66,570
b. Children with IEPs who received a valid score and a proficiency was assigned for the regular assessment	13,342	13,344	11,787
c. All students in regular assessment with no accommodations scored at or above proficient against grade level	23,944	27,916	36,379
d. All students in regular assessment with accommodations scored at or above proficient against grade level	1,047	1,490	2,781
e. Children with IEPs in regular assessment with no accommodations scored at or above proficient against grade level	752	448	726
f. Children with IEPs in regular assessment with accommodations scored at or above proficient against grade level	768	896	1,817

**Data Source:**

SY 2021-22 Assessment Data Groups - Math (EDFacts file spec FS175; Data Group: 583)

**Date:**

04/05/2023

**Math Assessment Proficiency Data by Grade**

Group	Grade 4	Grade 8	Grade HS
a. All Students who received a valid score and a proficiency was assigned for the regular assessment	64,148	69,194	66,201
b. Children with IEPs who received a valid score and a proficiency was assigned for the regular assessment	13,315	13,287	11,653
c. All students in regular assessment with no accommodations scored at or above proficient against grade level	25,595	23,955	31,011
d. All students in regular assessment with accommodations scored at or above proficient against grade level	1,957	1,444	2,373
e. Children with IEPs in regular assessment with no accommodations scored at or above proficient against grade level	910	396	630
f. Children with IEPs in regular assessment with accommodations scored at or above proficient against grade level	1,206	755	1,193

**FFY 2021 SPP/APR Data: Reading Assessment**

Group	Group Name	Proficiency rate for children with IEPs scoring at or above proficient against grade level academic achievement standards	Proficiency rate for all students scoring at or above proficient against grade level academic achievement standards	FFY 2020 Data	FFY 2021 Target	FFY 2021 Data	Status	Slippage
A	Grade 4	11.39%	38.97%	29.30	29.40	27.57	Met target	No Slippage
B	Grade 8	10.07%	42.41%	29.93	29.60	32.34	Did not meet target	Slippage
C	Grade HS	21.57%	58.83%	37.57	38.10	37.25	Met target	No Slippage

Provide reasons for slippage for Group B, if applicable

The 2022 MCAS showed mixed results compared to 2021:

- In 2022, the Department returned to the administration of full-length MCAS tests in grades 3–8. In 2021, shorter, half-tests were administered in grades 3–8 since many schools did not resume in-person instruction until spring 2021 or were in the process of reopening.
- In 2020, the Department did not administer MCAS tests due to the cancellation of state assessments and school closures related to COVID-19. When we compare 2022 results to pre-pandemic levels, we have a ways to go across all subject areas to fully recover.
- Each ELA test contains one or two required essays, and the 2022 writing results declined significantly. The average points scored per essay decreased in grades 3-8, with larger decreases in grades 3.

Student absenteeism remains a challenge for recovery efforts, as compared to pre-pandemic rates:

- On average, students missed 11 days in 2021 and 15 days in 2022
- In 2022, chronic absenteeism (absent for 10% or more days of enrollment) continued to increase, as compared to prior years:
- The percentage of chronically absent students more than doubled from 2019 levels and increased ten percentage points (to 28%) between 2021 and 2022.
- The percentage of students absent for 10 days or more nearly doubled (to 56%) between 2021 and 2022.

**FFY 2021 SPP/APR Data: Math Assessment**

Group	Group Name	Proficiency rate for children with IEPs scoring at or above proficient against grade level academic achievement standards	Proficiency rate for all students scoring at or above proficient against grade level academic achievement standards	FFY 2020 Data	FFY 2021 Target	FFY 2021 Data	Status	Slippage
A	Grade 4	15.89%	42.95%	21.96	21.80	27.06	Did not meet target	Slippage
B	Grade 8	8.66%	36.71%	25.24	24.80	28.04	Did not meet target	Slippage
C	Grade HS	15.64%	50.43%	37.28	37.20	34.78	Met target	No Slippage

**Provide reasons for slippage for Group A, if applicable**

The 2022 MCAS showed mixed results compared to 2021:

- In 2022, the Department returned to the administration of full-length MCAS tests in grades 3–8. In 2021, shorter, half-tests were administered in grades 3–8 since many schools did not resume in-person instruction until spring 2021 or were in the process of reopening.
- In 2020, the Department did not administer MCAS tests due to the cancellation of state assessments and school closures related to COVID-19. When we compare 2022 results to pre-pandemic levels, we have a ways to go across all subject areas to fully recover.
- Each ELA test contains one or two required essays, and the 2022 writing results declined significantly. The average points scored per essay decreased in grades 3-8, with larger decreases in grades 3.

Student absenteeism remains a challenge for recovery efforts, as compared to pre-pandemic rates:

- On average, students missed 11 days in 2021 and 15 days in 2022
- In 2022, chronic absenteeism (absent for 10% or more days of enrollment) continued to increase, as compared to prior years.
- The percentage of chronically absent students more than doubled from 2019 levels and increased ten percentage points (to 28%) between 2021 and 2022.
- The percentage of students absent for 10 days or more nearly doubled (to 56%) between 2021 and 2022.

**Provide reasons for slippage for Group B, if applicable**

The 2022 MCAS showed mixed results compared to 2021:

- In 2022, the Department returned to the administration of full-length MCAS tests in grades 3–8. In 2021, shorter, half-tests were administered in grades 3–8 since many schools did not resume in-person instruction until spring 2021 or were in the process of reopening.
- In 2020, the Department did not administer MCAS tests due to the cancellation of state assessments and school closures related to COVID-19. When we compare 2022 results to pre-pandemic levels, we have a ways to go across all subject areas to fully recover.
- Each ELA test contains one or two required essays, and the 2022 writing results declined significantly. The average points scored per essay decreased in grades 3-8, with larger decreases in grades 3.

Student absenteeism remains a challenge for recovery efforts, as compared to pre-pandemic rates:

- On average, students missed 11 days in 2021 and 15 days in 2022
- In 2022, chronic absenteeism (absent for 10% or more days of enrollment) continued to increase, as compared to prior years.
- The percentage of chronically absent students more than doubled from 2019 levels and increased ten percentage points (to 28%) between 2021 and 2022.
- The percentage of students absent for 10 days or more nearly doubled (to 56%) between 2021 and 2022.

**Provide additional information about this indicator (optional)**

This report displays the most current data compared with the goals set by federal and state accountability requirements. In 2022, higher rates of student absenteeism were seen in all grades and student groups. This suggests that the impact of COVID-19 continued to interrupt opportunities for student learning.

**3D - Prior FFY Required Actions**

None

**3D - OSEP Response**

**3D - Required Actions**

## Indicator 4A: Suspension/Expulsion

### Instructions and Measurement

**Monitoring Priority:** FAPE in the LRE

**Results Indicator:** Rates of suspension and expulsion:

- A. Percent of local educational agencies (LEA) that have a significant discrepancy, as defined by the State, in the rate of suspensions and expulsions of greater than 10 days in a school year for children with IEPs; and
- B. Percent of LEAs that have: (a) a significant discrepancy, as defined by the State, by race or ethnicity, in the rate of suspensions and expulsions of greater than 10 days in a school year for children with IEPs; and (b) policies, procedures or practices that contribute to the significant discrepancy, as defined by the State, and do not comply with requirements relating to the development and implementation of IEPs, the use of positive behavioral interventions and supports, and procedural safeguards.

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

#### Data Source

State discipline data, including State's analysis of State's Discipline data collected under IDEA Section 618, where applicable. Discrepancy can be computed by either comparing the rates of suspensions and expulsions for children with IEPs to rates for nondisabled children within the LEA or by comparing the rates of suspensions and expulsions for children with IEPs among LEAs within the State.

#### Measurement

Percent = [(# of LEAs that meet the State-established n and/or cell size (if applicable) that have a significant discrepancy, as defined by the State, in the rates of suspensions and expulsions for more than 10 days during the school year of children with IEPs) divided by the (# of LEAs in the State that meet the State-established n and/or cell size (if applicable))] times 100.

Include State's definition of "significant discrepancy."

#### Instructions

If the State has established a minimum n and/or cell size requirement, the State may only include, in both the numerator and the denominator, LEAs that met that State-established n and/or cell size. If the State used a minimum n and/or cell size requirement, report the number of LEAs excluded from the calculation as a result of this requirement.

Describe the results of the State's examination of the data for the year before the reporting year (e.g., for the FFY 2021 SPP/APR, use data from 2020-2021), including data disaggregated by race and ethnicity to determine if significant discrepancies, as defined by the State, are occurring in the rates of long-term suspensions and expulsions (more than 10 days during the school year) of children with IEPs, as required at 20 U.S.C. 1412(a)(22). The State's examination must include one of the following comparisons:

- The rates of suspensions and expulsions for children with IEPs among LEAs within the State; or
- The rates of suspensions and expulsions for children with IEPs to nondisabled children within the LEAs

In the description, specify which method the State used to determine possible discrepancies and explain what constitutes those discrepancies.

Because the measurement table requires that the data examined for this indicator are lag year data, States should examine the 618 data that was submitted by LEAs that were in operation during the school year before the reporting year. For example, if a State has 100 LEAs operating in the 2020-2021 school year, those 100 LEAs would have reported 618 data in 2021-2022 on the number of children suspended/expelled. If the State then opens 15 new LEAs in 2021-2022, suspension/expulsion data from those 15 new LEAs would not be in the 2020-2021 618 data set, and therefore, those 15 new LEAs should not be included in the denominator of the calculation. States must use the number of LEAs from the year before the reporting year in its calculation for this indicator. For the FFY 2021 SPP/APR submission, States must use the number of LEAs reported in 2020-2021 (which can be found in the FFY 2020 SPP/APR introduction).

Indicator 4A: Provide the actual numbers used in the calculation (based upon districts that met the minimum n and/or cell size requirement, if applicable). If significant discrepancies occurred, describe how the State educational agency reviewed and, if appropriate, revised (or required the affected local educational agency to revise) its 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 that such policies, procedures, and practices comply with applicable requirements.

Provide detailed information about the timely correction of noncompliance as noted in OSEP's response for the previous SPP/APR. If discrepancies occurred and the LEA with discrepancies had policies, procedures or practices that contributed to the significant discrepancy, as defined by the State, and that do not comply with requirements relating to the development and implementation of IEPs, the use of positive behavioral interventions and supports, and procedural safeguards, describe how the State ensured that such policies, procedures, and practices were revised to comply with applicable requirements consistent with (OSEP) Memorandum 09-02, dated October 17, 2008.

If the State did not ensure timely correction of the previous noncompliance, provide information on the extent to which noncompliance was subsequently corrected (more than one year after identification). In addition, provide information regarding the nature of any continuing noncompliance, improvement activities completed (e.g., review of policies and procedures, technical assistance, training, etc.) and any enforcement actions that were taken.

If the State reported less than 100% compliance for the previous reporting period (e.g., for the FFY 2021 SPP/APR, the data for FFY 2020), and the State did not identify any findings of noncompliance, provide an explanation of why the State did not identify any findings of noncompliance.

## 4A - Indicator Data

### Historical Data

Baseline Year	Baseline Data
2021	0.27%

FFY	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Target <=	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Data	1.92%	1.36%	1.08%	1.06%	1.06%

## Targets

FFY	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Target <=	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%

### Targets: Description of Stakeholder Input

MA DESE is committed to a continuous system of engaging stakeholders to develop targets and set priorities for improvement in each of the areas reported in the SPP/APR.

The Special Education Advisory Panel (SEAP) and Special Education State Advisory Council (SAC), comprised of parents, individuals with disabilities, educators, administrators, and representatives from state agencies, higher education, and other stakeholder groups, meets at least four times each school year to review data, discuss policy priorities, and identify unmet needs in the area of special education consistent with state law and IDEA Part B. At each meeting, the group addressed various aspects of the SPP/APR and the State's general supervision systems, as well as relevant policy matters. In FFY2020 MA DESE facilitated discussions with the SEAP and SAC to establish baselines and targets for the performance Indicators. In FFY2021, MA DESE discussed each Indicator's performance and impacts on the LEA Determinations and Accountability and Assistance systems. MA DESE is committed to keep members of the SEAP and SAC up to date on processes and supports provided to LEA's in order to improve outcomes for students with disabilities. MA DESE will continue discussions around and current data, longitudinal targets, historical rates of performance and compliance and the trajectory for improvement for each of the Indicators, and the effectiveness of focused improvement activities within the context of the state's Results Driven Accountability framework.

The SAC is required by Massachusetts General Law (M.G.L. c. 15, § 1G

<https://malegislature.gov/Laws/GeneralLaws/PartI/TitleII/Chapter15/Section1G>). The purpose of the SAC is to advise the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education and to make other programmatic recommendations as it deems necessary to fulfill the goals established by the board.

The SEAP is required by IDEA (34 CFR §§ 300.167-300.169 [https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-34/subtitle-B/chapter-III/part-300#sg34.2.300\\_1166.sg15](https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-34/subtitle-B/chapter-III/part-300#sg34.2.300_1166.sg15)).

The purpose of the SEAP is to advise the State Education Authority (SEA) of unmet needs within the State regarding the education of children with disabilities. The Panel comments publicly on proposed rules or regulations regarding the education of children with disabilities. The Panel's advisory function to the State Education Authority (SEA) in developing evaluations and reporting 618 data (IDEA data) to USED and in developing corrective action plans to address findings in Federal monitoring reports under IDEA Part B. The Panel also advises the SEA in developing and implementing policies relating to the coordination of services for children with disabilities.

MA DESE has set a high priority on expanding the agency's capacity to solicit broad and diverse stakeholder input to set SPP/APR targets, analyze data, develop improvement strategies, and evaluate progress. For FFY2021, MA DESE sought to continue stakeholder Indicator knowledge that began in FFY2020. A new SPP/APR webpage, previously linked above, was created and posted along with new webpages for Indicators 4, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 15, 16, and 17. Small changes were made to previously created webpages for Indicators 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, 8, and 14 with Quick Reference Guides (QRGs) and PowerPoints for each Indicator. These QRGs and PowerPoints were available in six languages that correspond to the most common languages spoken in Massachusetts: English, Spanish, Portuguese, Chinese, Vietnamese, and Haitian Creole. Narrated versions of each PowerPoint were also available in English on the YouTube page of our partner, the Federation for Children with Special Needs (the Massachusetts Parent Training and Information Center/PTIC). MA DESE hosted six virtual stakeholder information and feedback sessions to broaden stakeholder knowledge on Indicators 4, 9, 10, 11, 12, and 13, while also soliciting feedback for Indicators 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, 8, 14, and 17 and presenting information to stakeholders, such as performance towards the targets set in FFY2020. These informational sessions featured a large group presentation on each topic, that was simultaneously translated into Spanish, Portuguese, Chinese, Vietnamese, and Haitian Creole. After each large group presentation, breakout rooms were opened in each of the previously mentioned languages, where stakeholders would be able to communicate and ask questions, in their native language, to MA DESE staff.

MA DESE also consults regularly, on a monthly or at least quarterly basis, with Massachusetts Administrators of Special Education, <http://www.asepage.org/>, the Federation for Children with Special Needs, <https://fcsn.org/>, Massachusetts Advocates for Children, <https://www.massadvocates.org/>, the Massachusetts Association of Approved Special Education Schools, <https://maaps.org/>, Massachusetts Urban Special Education Leadership Collaborative, and the Special Needs Advocacy Network, [www.spanmass.org](http://www.spanmass.org). In addition, the Massachusetts State Special Education Director at MA DESE gives monthly virtual presentations to statewide special education leaders on a wide array of special education compliance and performance topics. During all of these meetings, MA DESE solicits and receives significant feedback that informs the development of special education policy and guidance.

As needed, MA DESE also convenes stakeholder working groups throughout the year to provide focused input on specific projects and policy priorities. Examples of these focused groups include the Early Childhood Interagency Coordinating Council, with membership that includes community members and state agencies, a Statewide Systemic Improvement Plan (SSIP) leadership team and working group, a family engagement workgroup, an advisory group for the Dropout Prevention and Re-engagement Network, and secondary transition stakeholder groups. MA DESE also consults with educators, parents, advocates, and others on an ad hoc basis to inform policy and practice.

MA DESE engages with stakeholders on the direction of Indicator 17, the State's Systemic Improvement Plan (SSIP), at the state, district, classroom, and community levels. Stakeholders are provided with information about activities and goals, training events and embedded supports statewide, and the availability of resources to support and expand implementation. Stakeholders at the district and school levels participate in ongoing decision making about the direction of the SSIP by providing feedback about the quality of events and supports, observed benefits for their own stakeholders, and needs for moving forward with implementation most successfully. In May of 2022, MA DESE met with stakeholders to discuss revisions to the Theory of Action and the Evaluation Plan for the SSIP. Through frequent communication and input from stakeholders revisions to the Theory of Action and Evaluation Plan were made for incorporation and use during the FFY2022 SPP/APR reporting cycle. For additional information on stakeholder engagement related to Indicator 17, please see the Indicator 17 APR.

Stakeholder engagement is an essential component of MA DESE's special education agenda.

### FFY 2021 SPP/APR Data

**Has the state established a minimum n/cell-size requirement? (yes/no)**

YES

If yes, the State may only include, in both the numerator and the denominator, LEAs that met the State-established n/cell size. Report the number of LEAs excluded from the calculation as a result of the requirement.

25

Number of LEAs that have a significant discrepancy	Number of LEAs that met the State's minimum n/cell size	FFY 2020 Data	FFY 2021 Target	FFY 2021 Data	Status	Slippage
1	375	1.06%	0.00%	0.27%	N/A	N/A

**Choose one of the following comparison methodologies to determine whether significant discrepancies are occurring (34 CFR §300.170(a))**

Compare the rates of suspensions and expulsions of greater than 10 days in a school year for children with IEPs among LEAs in the State

**State's definition of "significant discrepancy" and methodology**

The State's definition of "significant discrepancy" and methodology is the number of districts with five times the State's rate of suspension and expulsion for more than 10 days for students with IEPs divided by the number of districts that met the "n" size of 30 multiplied by 100. Districts must also have a minimum cell size of 3 students with IEPs suspended and expelled for more than 10 days for each of the years of analysis to be identified for indicator. Districts who meet the criteria of "n" and "cell" size requirements and have a discrepancy rate of five times the state average for two consecutive years are found to have a significant discrepancy. Because of the data lag required for indicator 4 reporting, data is delayed. For the 2019-2020 school year, the overall State average for suspension or expulsion for greater than 10 days for all students was 0.00344%. Districts that suspended students with disabilities at five times this rate, 0.017%, were found to have a discrepancy in that year. For the 2020-2021 school year, the overall State average for suspension or expulsion for greater than 10 days for all students was 0.00055%. Districts that suspended students with disabilities at five times this rate, 0.00275%, were found to have a discrepancy in that year.

Districts meeting the criteria for both FFY 2020 and 2021 (two consecutive years) were identified as having a significant discrepancy. Overall, one (0.267%) school district had a significant discrepancy during this SPP-APR reporting year. Discipline data are reported by the school districts to MA DESE using the School Safety and Discipline Report (SSDR). The SSDR includes all incidents involving bullying, drug, violent, or crime-related offenses on school property and any other offenses that result in a disciplinary action that removes the student from the regular educational environment.

Out of the 400 LEAs, only 375 met the "n" size requirement. Twenty-five (25) did not meet the state-established "n" size. Of the 375 districts meeting the criteria, one district (0. 0.267%) was found to have a discrepancy for two consecutive years.

**Provide additional information about this indicator (optional)**

Based on feedback from the IDEA Data Center and Massachusetts stakeholders, the state completed a review of the data for Indicators 4a and 4B and made two changes to the calculations for the FFY2021 SPP-APR.

(1) Use of a minimum cell size of 3 students with IEPs being suspended and expelled for more than 10 days for each of the years of analysis for an LEA to be identified for indicator 4

Over multiple school years, LEAs, in particular small districts, have shared concerns with MA DESE that their identification for indicator 4 was based on a single student. Even before stakeholder input, MA DESE noticed a set of districts each year was identified based on a single student with a disability in each school year being suspended/expelled for greater than 10 days. MA DESE talked with special educators and special education school leaders in the LEAs that shared these concerns. These stakeholders stated that they were concerned with issues of inequity in their discipline data, being based on a single student per year often resulted in them having to participate in the PPP submission process and, due to limited time and bandwidth, this took away from other important equity work. After talking to these stakeholders, MA DESE decided that it wanted to make sure indicator 4 served its purpose of identifying LEAs that have issues with inequities in the discipline while also balancing the concerns shared by LEAs (e.g. resources in LEAs were being used to complete PPP submissions instead of supporting students).

As a result of these external and internal discussions, MA DESE completed an analysis of its data. This analysis resulted in creating multiple scenarios of different minimum cell sizes (2,3,5, and 10). MA DESE shared this analysis with its liaison at IDC and had internal discussions. After this analysis and discussions, MA DESE settled on a minimum cell size of 3 students with disabilities being suspended/expelled for at least 10 days per school year.

MA DESE continues to review discipline data for students with disabilities for significant disproportionality in special education. Through this initiative, all LEAs in the commonwealth are provided detailed data reports that include data on the discipline of students with disabilities disaggregated based on race/ethnicity. Any LEA that is either at-risk or identified is also invited to participate in a series of PD and identified LEAs submit action plans.

(2) Updating of suspension data to only include out-of-school suspensions.

In discussions with our state liaison at IDC, MA DESE was made aware of Universal Technical Assistance for Indicator 4. MA DESE has historically included in-school suspensions (ISS) for Indicators 4A and 4B. The state of Massachusetts has included in-school suspensions in the data for over a decade because ISS still results in students missing time on learning which has a negative impact on students with disabilities. MA DESE has always believed in the importance of decreasing the exclusion of students with disabilities, tracking when it does occur, and helping to maximize the amount of time students spend learning with their peers. This is why MA DESE has historically included in-school suspensions for indicator 4. It also allowed MA DESE to support a larger number of LEAs that had issues of inequity in their discipline practices.

For FFY2021, MA DESE has removed in-school suspensions for the state and district rates. It now only includes out-of-school suspensions and expulsions. Moving forward, MA DESE will continue to follow the requirements set forth by USED that out-of-school suspensions and expulsions are only to be included in the data for Indicator 4. No in-school suspensions were included in the data analysis for Indicator 4A or 4B for FFY2021.

Due to these two changes, Massachusetts set FFY21 as a new baseline for indicator 4A.

**COVID-19 IMPACT**

While MA DESE saw a decrease in the number of students being suspended and expelled because of the COVID-19 pandemic, a similar number of LEAs were identified for indicator 4A as in prior SPP-APRs. Even as students were removed from time on learning with less frequency, students with disabilities, across the commonwealth, were still suspended and expelled at a higher rate than their peers. MA DESE remains concerned about this trend and continues to provide technical assistance and support to LEAs around supporting students with disabilities and decreasing the use of suspension and expulsions.

Any decreases in the number of LEAs identified under Indicator 4 were likely caused by MA DESE's implementation of the Universal Technical Assistance's requirement to remove in-school suspensions from the data and the newly implemented minimum cell sizes.

**Review of Policies, Procedures, and Practices (completed in FFY 2021 using 2020-2021 data)**

**Provide a description of the review of policies, procedures, and practices relating to the development and implementation of IEPs, the use of positive behavioral interventions and supports, and procedural safeguards.**

MA DESE uses the same methodology for reviewing policies, practices, and procedures (PPPs) for LEAs identified as significant discrepancies in Indicators 4A and 4B.

Assessing the appropriateness of the PPPs regarding the development and implementation of IEPs, the use of positive behavioral and instructional interventions and supports, and procedural safeguards has been a coordinated and collaborative process among several offices at MA DESE. MA DESE verifies compliance of LEAs' PPPs through its monitoring review process, including special education monitoring criteria that address these focus areas. MA DESE also assesses corrective action reports and progress reports completed by LEAs in all other areas of identified noncompliance to assess whether the non-compliance contributed to the discrepancy in indicators 4A and 4B. Any deficiencies in the PPPs must be corrected by the LEA within one year from the date of notification and the LEA must submit evidence of the corrections to MA DESE for verification.

In this focused process. MA DESE verified that one LEA identified as having significant discrepancy through data analysis compliant with the IDEA but zero instances of noncompliance in relation to policies, practices, and procedures. Nonetheless, MA DESE will support their participation in Professional Learning (targeted assistance conversations with staff from the MA DESE Offices of Student and Family Support, Special Education Planning and Policy, and Charter Schools and School Redesign). This engagement includes a discussion of district-specific data, as well as information about successful strategies that LEAs have implemented and challenges they are facing related to student discipline practice to provide for reflection on policies, practices, and procedures in order to support students with IEPs and reduce the use of disciplinary removal.

The State DID NOT identify noncompliance with Part B requirements as a result of the review required by 34 CFR §300.170(b)

The State DID NOT identify noncompliance with Part B requirements as a result of the review required by 34 CFR §300.170(b)

**Correction of Findings of Noncompliance Identified in FFY 2020**

Findings of Noncompliance Identified	Findings of Noncompliance Verified as Corrected Within One Year	Findings of Noncompliance Subsequently Corrected	Findings Not Yet Verified as Corrected
0	0	0	0

**Correction of Findings of Noncompliance Identified Prior to FFY 2020**

Year Findings of Noncompliance Were Identified	Findings of Noncompliance Not Yet Verified as Corrected as of FFY 2020 APR	Findings of Noncompliance Verified as Corrected	Findings Not Yet Verified as Corrected

**4A - Prior FFY Required Actions**

None

**4A - OSEP Response**

OSEP cannot determine whether the data are valid and reliable. The State reported it compares the rates of suspensions and expulsions for children with IEPs among LEAs in the State. However, in its narrative, the State reported, "For the 2019-2020 school year, the overall State average for suspension or expulsion for greater than 10 days for all students was 0.00344%. Districts that suspended students with disabilities at five times this rate, 0.017%, were found to have a discrepancy in that year." It is unclear whether the State average for suspension and expulsion for greater than 10 days is referring to all students or all students with disabilities within the State. Therefore, it is unclear whether the State's chosen methodology meets one of the two comparison methods as required by the Measurement Table and OSEP cannot determine whether the State met its target.

The State has revised the baseline for this indicator, using data from FFY 2021, however OSEP cannot accept the revision because OSEP cannot determine whether the State's FFY 2021 data are valid and reliable.

The State revised its targets for FFYs 2021 through 2025 for this indicator, however, OSEP cannot accept the targets because OSEP cannot determine whether the FFY 2025 target is above baseline.

As noted in the FFY 2021 Part B SPP/APR General Instructions, the State's methodology for examining data must be reasonably designed to determine if significant discrepancies are occurring in the rate of long-term suspensions and expulsions of children with disabilities among LEAs in the State or compared to the rates for nondisabled children within those LEAs. The Part B SPP/APR General Instructions also noted that factors OSEP may consider when determining reasonableness of a State's methodology include whether none, or a very low percentage of, the State's LEAs are being examined for significant discrepancy under the State's chosen methodology, and whether statistically sound alternative methodologies exist or are being used by similarly-situated States. OSEP notes that the State's chosen methodology results in a threshold for measuring significant discrepancy in the rate of long-term suspension and expulsion rates of children with IEPs that falls above the median of thresholds used by all States that use a rate ratio.

## 4A - Required Actions

## Indicator 4B: Suspension/Expulsion

### Instructions and Measurement

**Monitoring Priority:** FAPE in the LRE

**Compliance Indicator:** Rates of suspension and expulsion:

- A. Percent of local educational agencies (LEA) that have a significant discrepancy, as defined by the State, in the rate of suspensions and expulsions of greater than 10 days in a school year for children with IEPs; and
- B. Percent of LEAs that have: (a) a significant discrepancy, as defined by the State, by race or ethnicity, in the rate of suspensions and expulsions of greater than 10 days in a school year for children with IEPs; and (b) policies, procedures or practices that contribute to the significant discrepancy, as defined by the State, and do not comply with requirements relating to the development and implementation of IEPs, the use of positive behavioral interventions and supports, and procedural safeguards.

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

#### Data Source

State discipline data, including State's analysis of State's Discipline data collected under IDEA Section 618, where applicable. Discrepancy can be computed by either comparing the rates of suspensions and expulsions for children with IEPs to rates for nondisabled children within the LEA or by comparing the rates of suspensions and expulsions for children with IEPs among LEAs within the State.

#### Measurement

Percent = [(# of LEAs that meet the State-established n and/or cell size (if applicable) for one or more racial/ethnic groups that have: (a) a significant discrepancy, as defined by the State, by race or ethnicity, in the rates of suspensions and expulsions of more than 10 days during the school year of children with IEPs; and (b) policies, procedures or practices that contribute to the significant discrepancy, as defined by the State, and do not comply with requirements relating to the development and implementation of IEPs, the use of positive behavioral interventions and supports, and procedural safeguards) divided by the (# of LEAs in the State that meet the State-established n and/or cell size (if applicable) for one or more racial/ethnic groups)] times 100.

Include State's definition of "significant discrepancy."

#### Instructions

If the State has established a minimum n and/or cell size requirement, the State may only include, in both the numerator and the denominator, LEAs that met that State-established n and/or cell size. If the State used a minimum n and/or cell size requirement, report the number of LEAs totally excluded from the calculation as a result of this requirement.

Describe the results of the State's examination of the data for the year before the reporting year (e.g., for the FFY 2021 SPP/APR, use data from 2020-2021), including data disaggregated by race and ethnicity to determine if significant discrepancies, as defined by the State, are occurring in the rates of long-term suspensions and expulsions (more than 10 days during the school year) of children with IEPs, as required at 20 U.S.C. 1412(a)(22). The State's examination must include one of the following comparisons:

- The rates of suspensions and expulsions for children with IEPs among LEAs within the State; or
- The rates of suspensions and expulsions for children with IEPs to nondisabled children within the LEAs

In the description, specify which method the State used to determine possible discrepancies and explain what constitutes those discrepancies.

Because the measurement table requires that the data examined for this indicator are lag year data, States should examine the 618 data that was submitted by LEAs that were in operation during the school year before the reporting year. For example, if a State has 100 LEAs operating in the 2020-2021 school year, those 100 LEAs would have reported 618 data in 2020-2021 on the number of children suspended/expelled. If the State then opens 15 new LEAs in 2021-2022, suspension/expulsion data from those 15 new LEAs would not be in the 2020-2021 618 data set, and therefore, those 15 new LEAs should not be included in the denominator of the calculation. States must use the number of LEAs from the year before the reporting year in its calculation for this indicator. For the FFY 2021 SPP/APR submission, States must use the number of LEAs reported in 2020-2021 (which can be found in the FFY 2020 SPP/APR introduction).

Indicator 4B: Provide the following: (a) the number of LEAs that met the State-established n and/or cell size (if applicable) for one or more racial/ethnic groups that have a significant discrepancy, as defined by the State, by race or ethnicity, in the rates of long-term suspensions and expulsions (more than 10 days during the school year) for children with IEPs; and (b) the number of those LEAs in which policies, procedures or practices contribute to the significant discrepancy and do not comply with requirements relating to the development and implementation of IEPs, the use of positive behavioral interventions and supports, and procedural safeguards.

Provide detailed information about the timely correction of noncompliance as noted in OSEP's response for the previous SPP/APR. If discrepancies occurred and the LEA with discrepancies had policies, procedures or practices that contributed to the significant discrepancy, as defined by the State, and that do not comply with requirements relating to the development and implementation of IEPs, the use of positive behavioral interventions and supports, and procedural safeguards, describe how the State ensured that such policies, procedures, and practices were revised to comply with applicable requirements consistent with (OSEP) Memorandum 09-02, dated October 17, 2008.

If the State did not ensure timely correction of the previous noncompliance, provide information on the extent to which noncompliance was subsequently corrected (more than one year after identification). In addition, provide information regarding the nature of any continuing noncompliance, improvement activities completed (e.g., review of policies and procedures, technical assistance, training, etc.) and any enforcement actions that were taken.

If the State reported less than 100% compliance for the previous reporting period (e.g., for the FFY 2021 SPP/APR, the data for FFY 2020), and the State did not identify any findings of noncompliance, provide an explanation of why the State did not identify any findings of noncompliance.

Targets must be 0% for 4B.

## 4B - Indicator Data

### Not Applicable

Select yes if this indicator is not applicable.

NO

### Historical Data

Baseline Year	Baseline Data
2021	0.00%

FFY	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Target	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Data	0.50%	0.51%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%

**Targets**

FFY	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Target	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%

**FFY 2021 SPP/APR Data**

**Has the state established a minimum n/cell-size requirement? (yes/no)**

YES

**If yes, the State may only include, in both the numerator and the denominator, LEAs that met the State-established n/cell size. Report the number of LEAs excluded from the calculation as a result of the requirement.**

3

Number of LEAs that have a significant discrepancy, by race or ethnicity	Number of those LEAs that have policies, procedure or practices that contribute to the significant discrepancy and do not comply with requirements	Number of LEAs that met the State's minimum n/cell size	FFY 2020 Data	FFY 2021 Target	FFY 2021 Data	Status	Slippage
0	0	397	0.00%	0%	0.00%	N/A	N/A

**Were all races and ethnicities included in the review?**

YES

**State's definition of "significant discrepancy" and methodology**

MA DESE's definition of significant discrepancy in the rate of suspensions and expulsions (for greater than 10 days in a school year) of students with IEPs who are members of a specific racial/ethnic group is a suspension/ expulsion rate of five times the state rate for all students for three consecutive years. During FFY 2021 the state rate of all students statewide who were suspended or expelled for greater than 10 days is 0.00055; five times the state rate is 0.00275,

Therefore, LEAs met the State's definition of significant discrepancy if they:

- met the minimum "n" size of 10 students with IEPs in a particular racial/ethnic group; and
- met the minimum "cell" size of 3 students with disabilities in a particular racial/ethnic group being suspended/expelled for more than 10 days
- suspended or expelled more than five times the state rate of students with an IEP who are members of a particular racial/ethnic group for greater than 10 days over the course of the 2020-2021 school year;
- had similar data for the prior two school years.

Discipline data are reported by LEAs to MA DESE using the School Safety and Discipline Report (SSDR). The SSDR includes all incidents involving bullying, drug, violent, or crime-related offenses on school property and any other offenses that result in a disciplinary action removing the student from the regular educational environment.

Although 400 LEAs were in operation during the 2020-2021 school year, MA DESE has overwritten the data for indicator 4B, removing from the calculation those LEAs that did not have data for each year of the calculation or did not meet the state's minimum "n" size for all reporting years. Data reported here is on the 397 LEAs that met the state's "n" size requirement for Indicator 4B.

**Provide additional information about this indicator (optional)**

Based on feedback from the IDEA Data Center and Massachusetts stakeholders, the state completed a review of the data for Indicators 4a and 4B and made two changes to the calculations for the FFY2021 SPP-APR.

(1) Use of a minimum cell size of 3 students with IEPs in a racial/ethnic group being suspended and expelled for more than 10 days for each of the years of analysis for an LEA to be identified for indicator 4

Over multiple school years, LEAs, in particular small districts, have shared concerns with MA DESE that their identification for indicator 4 was based on a single student. Even before stakeholder input, MA DESE noticed a set of districts each year was identified based on a single student with a disability in

each school year being suspended/expelled for greater than 10 days. MA DESE talked with special educators and special education school leaders in the LEAs that shared these concerns. These stakeholders stated that they were concerned with issues of inequity in their discipline data, being based on a single student per year often resulted in them having to participate in the PPP submission process and, due to limited time and bandwidth, this took away from other important equity work. After talking to these stakeholders, MA DESE decided that it wanted to make sure indicator 4 served its purpose of identifying LEAs that have issues with inequities in the discipline while also balancing the concerns shared by LEAs (e.g. resources in LEAs were being used to complete PPP submissions instead of supporting students).

As a result of these external and internal discussions, MA DESE completed an analysis of its data. This analysis resulted in creating multiple scenarios of different minimum cell sizes (2,3,5, and 10). MA DESE shared this analysis with its liaison at IDC and had internal discussions. After this analysis and discussions. MA DESE settled on a minimum cell size of 3 students with disabilities being suspended/expelled for at least 10 days per school year.

MA DESE continues to review discipline data for students with disabilities for significant disproportionality in special education. Through this initiative, all LEAs in the commonwealth are provided detailed data reports that include data on the discipline of students with disabilities disaggregated based on race/ethnicity. Any LEA that is either at-risk or identified is also invited to participate in a series of PD, and identified LEAs submit action plans.

(2) Updating of suspension data to only include out-of-school suspensions.

In discussions with our state liaison at IDC, MA DESE was made aware of Universal Technical Assistance for Indicator 4. MA DESE has historically included in-school suspensions (ISS) for Indicators 4A and 4B. The state of Massachusetts has included in-school suspensions in the data for over a decade because ISS still results in students missing time on learning which has a negative impact on students with disabilities. MA DESE has always believed in the importance of decreasing the exclusion of students with disabilities, tracking when it does occur, and helping to maximize the amount of time students spend learning with their peers. This is why MA DES has historically included in-school suspensions for indicator 4. It also allowed MA DESE to support a larger number of LEAs that had issues of inequity in their discipline practices.

For FFY2021, MA DESE has removed in-school suspensions for the state and district rates. It now only includes out-of-school suspensions and expulsions. Moving forward, MA DESE will continue to follow the requirements set forth by USED that out-of-school suspensions and expulsions are only to be included in the data for Indicator 4. No in-school suspensions were included in the data analysis for Indicator 4A or 4B for FFY2021.

Due to these two changes, Massachusetts set FFY21 as a new baseline for indicator 4B.

**COVID-19 IMPACT**

MA DESE saw a decrease in the number of students being suspended and expelled because of the COVID-19 pandemic. Though even as students were removed from time on learning with fewer frequency, students with disabilities, across the commonwealth, were still suspended and expelled at a higher rate than their peers. MA DESE remains concerned about this trend and continues to provide technical assistance and support to LEAs around supporting students with disabilities and decreasing the use of suspension and expulsions.

Any decreases in the number of LEAs identified under Indicator 4 was likely caused by MA DESE's implementation of the Universal Technical Assistance's requirement to remove in school suspensions from the data and the newly implemented minimum cell sizes.

**Review of Policies, Procedures, and Practices (completed in FFY 2021 using 2020-2021 data)**

**Provide a description of the review of policies, procedures, and practices relating to the development and implementation of IEPs, the use of positive behavioral interventions and supports, and procedural safeguards.**

MA DESE uses the same methodology for reviewing policies, practices, and procedures (PPPs) for LEAs identified as significant discrepancies in Indicators 4A and 4B.

Assessing the appropriateness of the PPPs regarding the development and implementation of IEPs, the use of positive behavioral and instructional interventions and supports, and procedural safeguards has been a coordinated and collaborative process among several offices at MA DESE. MA DESE verifies compliance of LEAs' PPPs through its monitoring review process, including special education monitoring criteria that address these focus areas. MA DESE also assesses corrective action reports and progress reports completed by LEAs in all other areas of identified noncompliance to assesses whether the non-compliance contributed to the discrepancy in indicators 4A and 4B. Any deficiencies in the PPPs must be corrected by the LEA within one year from the date of notification, and the LEA must submit evidence of the corrections to MA DESE for verification.

In this focused process. MA DESE verified that zero LEAs were identified (for 4b) as having significant discrepancies through data analysis compliant with the IDEA but zero instances of noncompliance in relation to policies, practices, and procedures. If any had been identified, MA DESE would have supported their participation in Professional Learning (targeted assistance with staff from the MA DESE Offices of Student and Family Support, Special Education Planning and Policy, and Charter Schools and School Redesign) and other professional development offered by MA DESE for districts with concerns of possible inequities for students with disabilities. This engagement includes a discussion of district-specific data, as well as information about successful strategies that LEAs have implemented and challenges districts, are facing related to student discipline practice and to provide for reflection on policies, practices, and procedures in order to support students on IEPs and reduce the use of disciplinary removal.

The State DID NOT identify noncompliance with Part B requirements as a result of the review required by 34 CFR §300.170(b)

**Correction of Findings of Noncompliance Identified in FFY 2020**

Findings of Noncompliance Identified	Findings of Noncompliance Verified as Corrected Within One Year	Findings of Noncompliance Subsequently Corrected	Findings Not Yet Verified as Corrected
0	0	0	0

**Correction of Findings of Noncompliance Identified Prior to FFY 2020**

Year Findings of Noncompliance Were Identified	Findings of Noncompliance Not Yet Verified as Corrected as of FFY 2020 APR	Findings of Noncompliance Verified as Corrected	Findings Not Yet Verified as Corrected

Year Findings of Noncompliance Were Identified	Findings of Noncompliance Not Yet Verified as Corrected as of FFY 2020 APR	Findings of Noncompliance Verified as Corrected	Findings Not Yet Verified as Corrected

#### 4B - Prior FFY Required Actions

None

#### 4B - OSEP Response

OSEP cannot determine whether the data are valid and reliable. The State reports, "MA DESE's definition of significant discrepancy in the rate of suspensions and expulsions (for greater than 10 days in a school year) of students with IEPs who are members of a specific racial/ethnic group is a suspension/ expulsion rate of five times the state rate for all students for three consecutive years." OSEP is unclear whether the State is comparing the LEA rate of students with disabilities by race/ethnicity to students with and without disabilities in the State or to all students with disabilities in the State. Additionally, the State reports, "Therefore, LEAs met the State's definition of significant discrepancy if they: met the minimum "n" size of 10 students with IEPs in a particular racial/ethnic group; and met the minimum "cell" size of 3 students with disabilities in a particular racial/ethnic group being suspended/expelled for more than 10 days; suspended or expelled more than five times the state rate of students with an IEP who are members of a particular racial/ethnic group for greater than 10 days over the course of the 2020-2021 school year; had similar data for the prior two school years." It is unclear whether the State is using different State thresholds for different racial and ethnic groups. It is the Department's longstanding position that States may not set different thresholds for different racial and ethnic groups because doing so would be unlikely to meet constitutional scrutiny. The State's thresholds developed for each category of analysis must be the same for each racial and ethnic group. Therefore, OSEP cannot determine whether the State met its target.

The State revised its baseline for this indicator using data from FFY 2021, however, OSEP cannot accept this revision because OSEP cannot determine whether the State's FFY 2021 data are valid and reliable.

As noted in the FFY 2021 Part B SPP/APR General Instructions, the State's methodology for examining data must be reasonably designed to determine if significant discrepancies are occurring in the rate of long-term suspensions and expulsions of children with disabilities among LEAs in the State or compared to the rates for nondisabled children within those LEAs. The Part B SPP/APR General Instructions also noted that factors OSEP may consider when determining reasonableness of a State's methodology include whether none, or a very low percentage of, the State's LEAs are being examined for significant discrepancy under the State's chosen methodology, and whether statistically sound alternative methodologies exist or are being used by similarly-situated States. OSEP notes that the State's chosen methodology results in a threshold for measuring significant discrepancy in the rate of long-term suspension and expulsion rates of children with IEPs that falls above the median of thresholds used by all States that use a rate ratio.

#### 4B- Required Actions

## Indicator 5: Education Environments (children 5 (Kindergarten) - 21)

### Instructions and Measurement

**Monitoring Priority:** FAPE in the LRE

**Results indicator:** Percent of children with IEPs aged 5 who are enrolled in kindergarten and aged 6 through 21 served:

- A. Inside the regular class 80% or more of the day;
- B. Inside the regular class less than 40% of the day; and
- C. In separate schools, residential facilities, or homebound/hospital placements.

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

#### Data Source

Same data as used for reporting to the Department under section 618 of the IDEA, using the definitions in EDFacts file specification FS002.

#### Measurement

- A. Percent = [(# of children with IEPs aged 5 who are enrolled in kindergarten and aged 6 through 21 served inside the regular class 80% or more of the day) divided by the (total # of students aged 5 who are enrolled in kindergarten and aged 6 through 21 with IEPs)] times 100.
- B. Percent = [(# of children with IEPs aged 5 who are enrolled in kindergarten and aged 6 through 21 served inside the regular class less than 40% of the day) divided by the (total # of students aged 5 who are enrolled in kindergarten and aged 6 through 21 with IEPs)] times 100.
- C. Percent = [(# of children with IEPs aged 5 who are enrolled in kindergarten and aged 6 through 21 served in separate schools, residential facilities, or homebound/hospital placements) divided by the (total # of students aged 5 who are enrolled in kindergarten and aged 6 through 21 with IEPs)] times 100.

#### Instructions

*Sampling from the State's 618 data is not allowed.*

States must report five-year-old children with disabilities who are enrolled in kindergarten in this indicator. Five-year-old children with disabilities who are enrolled in preschool programs are included in Indicator 6. Describe the results of the calculations and compare the results to the target.

If the data reported in this indicator are not the same as the State's data reported under section 618 of the IDEA, explain.

## 5 - Indicator Data

### Historical Data

Part	Baseline	FFY	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
A	2020	Target >=	61.00%	61.50%	61.50%	61.50%	65.49%
A	65.49%	Data	62.82%	63.83%	65.02%	65.55%	65.49%
B	2020	Target <=	14.40%	14.40%	14.30%	14.30%	13.32%
B	13.32%	Data	13.82%	13.40%	13.22%	13.23%	13.32%
C	2020	Target <=	5.50%	5.40%	5.40%	5.40%	6.44%
C	6.44%	Data	6.93%	6.86%	6.57%	6.44%	6.44%

### Targets

FFY	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Target A >=	65.49%	65.49%	65.49%	67.49%	67.99%
Target B <=	13.32%	13.32%	13.32%	12.92%	12.82%
Target C <=	6.44%	6.44%	6.44%	6.04%	5.94%

### Targets: Description of Stakeholder Input

MA DESE is committed to a continuous system of engaging stakeholders to develop targets and set priorities for improvement in each of the areas reported in the SPP/APR.

The Special Education Advisory Panel (SEAP) and Special Education State Advisory Council (SAC), comprised of parents, individuals with disabilities, educators, administrators, and representatives from state agencies, higher education, and other stakeholder groups, meets at least four times each school year to review data, discuss policy priorities, and identify unmet needs in the area of special education consistent with state law and IDEA Part B. At each meeting, the group addressed various aspects of the SPP/APR and the State's general supervision systems, as well as relevant policy matters. In FFY2020 MA DESE facilitated discussions with the SEAP and SAC to establish baselines and targets for the performance Indicators. In FFY2021, MA DESE discussed each Indicator's performance and impacts on the LEA Determinations and Accountability and Assistance systems. MA DESE is committed to keep members of the SEAP and SAC up to date on processes and supports provided to LEA's in order to improve outcomes for students with disabilities. MA DESE will continue discussions around and current data, longitudinal targets, historical rates of performance and compliance and the trajectory for improvement for each of the Indicators, and the effectiveness of focused improvement activities within the context of the state's Results Driven Accountability framework.

The SAC is required by Massachusetts General Law (M.G.L. c. 15, § 1G

<https://malegislature.gov/Laws/GeneralLaws/PartI/TitleII/Chapter15/Section1G>). The purpose of the SAC is to advise the Board of Elementary and

Secondary Education and to make other programmatic recommendations as it deems necessary to fulfill the goals established by the board.

The SEAP is required by IDEA (34 CFR §§ 300.167-300.169 [https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-34/subtitle-B/chapter-III/part-300#sg34.2.300\\_1166.sg15](https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-34/subtitle-B/chapter-III/part-300#sg34.2.300_1166.sg15)). The purpose of the SEAP is to advise the State Education Authority (SEA) of unmet needs within the State regarding the education of children with disabilities. The Panel comments publicly on proposed rules or regulations regarding the education of children with disabilities. The Panel's advisory function to the State Education Authority (SEA) in developing evaluations and reporting 618 data (IDEA data) to USED and in developing corrective action plans to address findings in Federal monitoring reports under IDEA Part B. The Panel also advises the SEA in developing and implementing policies relating to the coordination of services for children with disabilities.

MA DESE has set a high priority on expanding the agency's capacity to solicit broad and diverse stakeholder input to set SPP/APR targets, analyze data, develop improvement strategies, and evaluate progress. For FFY2021, MA DESE sought to continue stakeholder Indicator knowledge that began in FFY2020. A new SPP/APR webpage, previously linked above, was created and posted along with new webpages for Indicators 4, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 15, 16, and 17. Small changes were made to previously created webpages for Indicators 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, 8, and 14 with Quick Reference Guides (QRGs) and PowerPoints for each Indicator. These QRGs and PowerPoints were available in six languages that correspond to the most common languages spoken in Massachusetts: English, Spanish, Portuguese, Chinese, Vietnamese, and Haitian Creole. Narrated versions of each PowerPoint were also available in English on the YouTube page of our partner, the Federation for Children with Special Needs (the Massachusetts Parent Training and Information Center/PTIC). MA DESE hosted six virtual stakeholder information and feedback sessions to broaden stakeholder knowledge on Indicators 4, 9, 10, 11, 12, and 13, while also soliciting feedback for Indicators 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, 8, 14, and 17 and presenting information to stakeholders, such as performance towards the targets set in FFY2020. These informational sessions featured a large group presentation on each topic, that was simultaneously translated into Spanish, Portuguese, Chinese, Vietnamese, and Haitian Creole. After each large group presentation, breakout rooms were opened in each of the previously mentioned languages, where stakeholders would be able to communicate and ask questions, in their native language, to MA DESE staff.

MA DESE also consults regularly, on a monthly or at least quarterly basis, with Massachusetts Administrators of Special Education, <http://www.asepage.org/>, the Federation for Children with Special Needs, <https://fcsn.org/>, Massachusetts Advocates for Children, <https://www.massadvocates.org/>, the Massachusetts Association of Approved Special Education Schools, <https://maaps.org/>, Massachusetts Urban Special Education Leadership Collaborative, and the Special Needs Advocacy Network, [www.spanmass.org](http://www.spanmass.org). In addition, the Massachusetts State Special Education Director at MA DESE gives monthly virtual presentations to statewide special education leaders on a wide array of special education compliance and performance topics. During all of these meetings, MA DESE solicits and receives significant feedback that informs the development of special education policy and guidance.

As needed, MA DESE also convenes stakeholder working groups throughout the year to provide focused input on specific projects and policy priorities. Examples of these focused groups include the Early Childhood Interagency Coordinating Council, with membership that includes community members and state agencies, a Statewide Systemic Improvement Plan (SSIP) leadership team and working group, a family engagement workgroup, an advisory group for the Dropout Prevention and Re-engagement Network, and secondary transition stakeholder groups. MA DESE also consults with educators, parents, advocates, and others on an ad hoc basis to inform policy and practice.

MA DESE engages with stakeholders on the direction of Indicator 17, the State's Systemic Improvement Plan (SSIP), at the state, district, classroom, and community levels. Stakeholders are provided with information about activities and goals, training events and embedded supports statewide, and the availability of resources to support and expand implementation. Stakeholders at the district and school levels participate in ongoing decision making about the direction of the SSIP by providing feedback about the quality of events and supports, observed benefits for their own stakeholders, and needs for moving forward with implementation most successfully. In May of 2022, MA DESE met with stakeholders to discuss revisions to the Theory of Action and the Evaluation Plan for the SSIP. Through frequent communication and input from stakeholders revisions to the Theory of Action and Evaluation Plan were made for incorporation and use during the FFY2022 SPP/APR reporting cycle. For additional information on stakeholder engagement related to Indicator 17, please see the Indicator 17 APR.

Stakeholder engagement is an essential component of MA DESE's special education agenda.

#### Prepopulated Data

Source	Date	Description	Data
SY 2021-22 Child Count/Educational Environment Data Groups (EDFacts file spec FS002; Data group 74)	07/06/2022	Total number of children with IEPs aged 5 (kindergarten) through 21	167,185
SY 2021-22 Child Count/Educational Environment Data Groups (EDFacts file spec FS002; Data group 74)	07/06/2022	A. Number of children with IEPs aged 5 (kindergarten) through 21 inside the regular class 80% or more of the day	110,617
SY 2021-22 Child Count/Educational Environment Data Groups (EDFacts file spec FS002; Data group 74)	07/06/2022	B. Number of children with IEPs aged 5 (kindergarten) through 21 inside the regular class less than 40% of the day	22,421
SY 2021-22 Child Count/Educational Environment Data Groups (EDFacts file spec FS002; Data group 74)	07/06/2022	c1. Number of children with IEPs aged 5 (kindergarten) through 21 in separate schools	8,548
SY 2021-22 Child Count/Educational Environment Data Groups (EDFacts file spec FS002; Data group 74)	07/06/2022	c2. Number of children with IEPs aged 5 (kindergarten) through 21 in residential facilities	840

Source	Date	Description	Data
SY 2021-22 Child Count/Educational Environment Data Groups (EDFacts file spec FS002; Data group 74)	07/06/2022	c3. Number of children with IEPs aged 5 (kindergarten) through 21 in homebound/hospital placements	773

Select yes if the data reported in this indicator are not the same as the State's data reported under section 618 of the IDEA.

NO

**FFY 2021 SPP/APR Data**

Education Environments	Number of children with IEPs aged 5 (kindergarten) through 21 served	Total number of children with IEPs aged 5 (kindergarten) through 21	FFY 2020 Data	FFY 2021 Target	FFY 2021 Data	Status	Slippage
A. Number of children with IEPs aged 5 (kindergarten) through 21 inside the regular class 80% or more of the day	110,617	167,185	65.49%	65.49%	66.16%	Met target	No Slippage
B. Number of children with IEPs aged 5 (kindergarten) through 21 inside the regular class less than 40% of the day	22,421	167,185	13.32%	13.32%	13.41%	Did not meet target	No Slippage
C. Number of children with IEPs aged 5 (kindergarten) through 21 inside separate schools, residential facilities, or homebound/hospital placements [c1+c2+c3]	10,161	167,185	6.44%	6.44%	6.08%	Met target	No Slippage

**Provide additional information about this indicator (optional)**

In FFY2021, a total of 134,603 (80.5%) of the students ages 5 (school age) through 21 served under IDEA, Part B, were educated in regular classrooms for at least 40% of the school day with a significant majority of students served inside the regular class 80% or more of the day. MA DESE met and exceeded targets for Measurements A and C by +.67 and -.36 percentage points respectively. However, MA DESE did not meet the Measurement B target by +.09 percentage points – this increase does not meet OSEP's definition of slippage.

Indicator 5 data is collected and validated through the Department's Student Information Management System (SIMS); COVID-19 did not have an impact on Indicator 5 data collection, completeness, validity, or reliability. MA DESE Indicator 5 data is complete, accurate, and reliable.

The COVID-19 pandemic may have affected Indicator 5 performance, particularly Measurement B, as LEAs reported an increase in students' academic, social, and emotional needs. Thus, MA DESE continues to anticipate shifts in future Indicator 5 performance data – as IEP Teams address new and increased areas of disability-related needs. In FFY2021, MA DESE continued to analyze Indicator 5 longitudinal performance to provide more clarity about the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on student placement needs. Additionally, MA DESE worked with LEAs to analyze local placement data; review local policies, procedures, and practices; and make system-level improvements to expand and support inclusive opportunities for students with disabilities.

**5 - Prior FFY Required Actions**

None

**5 - OSEP Response**

**5 - Required Actions**

## Indicator 6: Preschool Environments

### Instructions and Measurement

**Monitoring Priority:** FAPE in the LRE

**Results indicator:** Percent of children with IEPs aged 3, 4, and aged 5 who are enrolled in a preschool program attending a:

- A. Regular early childhood program and receiving the majority of special education and related services in the regular early childhood program; and
- B. Separate special education class, separate school or residential facility.
- C. Receiving special education and related services in the home.

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

### Data Source

Same data as used for reporting to the Department under section 618 of the IDEA, using the definitions in EDFacts file specification FS089.

### Measurement

- A. Percent =  $\left[ \frac{\text{\# of children ages 3, 4, and 5 with IEPs attending a regular early childhood program and receiving the majority of special education and related services in the regular early childhood program}}{\text{total \# of children ages 3, 4, and 5 with IEPs}} \right] \times 100$ .
- B. Percent =  $\left[ \frac{\text{\# of children ages 3, 4, and 5 with IEPs attending a separate special education class, separate school or residential facility}}{\text{total \# of children ages 3, 4, and 5 with IEPs}} \right] \times 100$ .
- C. Percent =  $\left[ \frac{\text{\# of children ages 3, 4, and 5 with IEPs receiving special education and related services in the home}}{\text{total \# of children ages 3, 4, and 5 with IEPs}} \right] \times 100$ .

### Instructions

*Sampling from the State's 618 data is not allowed.*

States must report five-year-old children with disabilities who are enrolled in preschool programs in this indicator. Five-year-old children with disabilities who are enrolled in kindergarten are included in Indicator 5.

States may choose to set one target that is inclusive of children ages 3, 4, and 5, or set individual targets for each age.

For Indicator 6C: States are not required to establish a baseline or targets if the number of children receiving special education and related services in the home is less than 10, regardless of whether the State chooses to set one target that is inclusive of children ages 3, 4, and 5, or set individual targets for each age. In a reporting period during which the number of children receiving special education and related services in the home reaches 10 or greater, States are required to develop baseline and targets and report on them in the corresponding SPP/APR.

For Indicator 6C: States may express their targets in a range (e.g., 75-85%). Describe the results of the calculations and compare the results to the target.

If the data reported in this indicator are not the same as the State's data reported under IDEA section 618, explain.

## 6 - Indicator Data

**Not Applicable**

**Select yes if this indicator is not applicable.**

NO

### Historical Data – 6A, 6B

Part	FFY	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
A	Target >=	45.00%	47.00%	50.00%	50.00%	52.31%
A	Data	53.68%	54.41%	54.76%	54.78%	52.31%
B	Target <=	12.80%	12.40%	12.40%	12.40%	19.36%
B	Data	16.74%	16.80%	16.19%	17.03%	19.36%

### Targets: Description of Stakeholder Input

MA DESE is committed to a continuous system of engaging stakeholders to develop targets and set priorities for improvement in each of the areas reported in the SPP/APR.

The Special Education Advisory Panel (SEAP) and Special Education State Advisory Council (SAC), comprised of parents, individuals with disabilities, educators, administrators, and representatives from state agencies, higher education, and other stakeholder groups, meets at least four times each school year to review data, discuss policy priorities, and identify unmet needs in the area of special education consistent with state law and IDEA Part B. At each meeting, the group addressed various aspects of the SPP/APR and the State's general supervision systems, as well as relevant policy matters. In FFY2020 MA DESE facilitated discussions with the SEAP and SAC to establish baselines and targets for the performance Indicators. In FFY2021, MA DESE discussed each Indicator's performance and impacts on the LEA Determinations and Accountability and Assistance systems. MA DESE is committed to keep members of the SEAP and SAC up to date on processes and supports provided to LEA's in order to improve outcomes for students with disabilities. MA DESE will continue discussions around and current data, longitudinal targets, historical rates of performance and compliance and the trajectory for improvement for each of the Indicators, and the effectiveness of focused improvement activities within the context of the state's Results Driven Accountability framework.

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<https://malegislature.gov/Laws/GeneralLaws/PartI/TitleII/Chapter15/Section1G>). The purpose of the SAC is to advise the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education and to make other programmatic recommendations as it deems necessary to fulfill the goals established by the board.

The SEAP is required by IDEA (34 CFR §§ 300.167-300.169 [https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-34/subtitle-B/chapter-III/part-300#sg34.2.300\\_1166.sg15](https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-34/subtitle-B/chapter-III/part-300#sg34.2.300_1166.sg15)). The purpose of the SEAP is to advise the State Education Authority (SEA) of unmet needs within the State regarding the education of children with disabilities. The Panel comments publicly on proposed rules or regulations regarding the education of children with disabilities. The Panel's advisory function to the State Education Authority (SEA) in developing evaluations and reporting 618 data (IDEA data) to USED and in developing corrective action plans to address findings in Federal monitoring reports under IDEA Part B. The Panel also advises the SEA in developing and implementing policies relating to the coordination of services for children with disabilities.

MA DESE has set a high priority on expanding the agency's capacity to solicit broad and diverse stakeholder input to set SPP/APR targets, analyze data, develop improvement strategies, and evaluate progress. For FFY2021, MA DESE sought to continue stakeholder Indicator knowledge that began in FFY2020. A new SPP/APR webpage, previously linked above, was created and posted along with new webpages for Indicators 4, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 15, 16, and 17. Small changes were made to previously created webpages for Indicators 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, 8, and 14 with Quick Reference Guides (QRGs) and PowerPoints for each Indicator. These QRGs and PowerPoints were available in six languages that correspond to the most common languages spoken in Massachusetts: English, Spanish, Portuguese, Chinese, Vietnamese, and Haitian Creole. Narrated versions of each PowerPoint were also available in English on the YouTube page of our partner, the Federation for Children with Special Needs (the Massachusetts Parent Training and Information Center/PTIC). MA DESE hosted six virtual stakeholder information and feedback sessions to broaden stakeholder knowledge on Indicators 4, 9, 10, 11, 12, and 13, while also soliciting feedback for Indicators 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, 8, 14, and 17 and presenting information to stakeholders, such as performance towards the targets set in FFY2020. These informational sessions featured a large group presentation on each topic, that was simultaneously translated into Spanish, Portuguese, Chinese, Vietnamese, and Haitian Creole. After each large group presentation, breakout rooms were opened in each of the previously mentioned languages, where stakeholders would be able to communicate and ask questions, in their native language, to MA DESE staff.

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MA DESE engages with stakeholders on the direction of Indicator 17, the State's Systemic Improvement Plan (SSIP), at the state, district, classroom, and community levels. Stakeholders are provided with information about activities and goals, training events and embedded supports statewide, and the availability of resources to support and expand implementation. Stakeholders at the district and school levels participate in ongoing decision making about the direction of the SSIP by providing feedback about the quality of events and supports, observed benefits for their own stakeholders, and needs for moving forward with implementation most successfully. In May of 2022, MA DESE met with stakeholders to discuss revisions to the Theory of Action and the Evaluation Plan for the SSIP. Through frequent communication and input from stakeholders revisions to the Theory of Action and Evaluation Plan were made for incorporation and use during the FFY2022 SPP/APR reporting cycle. For additional information on stakeholder engagement related to Indicator 17, please see the Indicator 17 APR.

Stakeholder engagement is an essential component of MA DESE's special education agenda.

**Targets**

**Please select if the State wants to set baseline and targets based on individual age ranges (i.e. separate baseline and targets for each age), or inclusive of all children ages 3, 4, and 5.**

Inclusive Targets

**Please select if the State wants to use target ranges for 6C.**

Target Range is used

**Baselines for Inclusive Targets option (A, B, C)**

Part	Baseline Year	Baseline Data
A	2020	52.31%
B	2020	19.36%
C	2020	0.13%

**Inclusive Targets – 6A, 6B**

FFY	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Target A >=	52.31%	52.31%	52.31%	53.36%	54.41%
Target B <=	19.36%	19.36%	19.36%	18.02%	16.68%

**Inclusive Targets (with Target Ranges) – 6C**

FFY	2021 (low)	2021 (high)	2022 (low)	2022 (high)	2023 (low)	2023 (high)	2024 (low)	2024 (high)	2025 (low)	2025 (high)
Target C <=	0.11%	0.13%	0.11%	0.13%	0.11%	0.13%	0.10%	0.12%	0.09%	0.11%

**Prepopulated Data**

**Data Source:**

SY 2021-22 Child Count/Educational Environment Data Groups (EDFacts file spec FS089; Data group 613)

**Date:**

07/06/2022

Description	3	4	5	3 through 5 - Total
Total number of children with IEPs	3,789	5,639	969	10,397
a1. Number of children attending a regular early childhood program and receiving the majority of special education and related services in the regular early childhood program	1,856	2,875	514	5,245
b1. Number of children attending separate special education class	789	1,027	145	1,961
b2. Number of children attending separate school	36	54	23	113
b3. Number of children attending residential facility	0	0	0	0
c1. Number of children receiving special education and related services in the home	2	11	1	14

Select yes if the data reported in this indicator are not the same as the State's data reported under section 618 of the IDEA.

NO

**FFY 2021 SPP/APR Data - Aged 3 through 5**

Preschool Environments	Number of children with IEPs aged 3 through 5 served	Total number of children with IEPs aged 3 through 5	FFY 2020 Data	FFY 2021 Target	FFY 2021 Data	Status	Slippage
A. A regular early childhood program and receiving the majority of special education and related services in the regular early childhood program	5,245	10,397	52.31%	52.31%	50.45%	Did not meet target	Slippage
B. Separate special education class, separate school or residential facility	2,074	10,397	19.36%	19.36%	19.95%	Did not meet target	No Slippage

**FFY 2021 SPP/APR Data - Aged 3 through 5**

Preschool Environments	Number of children with IEPs aged 3 through 5 served	Total number of children with IEPs aged 3 through 5	FFY 2020 Data	FFY 2021 Target (low)	FFY 2021 Target (high)	FFY 2021 Data	Status	Slippage
C. Home	14	10,397	0.13%	0.11%	0.13%	0.13%	Met target	No Slippage

**Provide reasons for slippage for Group A aged 3 through 5, if applicable**

The number of preschool students with IEPs receiving majority of their special education and related services in a regular preschool program decreased by 1.86 percentage points, from 52.31% in FFY2020 to 50.45% in FFY2021, while the number of students receiving services in separate special

education settings increased by 0.59 percentage points from 19.36% in FFY2020 to 19.95% in FFY2021. Based on district feedback, the slippage for 6A can be attributed to the residual effects of COVID-19 as schools transitioned back to full-time in-person learning and an increased number of parents requesting separate special education placements for their children with IEPs. Specifically, districts reported greater concerns about preschool students' social-emotional and cognitive development (i.e., behavior challenges and language and learning delays) and students adjusting to classroom structure and norms when in-person learning resumed. Districts also reported an increase in Part C referrals and eligible students needing separate special education placements as a result of the needs identified in the initial evaluations. Additionally, a greater number of parents have requested separate special education placements given the smaller class size and higher teacher to student ratio such placements offer.

**Provide additional information about this indicator (optional)**

At the height of the COVID-19 pandemic, government-mandated masking and social-distancing requirements hindered three- to five-year old children's early interactions and language development. As a result, more children entered school with delays in social-emotional, language, and cognitive development. To mitigate the lingering effects of COVID-19, DESE has been working closely with the Massachusetts Department of Early Education and Care (EEC), the agency that oversees community childcare programs, to provide technical assistance to promote preschool inclusion, expand inclusionary opportunities for eligible students, and support districts with placing preschool students with disabilities in their natural (inclusive) environments. Multiple offices within DESE (i.e., Offices of Special Education Planning and Policy and Student and Family Supports) have also been collaborating to better support districts with improving the quality of their preschool classrooms so that students of all abilities can benefit from inclusionary programs. Furthermore, DESE has been promoting and integrating evidence-based practices that support inclusion across early childhood initiatives (e.g., Pyramid Model) so that districts and families understand and see the importance and benefits of a high-quality inclusive preschool program.

**6 - Prior FFY Required Actions**

None

**6 - OSEP Response**

**6 - Required Actions**

## Indicator 7: Preschool Outcomes

### Instructions and Measurement

**Monitoring Priority:** FAPE in the LRE

**Results indicator:** Percent of preschool children aged 3 through 5 with IEPs who demonstrate improved:

- A. Positive social-emotional skills (including social relationships);
- B. Acquisition and use of knowledge and skills (including early language/ communication and early literacy); and
- C. Use of appropriate behaviors to meet their needs.

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

#### Data Source

State selected data source.

#### Measurement

Outcomes:

- A. Positive social-emotional skills (including social relationships);
- B. Acquisition and use of knowledge and skills (including early language/communication and early literacy); and
- C. Use of appropriate behaviors to meet their needs.

Progress categories for A, B and C:

- a. Percent of preschool children who did not improve functioning = [(# of preschool children who did not improve functioning) divided by (# of preschool children with IEPs assessed)] times 100.
- b. Percent of preschool children who improved functioning but not sufficient to move nearer to functioning comparable to same-aged peers = [(# of preschool children who improved functioning but not sufficient to move nearer to functioning comparable to same-aged peers) divided by (# of preschool children with IEPs assessed)] times 100.
- c. Percent of preschool children who improved functioning to a level nearer to same-aged peers but did not reach it = [(# of preschool children who improved functioning to a level nearer to same-aged peers but did not reach it) divided by (# of preschool children with IEPs assessed)] times 100.
- d. Percent of preschool children who improved functioning to reach a level comparable to same-aged peers = [(# of preschool children who improved functioning to reach a level comparable to same-aged peers) divided by (# of preschool children with IEPs assessed)] times 100.
- e. Percent of preschool children who maintained functioning at a level comparable to same-aged peers = [(# of preschool children who maintained functioning at a level comparable to same-aged peers) divided by (# of preschool children with IEPs assessed)] times 100.

#### Summary Statements for Each of the Three Outcomes:

**Summary Statement 1:** Of those preschool children who entered the preschool program below age expectations in each Outcome, the percent who substantially increased their rate of growth by the time they turned 6 years of age or exited the program.

**Measurement for Summary Statement 1:** Percent = [(# of preschool children reported in progress category (c) plus # of preschool children reported in category (d)) divided by (# of preschool children reported in progress category (a) plus # of preschool children reported in progress category (b) plus # of preschool children reported in progress category (c) plus # of preschool children reported in progress category (d))] times 100.

**Summary Statement 2:** The percent of preschool children who were functioning within age expectations in each Outcome by the time they turned 6 years of age or exited the program.

**Measurement for Summary Statement 2:** Percent = [(# of preschool children reported in progress category (d) plus # of preschool children reported in progress category (e)) divided by (the total # of preschool children reported in progress categories (a) + (b) + (c) + (d) + (e))] times 100.

#### Instructions

Sampling of **children for assessment** is allowed. When sampling is used, submit a description of the sampling methodology outlining how the design will yield valid and reliable estimates. (See [General Instructions](#) on page 2 for additional instructions on sampling.)

In the measurement include, in the numerator and denominator, only children who received special education and related services for at least six months during the age span of three through five years.

Describe the results of the calculations and compare the results to the targets. States will use the progress categories for each of the three Outcomes to calculate and report the two Summary Statements. States have provided targets for the two Summary Statements for the three Outcomes (six numbers for targets for each FFY).

Report progress data and calculate Summary Statements to compare against the six targets. Provide the actual numbers and percentages for the five reporting categories for each of the three outcomes.

In presenting results, provide the criteria for defining "comparable to same-aged peers." If a State is using the Early Childhood Outcomes Center (ECO) Child Outcomes Summary (COS), then the criteria for defining "comparable to same-aged peers" has been defined as a child who has been assigned a score of 6 or 7 on the COS.

In addition, list the instruments and procedures used to gather data for this indicator, including if the State is using the ECO COS.

## 7 - Indicator Data

### Not Applicable

Select yes if this indicator is not applicable.

NO

#### Historical Data

Part	Baseline	FFY	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
A1	2017	Target >=	85.00%		86.00%	86.00%	86.00%
A1	85.61%	Data	88.70%	85.61%	85.17%	82.44%	80.09%
A2	2017	Target >=	49.00%		50.00%	50.00%	50.00%

A2	47.00%	Data	47.74%	47.00%	46.03%	43.74%	44.53%
B1	2017	Target >=	83.00%		85.00%	85.00%	85.00%
B1	84.90%	Data	85.47%	84.90%	83.56%	84.20%	82.19%
B2	2017	Target >=	48.00%		49.00%	49.00%	49.00%
B2	48.39%	Data	46.48%	48.39%	46.60%	45.04%	43.92%
C1	2017	Target >=	85.00%		86.00%	86.00%	86.00%
C1	85.51%	Data	89.31%	85.51%	86.17%	84.43%	83.47%
C2	2017	Target >=	62.00%		63.00%	63.00%	63.00%
C2	60.46%	Data	63.73%	60.46%	60.67%	58.26%	53.50%

### Targets

FFY	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Target A1 >=	86.00%	86.00%	86.50%	87.00%	88.00%
Target A2 >=	50.00%	50.00%	50.25%	50.50%	51.00%
Target B1 >=	85.00%	85.00%	85.50%	86.00%	87.00%
Target B2 >=	49.00%	49.00%	49.25%	49.50%	50.00%
Target C1 >=	86.00%	86.00%	86.50%	87.00%	88.00%
Target C2 >=	63.00%	63.00%	63.25%	63.50%	64.00%

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Stakeholder engagement is an essential component of MA DESE's special education agenda.

DESE has strategically engaged district and school stakeholders in Indicator 7 child outcomes data collection. DESE presented a webinar in October 2022 on how to use the newly developed Early Childhood Outcomes Summary (ECOS) database and the process for collecting and submitting Indicator 7 data. As part of the registration for the webinar, registrants posed questions that they hoped would be answered during the session and DESE addressed these questions during the webinar as well as additional questions from participants. Following the webinar, participants shared feedback through an online form. This feedback is being used to inform upcoming technical assistance (TA).

In collaboration with the external evaluator, DESE conducted focus groups with families of children attending preschools across the state. The focus group goals were to obtain input from families about their awareness, experiences, and perceptions of services and supports to enhance social and emotional development among preschool children and apply this knowledge to identify innovations or refinements to ongoing family engagement efforts. Participants included 20 parents of children with disabilities and 13 parents of children without disabilities. DESE is reviewing the focus group findings to determine strategies for improving future TA and professional development.

#### FFY 2021 SPP/APR Data

##### Number of preschool children aged 3 through 5 with IEPs assessed

2,105

##### Outcome A: Positive social-emotional skills (including social relationships)

Outcome A Progress Category	Number of children	Percentage of Children
a. Preschool children who did not improve functioning	31	1.47%
b. Preschool children who improved functioning but not sufficient to move nearer to functioning comparable to same-aged peers	224	10.64%
c. Preschool children who improved functioning to a level nearer to same-aged peers but did not reach it	892	42.38%
d. Preschool children who improved functioning to reach a level comparable to same-aged peers	643	30.55%
e. Preschool children who maintained functioning at a level comparable to same-aged peers	315	14.96%

Outcome A	Numerator	Denominator	FFY 2020 Data	FFY 2021 Target	FFY 2021 Data	Status	Slippage
A1. Of those children who entered or exited the program below age expectations in Outcome A, the percent who substantially increased their rate of growth by the time they turned 6 years of age or exited the program. <i>Calculation: (c+d)/(a+b+c+d)</i>	1,535	1,790	80.09%	86.00%	85.75%	Did not meet target	No Slippage
A2. The percent of preschool children who were functioning within age expectations in Outcome A by the time they turned 6 years of age or exited the	958	2,105	44.53%	50.00%	45.51%	Did not meet target	No Slippage

Outcome A	Numerator	Denominator	FFY 2020 Data	FFY 2021 Target	FFY 2021 Data	Status	Slippage
program. Calculation: $(d+e)/(a+b+c+d+e)$							

**Outcome B: Acquisition and use of knowledge and skills (including early language/communication)**

Outcome B Progress Category	Number of Children	Percentage of Children
a. Preschool children who did not improve functioning	20	0.95%
b. Preschool children who improved functioning but not sufficient to move nearer to functioning comparable to same-aged peers	249	11.83%
c. Preschool children who improved functioning to a level nearer to same-aged peers but did not reach it	811	38.53%
d. Preschool children who improved functioning to reach a level comparable to same-aged peers	670	31.83%
e. Preschool children who maintained functioning at a level comparable to same-aged peers	355	16.86%

Outcome B	Numerator	Denominator	FFY 2020 Data	FFY 2021 Target	FFY 2021 Data	Status	Slippage
B1. Of those children who entered or exited the program below age expectations in Outcome B, the percent who substantially increased their rate of growth by the time they turned 6 years of age or exited the program. Calculation: $(c+d)/(a+b+c+d)$	1,481	1,750	82.19%	85.00%	84.63%	Did not meet target	No Slippage
B2. The percent of preschool children who were functioning within age expectations in Outcome B by the time they turned 6 years of age or exited the program. Calculation: $(d+e)/(a+b+c+d+e)$	1,025	2,105	43.92%	49.00%	48.69%	Did not meet target	No Slippage

**Outcome C: Use of appropriate behaviors to meet their needs**

Outcome C Progress Category	Number of Children	Percentage of Children
a. Preschool children who did not improve functioning	28	1.33%
b. Preschool children who improved functioning but not sufficient to move nearer to functioning comparable to same-aged peers	223	10.59%
c. Preschool children who improved functioning to a level nearer to same-aged peers but did not reach it	684	32.49%
d. Preschool children who improved functioning to reach a level comparable to same-aged peers	730	34.68%
e. Preschool children who maintained functioning at a level comparable to same-aged peers	440	20.90%

Outcome C	Numerator	Denominator	FFY 2020 Data	FFY 2021 Target	FFY 2021 Data	Status	Slippage
C1. Of those children who entered or exited the program below age expectations in Outcome C, the percent who substantially increased their rate of growth by the time they turned 6 years of age or exited the program. Calculation: $(c+d)/(a+b+c+d)$	1,414	1,665	83.47%	86.00%	84.92%	Did not meet target	No Slippage

Outcome C	Numerator	Denominator	FFY 2020 Data	FFY 2021 Target	FFY 2021 Data	Status	Slippage
C2. The percent of preschool children who were functioning within age expectations in Outcome C by the time they turned 6 years of age or exited the program. <i>Calculation:</i> $(d+e)/(a+b+c+d+e)$	1,170	2,105	53.50%	63.00%	55.58%	Did not meet target	No Slippage

**Does the State include in the numerator and denominator only children who received special education and related services for at least six months during the age span of three through five years? (yes/no)**

YES

Sampling Question	Yes / No
Was sampling used?	YES
If yes, has your previously approved sampling plan changed?	NO

**Describe the sampling methodology outlining how the design will yield valid and reliable estimates.**

The FFY21 data reported here are based on the sampling plan described below. Data completeness increased this year with 2,105 usable records, a 60% increase from the previous year. This increase is likely due to frequent communication from DESE regarding Indicator 7 data collection timelines and the use of the new ECOS database. Please note that for FFY22 Massachusetts is eliminating the cohort model for data collection in an effort to increase data completeness.

FFY21 Sampling Plan: Massachusetts divides districts into four cohorts, with each cohort being representative of the State. According to the cohort schedule, local education agencies (LEAs) collect Indicator 7 child outcomes entry data for students once every 4 years as part of their assigned cohort. Data collection and reporting activities for those participating LEAs continue for approximately 3 years following entry data, until all originally assessed students have exited from early childhood special education services. Once all children from the LEA's cohort have exited from early childhood special education, the LEA has one year off from reporting and then begins a new cycle with a new cohort of eligible entering students. Therefore, for each reporting year, the sample includes data from three of the four district cohorts.

**Did you use the Early Childhood Outcomes Center (ECO) Child Outcomes Summary Form (COS) process? (yes/no)**

YES

**List the instruments and procedures used to gather data for this indicator.**

Districts collected child-level entry and exit COS data for preschool aged children (3–5 years of age) receiving special education services. DESE encourages districts to use assessment data from initial eligibility determinations when conducting COS entry ratings. In addition, DESE shares guidance and resources from ECTA and DaSy on completing the COS process, including the use of multiple sources of evidence to inform entry and exit ratings. For the 2021–22 school year, MA DESE developed and implemented the ECOS database to assist districts with submitting data gathered through the COS process. The ECOS database is linked with the Student Information Management System (SIMS). All students identified in SIMS as receiving early childhood special education are populated in the ECOS database. Part 1 of ECOS includes fields for the date services started and entry ratings for the three child outcomes (i.e., positive social-emotional skills, acquisition and use of knowledge and skills, and use of appropriate behaviors to meet needs). For districts participating in Pyramid Model implementation through the SSIP, there is a field to indicate if the child was in a classroom that was implementing the Pyramid Model. Part 2 of ECOS includes fields for the date the child exited preschool special education, an indicator for if the child left the district without exit data being collected and exit ratings and progress questions for the three outcomes. A reporting feature within ECOS is currently being developed. For the 2021–22 school year, reporting districts were required to complete data entry by August 31, 2022. MA DESE and the external evaluator supported districts with data collection and submission through frequent communication and technical assistance (TA). For FFY 2021, this included frequent TA on data entry and navigation of the new online database.

**Provide additional information about this indicator (optional)**

Indicator 7 data indicate that although targets were not met, figures for all FY2021 outcomes and summary statements were higher than those for FY2020, and there was a meaningful increase ( $p < 0.10$ ) for Summary Statement 1 on outcomes A and B and for Summary Statement 2 on outcome B. Data completeness increased this year with 2,105 usable records, a 60% increase from the previous year. This increase is likely due to frequent communication from DESE regarding Indicator 7 data collection timelines and the use of the new ECOS database.

The total number of complete entry and exit records collected from districts ( $n = 2,105$ ) represents 20% of the FFY21 three to five year old child count ( $N = 10,397$ ), which is an improvement over the 12% representation last year. TA providers from the Early Childhood Technical Assistance Center (ECTA) and the Center for IDEA Early Childhood Data Systems (DaSy) recommend 12% as a minimum standard of completeness (MA State Child Outcomes Profile: Part B 619 FFY 2020). However, this approximate FFY21 representation figure of 20% is still considerably below the approximately 50% national average. Therefore, the child outcomes data collected for the SiMR may not accurately represent the actual outcomes of all students receiving early childhood special education services in Massachusetts. Reasons for the lack of data completeness include the use of a statewide cohort model for data collection and limited capacity within some districts to collect data for all students receiving preschool special education services. To address these issues, beginning in the 2022–23 school year DESE is no longer using a cohort model for data collection and will require all districts to submit entry and exit data on an annual basis. To support the shift to annual reporting and to build district capacity to collect data, DESE is providing districts with additional training and support in collaboration with the external evaluator and TA providers from ECTA, DaSy, and The IDEA Data Center (IDC). The ECOS database also supports data completeness by being more user friendly than the previous SmartForms and being accessible on both Mac and PC systems. MA DESE continues to work toward increasing districts' capacity for reporting high-quality data to ensure valid and reliable results.

The child outcomes data for this reporting period may have been impacted by COVID-19 due to the impact on COS entry ratings that were collected following the onset of COVID-19 in March 2020. District teams' ability to convene meetings for COS ratings with all stakeholders present, full access to all prior assessments/documentation, and day-to-day interactions with students and families may all have been affected to some extent during the 2019–20 and 2020–21 school years. Therefore, it is reasonable to infer that the overall reliability and validity of the measure may have been impacted for

students who exited from preschool special education during FFY 2021. To mitigate these impacts, DESE provided TA to districts on entry and exit data collection processes and shared resources from ECTA via phone calls and e-mail.

## **7 - Prior FFY Required Actions**

None

## **7 - OSEP Response**

OSEP is unable to determine whether these data are valid and reliable because the State reported, "[t]he child outcomes data for this reporting period may have been impacted by COVID-19 due to the impact on COS entry ratings that were collected following the onset of COVID-19 in March 2020. District teams' ability to convene meetings for COS ratings with all stakeholders present, full access to all prior assessments/documentation, and day-to-day interactions with students and families may all have been affected to some extent during the 2019–20 and 2020–21 school years. Therefore, it is reasonable to infer that the overall reliability and validity of the measure may have been impacted for students who exited from preschool special education during FFY 2021." Therefore, OSEP could not determine whether the State met its target.

## **7 - Required Actions**

## Indicator 8: Parent involvement

### Instructions and Measurement

**Monitoring Priority:** FAPE in the LRE

**Results indicator:** 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))

#### Data Source

State selected data source.

#### 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.

#### Instructions

*Sampling of parents from whom response is requested is allowed. When sampling is used, submit a description of the sampling methodology outlining how the design will yield valid and reliable estimates. (See General Instructions on page 2 for additional instructions on sampling.)*

Describe the results of the calculations and compare the results to the target.

Provide the actual numbers used in the calculation.

If the State is using a separate data collection methodology for preschool children, the State must provide separate baseline data, targets, and actual target data or discuss the procedures used to combine data from school age and preschool data collection methodologies in a manner that is valid and reliable.

While a survey is not required for this indicator, a State using a survey must submit a copy of any new or revised survey with its SPP/APR.

Report the number of parents to whom the surveys were distributed and the number of respondent parents. The survey response rate is automatically calculated using the submitted data.

States must compare the response rate for the reporting year to the response rate for the previous year (e.g., in the FFY 2021 SPP/APR, compare the FFY 2021 response rate to the FFY 2020 response rate) and describe strategies that will be implemented which are expected to increase the response rate, particularly for those groups that are underrepresented.

**Beginning with the FFY 2021 SPP/APR, due February 1, 2023,** include in the State's analysis the extent to which the demographics of the children for whom parents responded are representative of the demographics of children receiving special education services. States must consider race/ethnicity. In addition, the State's analysis must also include at least one of the following demographics: age of the student, disability category, gender, geographic location, and/or another demographic category approved through the stakeholder input process. States must describe the metric used to determine representativeness (e.g., +/- 3% discrepancy in the proportion of responders compared to target group).

If the analysis shows that the demographics of the children for whom parents responding are not representative of the demographics of children receiving special education services in the State, describe the strategies that the State will use to ensure that in the future the response data are representative of those demographics. In identifying such strategies, the State should consider factors such as how the State distributed the survey to parents (e.g., by mail, by e-mail, on-line, by telephone, in-person through school personnel), and how responses were collected.

States are encouraged to work in collaboration with their OSEP-funded parent centers in collecting data.

## 8 - Indicator Data

Question	Yes / No
Do you use a separate data collection methodology for preschool children?	NO

### Targets: Description of Stakeholder Input

MA DESE is committed to a continuous system of engaging stakeholders to develop targets and set priorities for improvement in each of the areas reported in the SPP/APR.

The Special Education Advisory Panel (SEAP) and Special Education State Advisory Council (SAC), comprised of parents, individuals with disabilities, educators, administrators, and representatives from state agencies, higher education, and other stakeholder groups, meets at least four times each school year to review data, discuss policy priorities, and identify unmet needs in the area of special education consistent with state law and IDEA Part B. At each meeting, the group addressed various aspects of the SPP/APR and the State's general supervision systems, as well as relevant policy matters. In FFY2020 MA DESE facilitated discussions with the SEAP and SAC to establish baselines and targets for the performance Indicators. In FFY2021, MA DESE discussed each Indicator's performance and impacts on the LEA Determinations and Accountability and Assistance systems. MA DESE is committed to keep members of the SEAP and SAC up to date on processes and supports provided to LEA's in order to improve outcomes for students with disabilities. MA DESE will continue discussions around and current data, longitudinal targets, historical rates of performance and compliance and the trajectory for improvement for each of the Indicators, and the effectiveness of focused improvement activities within the context of the state's Results Driven Accountability framework.

The SAC is required by Massachusetts General Law (M.G.L. c. 15, § 1G

<https://malegislature.gov/Laws/GeneralLaws/PartI/TitleII/Chapter15/Section1G>). The purpose of the SAC is to advise the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education and to make other programmatic recommendations as it deems necessary to fulfill the goals established by the board.

The SEAP is required by IDEA (34 CFR §§ 300.167-300.169 [https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-34/subtitle-B/chapter-III/part-300#sg34.2.300\\_1166.sg15](https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-34/subtitle-B/chapter-III/part-300#sg34.2.300_1166.sg15)).

The purpose of the SEAP is to advise the State Education Authority (SEA) of unmet needs within the State regarding the education of children with disabilities. The Panel comments publicly on proposed rules or regulations regarding the education of children with disabilities. The Panel's advisory function to the State Education Authority (SEA) in developing evaluations and reporting 618 data (IDEA data) to USED and in developing corrective action plans to address findings in Federal monitoring reports under IDEA Part B. The Panel also advises the SEA in developing and implementing policies relating to the coordination of services for children with disabilities.

MA DESE has set a high priority on expanding the agency's capacity to solicit broad and diverse stakeholder input to set SPP/APR targets, analyze

data, develop improvement strategies, and evaluate progress. For FFY2021, MA DESE sought to continue stakeholder Indicator knowledge that began in FFY2020. A new SPP/APR webpage, previously linked above, was created and posted along with new webpages for Indicators 4, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 15, 16, and 17. Small changes were made to previously created webpages for Indicators 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, 8, and 14 with Quick Reference Guides (QRGs) and PowerPoints for each Indicator. These QRGs and PowerPoints were available in six languages that correspond to the most common languages spoken in Massachusetts: English, Spanish, Portuguese, Chinese, Vietnamese, and Haitian Creole. Narrated versions of each PowerPoint were also available in English on the YouTube page of our partner, the Federation for Children with Special Needs (the Massachusetts Parent Training and Information Center/PTIC). MA DESE hosted six virtual stakeholder information and feedback sessions to broaden stakeholder knowledge on Indicators 4, 9, 10, 11, 12, and 13, while also soliciting feedback for Indicators 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, 8, 14, and 17 and presenting information to stakeholders, such as performance towards the targets set in FFY2020. These informational sessions featured a large group presentation on each topic, that was simultaneously translated into Spanish, Portuguese, Chinese, Vietnamese, and Haitian Creole. After each large group presentation, breakout rooms were opened in each of the previously mentioned languages, where stakeholders would be able to communicate and ask questions, in their native language, to MA DESE staff.

MA DESE also consults regularly, on a monthly or at least quarterly basis, with Massachusetts Administrators of Special Education, <http://www.asepage.org/>, the Federation for Children with Special Needs, <https://fcsn.org/>, Massachusetts Advocates for Children, <https://www.massadvocates.org/>, the Massachusetts Association of Approved Special Education Schools, <https://maaps.org/>, Massachusetts Urban Special Education Leadership Collaborative, and the Special Needs Advocacy Network, [www.spanmass.org](http://www.spanmass.org). In addition, the Massachusetts State Special Education Director at MA DESE gives monthly virtual presentations to statewide special education leaders on a wide array of special education compliance and performance topics. During all of these meetings, MA DESE solicits and receives significant feedback that informs the development of special education policy and guidance.

As needed, MA DESE also convenes stakeholder working groups throughout the year to provide focused input on specific projects and policy priorities. Examples of these focused groups include the Early Childhood Interagency Coordinating Council, with membership that includes community members and state agencies, a Statewide Systemic Improvement Plan (SSIP) leadership team and working group, a family engagement workgroup, an advisory group for the Dropout Prevention and Re-engagement Network, and secondary transition stakeholder groups. MA DESE also consults with educators, parents, advocates, and others on an ad hoc basis to inform policy and practice.

MA DESE engages with stakeholders on the direction of Indicator 17, the State's Systemic Improvement Plan (SSIP), at the state, district, classroom, and community levels. Stakeholders are provided with information about activities and goals, training events and embedded supports statewide, and the availability of resources to support and expand implementation. Stakeholders at the district and school levels participate in ongoing decision making about the direction of the SSIP by providing feedback about the quality of events and supports, observed benefits for their own stakeholders, and needs for moving forward with implementation most successfully. In May of 2022, MA DESE met with stakeholders to discuss revisions to the Theory of Action and the Evaluation Plan for the SSIP. Through frequent communication and input from stakeholders revisions to the Theory of Action and Evaluation Plan were made for incorporation and use during the FFY2022 SPP/APR reporting cycle. For additional information on stakeholder engagement related to Indicator 17, please see the Indicator 17 APR.

Stakeholder engagement is an essential component of MA DESE's special education agenda.

MA DESE also allocated funds to develop district capacity to utilize Indicator 8 data to increase family engagement. In FFY2021, MA DESE hired an external evaluator (AnLar) to provide technical assistance (TA) to all MA districts regarding their Indicator 8 data. In partnership with AnLar, MA DESE is developing district data guides, which will provide districts with their Indicator 8 data using user-friendly data visualizations. These guides will be created within three months of the data being collected, allowing districts to have access to nearly real-time data as opposed to waiting for the end-of-year Indicator 8 analysis. Allowing districts access to the data soon after it was collected will provide districts the opportunity to reflect on the current perceptions of their family stakeholders and make meaningful changes related to family engagement. Additionally, MA DESE is developing webinars that districts can use to understand their Indicator 8 data. The external evaluator will be available to provide further TA to districts based on these updated resources and supports. These developments will ensure the Indicator 8 data can lead to meaningful data-driven decision-making at the district level.

#### Historical Data

Baseline Year	Baseline Data
2018	89.00%

FFY	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Target >=	85.50%	86.00%	86.50%	89.50%	89.00%
Data	82.94%	80.82%	89.00%	88.55%	88.35%

#### Targets

FFY	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Target >=	89.00%	89.50%	90.00%	90.50%	91.00%

#### FFY 2021 SPP/APR Data

Number of respondent parents who report schools facilitated parent involvement as a means of improving services and results for children with disabilities	Total number of respondent parents of children with disabilities	FFY 2020 Data	FFY 2021 Target	FFY 2021 Data	Status	Slippage
3,896	4,525	88.35%	89.00%	86.10%	Did not meet target	Slippage

**Provide reasons for slippage, if applicable**

There are a few reasons that might explain the decrease in Indicator 8 from 88.35% to 86.10%. First, the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic has continued to be a challenge for districts. As schools have had to navigate peaks in COVID rates, districts have had to make decisions about how to best provide services to their students. Districts have often made tough decisions, sometimes without families' input, and this decision-making process has left some families feeling dissatisfied. MA DESE will continue to provide guidance to school districts using the most up-to-date information about COVID rates, including a recommendation that districts work with families to navigate the pandemic and ensure that stakeholder input is a part of the decision-making process related to districts' COVID policies (as well as non-COVID policies).

The pandemic also has impacted school staffing, which has correlated to a decrease in engagement, among other things. Districts have faced staff shortages and increased staff turnover, including special education teachers and related service providers. As a result, some families have not had consistent contacts within the schools, which makes family engagement very challenging and can leave families feeling disconnected from school personnel and programs. Additionally, the staff who have remained have often had to assume additional responsibilities to make up for missing staff, which can lead staff to feel overwhelmed and unable to perform all of their duties and responsibilities. Since staff must decide how to allocate their limited time, it is likely that the responsibility that has been neglected is engaging families. While staff recognize that family engagement is as important to student outcomes as other responsibilities, engagement can seem less pressing when navigating a staffing crisis.

The pandemic has also required districts to reallocate resources, and those decisions likely have affected the way that parents feel about the schools. Specifically, districts have sometimes reallocated resources to prioritize children with significant needs, particularly in response to staff shortages and as schools shift between virtual and in-person learning. As a result, families of children with less significant needs have seen changes in service delivery, which has been a source of tension for the districts. As the COVID crisis comes to an end, MA DESE will work with districts to ensure meaningful service delivery to all children, which may increase the extent to which families feel supported by schools.

Finally, throughout the pandemic, schools have had to pause many in-person events which formerly encouraged family engagement. These events, such as family fun nights, fairs, or other ways in which families interacted with school staff, created positive interactions between families and schools and supported families' feelings of connectedness with the districts. As the COVID pandemic becomes more manageable, these events likely will begin to occur again, which will provide more opportunities for families to engage across the state.

MA DESE is mindful of the decrease in engagement from FFY2020 to FFY2021 and will provide guidance and support to districts to support family engagement over the next year.

**Since the State did not report preschool children separately, discuss the procedures used to combine data from school age and preschool surveys in a manner that is valid and reliable.**

In FFY2021, MA DESE collected Indicator 8 data as part of the Tiered Focus Monitoring process (TFM) through the Parent Survey. To facilitate access and response, MA DESE made the surveys available online, via mobile device, via email, or in hard copy. Information regarding the Parent Survey was sent by MA DESE to families of students with IEPs, ages 3-21, in the LEAs participating in TFM. Separate preschool surveys were not used; the questions used in the Parent Survey were developed to include families with children in Early Childhood Special Education (ECSE) and are appropriate for all populations. Among respondents who included their child's grade level in FFY2021, 8.95% have preschool children.

**The number of parents to whom the surveys were distributed.**

68,596

**Percentage of respondent parents**

6.60%

**Response Rate**

FFY	2020	2021
Response Rate	13.32%	6.60%

**Describe strategies that will be implemented which are expected to increase the response rate year over year, particularly for those groups that are underrepresented.**

MA DESE recognizes that low response rates may indicate that all families of students with disabilities have not had the opportunity to share their voice through the TFM Parent Survey. As such, the Indicator 8 data may not accurately reflect the proportion of families statewide who perceive they are engaged by their school district. MA DESE is employing several strategies to increase response rates for future reporting.

As part of the TFM process, MA DESE hosts parent information meetings. At these meetings, parents are given information about the Parent Survey and are encouraged to share this information with other parents of students with disabilities from their district. MA DESE will continue this process in FFY2022.

MA DESE makes the survey available in several formats to all families of students with IEPs, aged 3 through 21. Multiple input modalities allow for responses online, via mobile devices, and as a printed survey. In FFY2021, MA DESE offered the TFM translated into more languages than in previous years. Specifically, families can complete the TFM in English, Spanish, Portuguese (Brazil), Chinese (People's Republic of China), Khmer, Arabic, Haitian-Creole, Somali, Vietnamese, Telugu, Russian, Swahili, Twi, and Turkish, reflecting the languages most frequently spoken by families in the state. If the survey is not readily available in a family's home-language, the survey can be translated into other languages, upon request by the parent.

MA DESE continues to work closely with its special education advisory groups to share information about Indicator 8 and the Parent Survey. MA DESE also works with the Special Education Advisory groups to gather feedback on setting targets and to discuss how the Indicator 8 data will be used. MA DESE works collaboratively with The Federation for Children with Special Needs to conduct stakeholder meetings with families to share data regarding response rates and agreement rates. Indicator 8 and Family Engagement will continue to be topics for discussion and feedback with the Special Education Advisory Groups and the Federation for Children with Special Needs. These opportunities for partnering with stakeholders will increase awareness of Indicator 8 and the TFM Parent Survey, therefore increasing response rates from parents.

In addition to developing partnerships with the advisory and advocacy groups, MA DESE hired a vendor (AnLar) to improve the Indicator 8 data collection process in order to increase the response rate and representativeness of those responses. This TA will focus on data-driven decision-making as well as providing districts with strategies to encourage families to provide responses to the TFM. MA DESE and the vendor will continue to focus on the diversity of responses to the TFM, ensuring families from various cultural and linguistic backgrounds are represented in the data.

**Describe the analysis of the response rate including any nonresponse bias that was identified, and the steps taken to reduce any identified bias and promote response from a broad cross section of parents of children with disabilities.**

A total of 68,596 Parent Surveys (school-age and preschool) were distributed to parents through the TFM process. A total of 6,989 surveys were completed and returned for a response rate of 10.19%. 2,464 of the total responses to the Parent Survey were incomplete and were not used in the reported response rate calculation resulting in a reported 6.59% response rate.

The response rate, when coupled with demographic analyses of respondents, provides an understanding of the survey data, and the effect of nonresponse bias. MA DESE recognizes the need to continue to improve upon the representativeness of the response group, including in the following areas:

- The FFY2021 data regarding race/ethnicity indicate that responses from parents of students who are Asian, students who are Hispanic/Latino, and students who are Black/African American were underrepresented.
- The FFY2021 data by grade span indicate that responses from parents of students who are in Grades 6-8, Grades 9-12, and Grades 12+ were underrepresented.
- The FFY2021 data regarding gender indicate that responses from parents of students who are female were underrepresented.

To minimize nonresponse bias, and to increase representativeness of the data to the statewide demographic patterns of children with disabilities, MA DESE will continue to hold conversations about Indicator 8 and Family Engagement, with the special education advisory groups and the Federation for Children with Special Needs. MA DESE will continue to seek recommendations and implementation strategies from various stakeholders to increase response rates from the identified underrepresented subgroups. Additionally, MA DESE data specialists will review the data collection process to make any updates to data collection, searching specifically for ways in which the data collection process may not encourage equal access to underrepresented groups. Finally, MA DESE in partnership with their external vendor will provide TA to districts about how to encourage responses from underrepresented groups. Districts will be provided with a data sheet informing them about the representativeness of their data, in an effort to increase representativeness across the state and within specific districts.

These opportunities for partnering with community and district stakeholders will increase awareness of Indicator 8 and the TFM Parent Survey, as well as the importance of parents completing the survey, increasing response rates from parents of students with disabilities. MA DESE will continue to decrease nonresponsive bias from parents of students who have been underrepresented in the data.

**Include the State's analyses of the extent to which the demographics of the parents responding are representative of the demographics of children receiving special education services. States must include race/ethnicity in their analysis. In addition, the State's analysis must also include at least one of the following demographics: age of the student, disability category, gender, geographic location, and/or another demographic category approved through the stakeholder input process.**

The annual response rate is calculated by dividing the total number of survey responses by the total number of surveys distributed to families of students with IEPs served by the participating LEAs. Of the 68,596 surveys distributed to families, 6,989 were returned, resulting in a total response rate of 10.19%. 2,464 of the total responses to the Parent Survey were incomplete and were not used in the reported response rate calculation resulting in a reported 6.59% response rate. MA DESE recognizes that historically the response rate has been low. In FFY2021, MA DESE reviewed representativeness to determine who is not represented well in the responses. MA DESE continues to work within the TFM systems to increase the response rate in an effort to increase representativeness. MA DESE's partnership with the external vendor will also encourage response rates across the state by providing TA to districts about the importance of the survey and how to support families in completing the survey.

The Parent Survey administered through the TFM process includes optional questions in which families could, voluntarily, identify grade span, placement, gender, and race/ethnicity. The data collected from the FFY2021 survey responses were not entirely representative as compared to the statewide enrollment data of students with disabilities as shown below.

**Gender:**

Statewide enrollment data of students with disabilities: Female: 35.2%; Male: 64.7%; and non-Binary: 0.1%.

Survey responses from parents of students with disabilities: Female: 34.06%; Male: 64.85%; and non-Binary: 1.09%. There was no gender identified from 559 survey respondents.

Representativeness: A Chi-Square test of goodness of fit was conducted with a 95% confidence level ( $\chi^2(2)=685.05$ ), and the data were found to be unrepresentative of the statewide distribution of gender for students with disabilities. Responses representing female students were underrepresented in the sample compared to the statewide population.

**Grade Span:**

Statewide enrollment data of students with disabilities: PreK: 4.96%; K-Grade 5: 34.25%; Grade 6-Grade 8: 24.65%; Grade 9-Grade 12: 31.03%; and Grade 12+ 5.11%.

Survey responses from parents of students with disabilities: PreK: 8.95%; K-Grade 5: 43.63%; Grade 6-Grade 8: 23.14%; Grade 9-Grade 12: 21.54%; and Grade 12+: 2.74%. There was no grade level identified from 299 survey respondents.

Representativeness: A Chi-Square test of goodness of fit was conducted with a 95% confidence level ( $\chi^2(4)=661.21$ ), and the data were found to be unrepresentative of the statewide distribution of grade span for students with disabilities. Responses representing students in Grades 6-8, Grades 9-12, and Grades 12+ were underrepresented in the sample compared to the statewide population.

**Race/Ethnicity:**

Statewide enrollment data of students with disabilities: Multiracial: 4.3%; Hispanic/Latino: 25.6%; Black/African American: 10.6%; Asian 3.7%; Native American/Native Alaskan: 0.3%; Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander: 0.1%; and White: 55.5%.

Survey responses from parents of students with disabilities: Multiracial: 7.17%; Hispanic/Latino: 14.24%; Black/African American: 5.78%; Asian 2.97%; Native American/Native Alaskan: 0.40%; Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander: 0.10%; and White: 69.30%. There was no race/ethnicity identified from 726 survey respondents.

Representativeness: A Chi-Square test of goodness of fit was conducted with a 95% confidence level ( $\chi^2(6)=563.06$ ), and the data were found to be unrepresentative of the statewide distribution of race/ethnicity for students with disabilities. Responses representing Asian students, Black students, and Hispanic students were underrepresented in the sample compared to the statewide population.

Using the TFM Parent Survey, the data collected regarding the placement/services of students with an IEP were not valid. Families were able to indicate multiple placement types for their child, which resulted in families identifying conflicting placements/services, such as full inclusion as well as being placed in a substantially separate setting. For FFY2022, MA DESE will revise this question so that parents will not be given the option to choose conflicting responses. While not valid, the percentages of parents who selected each placement type are displayed below:

Academic Support: 66.59%; Transition Planning: 16.65%; Partial Inclusion: 19.02%; Substantially Separate: 10.66%; Out of District: 3.79%; and Other: 3.46%.

**The demographics of the parents responding are representative of the demographics of children receiving special education services. (yes/no)**

NO

**If no, describe the strategies that the State will use to ensure that in the future the response data are representative of those demographics**

MA DESE collected Indicator 8 data in FFY2021 using a survey available to families in LEAs participating in the TFM process. To encourage the broadest representation of respondents, the survey was made available to all families of students with IEPs in the participating LEAs. While the data are not fully representative of the race/ethnicity, gender, or grade level of children with disabilities across the state, the data provide MA DESE a snapshot of the perceptions of families of children with disabilities regarding their levels of engagement. MA DESE continues to take specific steps to strengthen the representativeness of the data for FFY2022.

MA DESE is confident in the sampling plan, and that analysis of demographic data indicates that the data is not representative of statewide enrollment data of students with disabilities.

MA DESE will consider the accessibility of the survey and ensure families are informed about their options to complete the TFM Parent Survey. In FFY21, the survey was offered in more languages than in prior years, increasing the probability that parents whose primary language is not English will complete the survey. In addition, multiple input modalities were provided, allowing families to complete the survey online, via mobile device, or as a printed survey.

MA DESE will provide districts with language they can use to inform families about the survey, its purpose and importance, and families' options for completing the survey. Strengthening the messaging that is provided to families so that they understand the importance of their role in helping DESE set priorities and policies should increase the likelihood that parents will prioritize the survey and submit their responses. MA DESE and their external vendor will also provide TA to districts about how to encourage responses, and they will work with districts to develop their processes for communicating with families.

MA DESE will continue to utilize its family engagement partners to solicit responses in the upcoming year. At present, MA DESE works with the Federation for Children with Special Needs and the Massachusetts Statewide Family Engagement Center to develop resources, and to provide TA and trainings related to evidence-based family engagement practices, racial equity, and inclusion. Both partners can encourage families who attend trainings or other events to complete the survey as a way of providing feedback to the state about their engagement levels. In addition to encouraging responses, MA DESE will work with both partners as well as the special education advisory groups across the state to seek recommendations and implementation strategies to increase response rates from the identified underrepresented subgroups. By specifically encouraging responses from these underrepresented groups, MA DESE can strengthen the representativeness of the data.

**Describe the metric used to determine representativeness (e.g., +/- 3% discrepancy in the proportion of responders compared to target group).**

MA DESE uses statistical testing to identify whether the response rates of each group are representative of the statewide demographics of children with disabilities. Specifically, MA DESE used a Chi-Square Goodness of Fit test (with 95% confidence) to determine whether each distribution in aggregate was likely to match the statewide distribution. For example, MA DESE tested if, with 95% confidence, the gender responses from the sample matched the statewide demographics. When the Chi-Square statistic presented evidence that the distribution was not likely to come from the statewide population, MA DESE then conducted a one-sample z-test to compare each proportion to the statewide statistic, again using 95% confidence. For each proportion that was found to be statistically lower than the statewide population proportion, MA DESE concluded the specific group of students was underrepresented in their data.

Sampling Question	Yes / No
Was sampling used?	YES
If yes, has your previously approved sampling plan changed?	NO

**Describe the sampling methodology outlining how the design will yield valid and reliable estimates.**

MA DESE uses the TFM schedule to collect Indicator 8 data. Excluding districts with enrollment greater than 50,000 students, all districts have been divided into one of three cohorts, with roughly one-third of all districts in each cohort. For any district with enrollment greater than 50,000 students (i.e., Boston Public Schools), the district has divided its schools into the cohorts, guaranteeing that MA DESE will receive data from the large districts each year. In FFY2021, data were collected from 111 LEAs. The FFY2021 cohort reported Indicator 8 data using the Parent Survey administered through the TFM process.

The TFM schedule was designed to be representative of the state, including urban, suburban, rural, large, medium, and small LEAs, as well as the full range of LEA program and structure types available in Massachusetts, which includes charter schools, virtual schools, Career and Vocational Technical Education schools, and comprehensive schools. These LEAs serve a full range of student disability types and needs for services, such that the cohort is representative of the state as a whole.

To ensure the broadest representation of respondents, surveys are made available for all families of children with an IEP in LEAs participating in the identified TFM cohort. MA DESE incorporates Indicator 8 data collection activities into the TFM process as part of the TFM Parent Survey. The TFM system addresses the components of the General Supervision System through which the state provides oversight and general supervision of school districts on implementation of legal requirements of IDEA and state special education and civil rights law and regulations. During the first year of the three-year monitoring cycle, participating school districts participate in self-assessment activities in partnership with DESE, reviewing special education and civil rights documentation for all required elements, and a representative sample of student records from across grade levels and disability categories. The outcome of this review and the reported SPP compliance data are used to determine the on-site monitoring activities that occur in the second year of the TFM cycle. During the on-site monitoring year, MA DESE and school districts collect the Parent Survey from parents of students with disabilities enrolled in the district. MA DESE reports the data annually in the SPP/APR and makes available specific district results on its website; [https://profiles.doe.mass.edu/statereport/special\\_education.aspx](https://profiles.doe.mass.edu/statereport/special_education.aspx). MA DESE monitoring teams also follow up on survey results as part of the TFM assistance activities and provide technical assistance and resources to school districts to support increased response rates and promote increased parent engagement. The external consultant that MA DESE hired in FFY2021 will also support districts by providing TA in conjunction with the monitoring teams.

Survey Question	Yes / No
Was a survey used?	YES
If yes, is it a new or revised survey?	NO
If yes, provide a copy of the survey.	

### **Provide additional information about this indicator (optional)**

The Parent Survey is intended to complement the family engagement activities and consists of statements/questions that parents rate on a scale of 1 (strongly disagree) through 4 (strongly agree). The standard adopted to demonstrate "schools facilitated parent involvement as a means of improving services and results for students with disabilities" requires that each survey respondent agree or strongly agree with 60% or more of the five survey items that relate to family engagement. Families who returned the survey but who did not complete all five of the survey items related to family engagement were excluded from the Indicator 8 calculation, but they were included in demographic calculations for any demographic information that was provided. The MA DESE Office of Planning and Research has approved the methodology for calculating results. Of the 6,989 responses that were received, 4,525 were complete and were incorporated into the Indicator 8 calculation. In FFY2021, 3,896 of the 4,525 respondent parents who completed all five Indicator 8 survey items agreed or strongly agreed with at least 60% of the items, yielding an agreement rate of 86.10%.

### **8 - Prior FFY Required Actions**

In the FFY 2021 SPP/APR, the State must report whether its FFY 2021 data are from a response group that is representative of the demographics of children receiving special education services, and, if not, the actions the State is taking to address this issue. The State must also include its analysis of the extent to which the demographics of the parents responding are representative of the demographics of children receiving special education services.

OSEP notes that one or more of the Indicator 8 attachment(s) included in the State's FFY 2020 SPP/APR submission are not in compliance with Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended (Section 508), and will not be posted on the U.S. Department of Education's IDEA website. Therefore, the State must make the attachment(s) available to the public as soon as practicable, but no later than 120 days after the date of the determination letter.

#### **Response to actions required in FFY 2020 SPP/APR**

1. In this year's APR, MA DESE discussed its plan to ensure the representativeness of Indicator 8 data to the demographics of children receiving special education services, thereby decreasing nonresponse bias. MA DESE will continue to collect and analyze data from respondents, noting when there are significant differences in the demographics of respondents and the statewide demographics of children with disabilities. MA DESE will hold conversations with the special education advisory groups and the Federation of Children with Special Needs to collaborate on ways to ensure underrepresented groups are providing Indicator 8 data to the state. MA DESE will review its Tiered Focus Monitoring process, particularly noting ways to further engage families of children from underrepresented groups. Last, MA DESE, and its external vendor will provide technical assistance to districts about ways to engage families of underrepresented groups and to increase the likelihood of receiving responses from these families. In sum, these actions will increase the representativeness of the Indicator 8 data and decrease nonresponse bias in the Indicator 8 APR.

2. MA DESE sent an updated APR to OSEP in the spring of 2022, in which the Indicator 8 attachment was edited to be in compliance with Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. Information regarding Tiered Focused Monitoring, including the Tiered Focused Monitoring Cycle can be found on the DESE website: <https://www.doe.mass.edu/psm/tfm/default.html>. MA DESE will continue to use this version of the TFM and any subsequent versions of the TFM or other attachments provided in MA DESE's SPP/APR will be in compliance with Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. Please see sections above that describe MA DESE's analysis of the representativeness of the state's FFY 2020 data, as well as steps MA DESE is taking to address this issue. MA DESE is confident in the sampling plan, and that analysis of demographic data indicates that the data is not representative of statewide enrollment data of students with disabilities.

### **8 - OSEP Response**

### **8 - Required Actions**

## Indicator 9: Disproportionate Representation

### Instructions and Measurement

**Monitoring Priority:** Disproportionality

**Compliance indicator:** 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))

#### Data Source

State's analysis, based on State's Child Count data collected under IDEA section 618, to determine if the disproportionate representation of racial and ethnic groups in special education and related services was the result of inappropriate identification.

#### Measurement

Percent = [(# of districts, that meet the State-established n and/or cell size (if applicable) for one or more racial/ethnic groups, 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 that meet the State-established n and/or cell size (if applicable) for one or more racial/ethnic groups)] times 100.

Include State's definition of "disproportionate representation." Please specify in your definition: 1) the calculation method(s) being used (i.e., risk ratio, weighted risk ratio, e-formula, etc.); and 2) the threshold at which disproportionate representation is identified. Also include, as appropriate, 3) the number of years of data used in the calculation; and 4) any minimum cell and/or n-sizes (i.e., risk numerator and/or risk denominator).

Based on its review of the 618 data for the reporting year, describe how the State made its annual determination as to whether the disproportionate representation it identified of racial and ethnic groups in special education and related services was the result of inappropriate identification as required by 34 CFR §§300.600(d)(3) and 300.602(a), e.g., using monitoring data; reviewing policies, practices and procedures, etc. In determining disproportionate representation, analyze data, for each district, for all racial and ethnic groups in the district, or all racial and ethnic groups in the district that meet a minimum n and/or cell size set by the State. Report on the percent of districts in which disproportionate representation of racial and ethnic groups in special education and related services is the result of inappropriate identification, even if the determination of inappropriate identification was made after the end of the FFY 2021 reporting period (i.e., after June 30, 2022).

#### Instructions

Provide racial/ethnic disproportionality data for all children aged 5 who are enrolled in kindergarten and 6 through 21 served under IDEA, aggregated across all disability categories.

States are not required to report on underrepresentation.

If the State has established a minimum n and/or cell size requirement, the State may only include, in both the numerator and the denominator, districts that met that State-established n and/or cell size. If the State used a minimum n and/or cell size requirement, report the number of districts totally excluded from the calculation as a result of this requirement because the district did not meet the minimum n and/or cell size for any racial/ethnic group.

Consider using multiple methods in calculating disproportionate representation of racial and ethnic groups to reduce the risk of overlooking potential problems. Describe the method(s) used to calculate disproportionate representation.

Provide the number of districts that met the State-established n and/or cell size (if applicable) for one or more racial/ethnic groups identified with disproportionate representation of racial and ethnic groups in special education and related services and the number of those districts identified with disproportionate representation that is the result of inappropriate identification.

Targets must be 0%.

Provide detailed information about the timely correction of noncompliance as noted in OSEP's response for the previous SPP/APR. If the State did not ensure timely correction of the previous noncompliance, provide information on the extent to which noncompliance was subsequently corrected (more than one year after identification). In addition, provide information regarding the nature of any continuing noncompliance, improvement activities completed (e.g., review of policies and procedures, technical assistance, training, etc.) and any enforcement actions that were taken. If the State reported less than 100% compliance for the previous reporting period (e.g., for the FFY 2021 SPP/APR, the data for FFY 2020), and the State did not identify any findings of noncompliance, provide an explanation of why the State did not identify any findings of noncompliance.

## 9 - Indicator Data

### Not Applicable

Select yes if this indicator is not applicable.

NO

#### Historical Data

Baseline Year	Baseline Data
2020	0.00%

FFY	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Target	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Data	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%

#### Targets

FFY	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Target	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%

#### FFY 2021 SPP/APR Data

Has the state established a minimum n and/or cell size requirement? (yes/no)

YES

If yes, the State may only include, in both the numerator and the denominator, districts that met the State-established n and/or cell size. Report the number of districts excluded from the calculation as a result of the requirement.

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Number of districts with disproportionate representation of racial/ethnic groups in special education and related services	Number of districts with disproportionate representation of racial/ethnic groups in special education and related services that is the result of inappropriate identification	Number of districts that met the State's minimum n and/or cell size	FFY 2020 Data	FFY 2021 Target	FFY 2021 Data	Status	Slippage
2	0	396	0.00%	0%	0.00%	Met target	No Slippage

Were all races and ethnicities included in the review?

YES

Define "disproportionate representation." Please specify in your definition: 1) the calculation method(s) being used (i.e., risk ratio, weighted risk ratio, e-formula, etc.); and 2) the threshold at which disproportionate representation is identified. Also include, as appropriate, 3) the number of years of data used in the calculation; and 4) any minimum cell and/or n-sizes (i.e., risk numerator and/or risk denominator).

Massachusetts defines "disproportionate representation" using a calculation of weighted or alternate risk ratios and a review of the appropriateness of an LEA's policies, practices, and procedures (PPPs) for identifying students as eligible for special education services.

MA DESE calculates a weighted or alternate risk ratio for each LEA, using a minimum cell size of 10 students with disabilities in each racial/ethnic group in every LEA. In LEAs in which there are at least 10 students with disabilities both in the racial/ethnic group, as well as the comparison group, MA DESE uses a weighted risk ratio. In cases where there are fewer than 10 students in the comparison group, MA DESE employs the alternate risk ratio. A cell of fewer than 10, though removed from the calculation, is reviewed individually to see if data irregularities for specific racial and ethnic groups in the LEA would suggest disproportionate representation due to inappropriate identification. All cells of greater than 10 are retained in the data set and are used to calculate disproportionate representation. Once the calculation is made for each district, the weighted or alternate risk ratios are compared to the two previous years' weighted or alternate risk ratios. LEAs are flagged if, for three consecutive years, they exhibit a weighted or alternate risk ratio of 3.0 or greater for possible over-representation. All LEAs 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, and communication with MA DESE about the identified disproportionate representation. If MA DESE determines the PPPs are inappropriate or otherwise inconsistent with federal and state regulations and concludes that the PPPs likely caused the disproportionate representation, then the LEA is identified as having disproportionate representation due to inappropriate identification and is required to take corrective actions.

For the FFY 2021 analysis, Massachusetts used the October 1, 2021 enrollment and child count data that it collects from LEAs through its Student Information Management System (SIMS). Four hundred LEAs were in operation in Massachusetts in October 2021, and 396 met the State's n size requirement for at least one racial/ethnic group. MA DESE found that two of these LEAs—a regional vocational technical school and a charter school—were flagged. The regional vocational technical school was flagged for overrepresentation of white students. The charter school was flagged for overrepresentation of both Hispanic students and African America/Black students.

In reviewing the LEAs' PPPs, MA DESE determined that in these two LEAs the disproportionate representation was not the result of inappropriate identification and no findings of noncompliance were made.

**Describe how the State made its annual determination as to whether the disproportionate representation it identified of racial and ethnic groups in special education and related services was the result of inappropriate identification.**

If an LEA displays a weighted or alternate risk ratio that exceeds 3.0 for three consecutive years for any racial/ethnic group, MA DESE follows up to review the appropriateness of the LEA's policies, practices, and procedures (PPPs). MA DESE requires the LEA to submit its PPPs regarding eligibility determination, along with any other data or information that may explain the pattern of disproportionate representation, including:

- LEA policies and practices regarding child find, student support teams, and special education referral and evaluation.
- Descriptions of tiered systems of support and/or other supports for struggling students in place within the LEA prior to referral for special education
- Information regarding the LEA's collaboration with other organizations (such as sending districts, local Early Intervention providers, etc.), if applicable.
- Information regarding any training or support that the LEA provides staff around cultural competency.

MA DESE then reviews this information to determine whether the disproportionate representation is the result of inappropriate identification.

MA DESE reviewed the policies, practices, and procedures, as described above, of the two LEAs identified as having disproportionate representation of racial and ethnic groups in special education and related services. MA DESE determined for each LEA that the disproportionate representation of racial and ethnic groups in special education and related services was not the result of inappropriate identification.

**Provide additional information about this indicator (optional)**

**Correction of Findings of Noncompliance Identified in FFY 2020**

Findings of Noncompliance Identified	Findings of Noncompliance Verified as Corrected Within One Year	Findings of Noncompliance Subsequently Corrected	Findings Not Yet Verified as Corrected
0	0	0	0

**Correction of Findings of Noncompliance Identified Prior to FFY 2020**

Year Findings of Noncompliance Were Identified	Findings of Noncompliance Not Yet Verified as Corrected as of FFY 2020 APR	Findings of Noncompliance Verified as Corrected	Findings Not Yet Verified as Corrected

**9 - Prior FFY Required Actions**

None

**9 - OSEP Response**

**9 - Required Actions**

# Indicator 10: Disproportionate Representation in Specific Disability Categories

## Instructions and Measurement

**Monitoring Priority:** Disproportionality

**Compliance indicator:** 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))

### Data Source

State's analysis, based on State's Child Count data collected under IDEA section 618, to determine if the disproportionate representation of racial and ethnic groups in specific disability categories was the result of inappropriate identification.

### Measurement

Percent = [(# of districts, that meet the State-established n and/or cell size (if applicable) for one or more racial/ethnic groups, 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 that meet the State-established n and/or cell size (if applicable) for one or more racial/ethnic groups)] times 100.

Include State's definition of "disproportionate representation." Please specify in your definition: 1) the calculation method(s) being used (i.e., risk ratio, weighted risk ratio, e-formula, etc.); and 2) the threshold at which disproportionate representation is identified. Also include, as appropriate, 3) the number of years of data used in the calculation; and 4) any minimum cell and/or n-sizes (i.e., risk numerator and/or risk denominator).

Based on its review of the 618 data for the reporting year, describe how the State made its annual determination as to whether the disproportionate representation it identified of racial and ethnic groups in specific disability categories was the result of inappropriate identification as required by 34 CFR §§300.600(d)(3) and 300.602(a), e.g., using monitoring data; reviewing policies, practices and procedures, etc. In determining disproportionate representation, analyze data, for each district, for all racial and ethnic groups in the district, or all racial and ethnic groups in the district that meet a minimum n and/or cell size set by the State. Report on the percent of districts in which disproportionate representation of racial and ethnic groups in specific disability categories is the result of inappropriate identification, even if the determination of inappropriate identification was made after the end of the FFY 2021 reporting period (i.e., after June 30, 2022).

### Instructions

Provide racial/ethnic disproportionality data for all children aged 5 who are enrolled in kindergarten and aged 6 through 21 served under IDEA. Provide these data at a minimum for children in the following six disability categories: intellectual disability, specific learning disabilities, emotional disturbance, speech or language impairments, other health impairments, and autism. If a State has identified disproportionate representation of racial and ethnic groups in specific disability categories other than these six disability categories, the State must include these data and report on whether the State determined that the disproportionate representation of racial and ethnic groups in specific disability categories was the result of inappropriate identification.

States are not required to report on underrepresentation.

If the State has established a minimum n and/or cell size requirement, the State may only include, in both the numerator and the denominator, districts that met that State-established n and/or cell size. If the State used a minimum n and/or cell size requirement, report the number of districts totally excluded from the calculation as a result of this requirement because the district did not meet the minimum n and/or cell size for any racial/ethnic group.

Consider using multiple methods in calculating disproportionate representation of racial and ethnic groups to reduce the risk of overlooking potential problems. Describe the method(s) used to calculate disproportionate representation.

Provide the number of districts that met the State-established n and/or cell size (if applicable) for one or more racial/ethnic groups identified with disproportionate representation of racial and ethnic groups in specific disability categories and the number of those districts identified with disproportionate representation that is the result of inappropriate identification.

Targets must be 0%.

Provide detailed information about the timely correction of noncompliance as noted in OSEP's response for the previous SPP/APR. If the State did not ensure timely correction of the previous noncompliance, provide information on the extent to which noncompliance was subsequently corrected (more than one year after identification). In addition, provide information regarding the nature of any continuing noncompliance, improvement activities completed (e.g., review of policies and procedures, technical assistance, training, etc.) and any enforcement actions that were taken.

If the State reported less than 100% compliance for the previous reporting period (e.g., for the FFY 2021 SPP/APR, the data for FFY 2020), and the State did not identify any findings of noncompliance, provide an explanation of why the State did not identify any findings of noncompliance.

## 10 - Indicator Data

### Not Applicable

Select yes if this indicator is not applicable.

NO

### Historical Data

Baseline Year	Baseline Data
2020	0.00%

FFY	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Target	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Data	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%

### Targets

FFY	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Target	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%

**FFY 2021 SPP/APR Data**

**Has the state established a minimum n and/or cell size requirement? (yes/no)**

YES

**If yes, the State may only include, in both the numerator and the denominator, districts that met the State-established n and/or cell size. Report the number of districts excluded from the calculation as a result of the requirement.**

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Number of districts with disproportionate representation of racial/ethnic groups in specific disability categories	Number of districts with disproportionate representation of racial/ethnic groups in specific disability categories that is the result of inappropriate identification	Number of districts that met the State's minimum n and/or cell size	FFY 2020 Data	FFY 2021 Target	FFY 2021 Data	Status	Slippage
7	0	359	0.00%	0%	0.00%	Met target	No Slippage

**Were all races and ethnicities included in the review?**

YES

**Define “disproportionate representation.” Please specify in your definition: 1) the calculation method(s) being used (i.e., risk ratio, weighted risk ratio, e-formula, etc.); and 2) the threshold at which disproportionate representation is identified. Also include, as appropriate, 3) the number of years of data used in the calculation; and 4) any minimum cell and/or n-sizes (i.e., risk numerator and/or risk denominator).**

Massachusetts defines “disproportionate representation” using a calculation of weighted or alternate risk ratios and a review of the appropriateness of an LEA’s policies, practices, and procedures (PPPs) for identifying students as eligible for special education services.

MA DESE calculates a weighted or alternate risk ratio for every LEA in each of the six required disability categories (intellectual impairments, specific learning disabilities, emotional disturbance, speech/language impairments, other health impairments, autism) using a minimum cell size of 10 for each racial/ethnic disability group in every LEA. In LEAs in which there are at least 10 students with disabilities both in the racial/ethnic disability group, as well as the comparison group, MA DESE uses a weighted risk ratio. In cases where there are fewer than 10 students in the comparison group, MA DESE employs the alternate risk ratio. Cells of fewer than 10, though removed from the calculation, are reviewed individually to see if data irregularities for specific racial and ethnic groups in these LEAs would suggest disproportionate representation. All cells of greater than 10 are retained in the data set and are used to calculate disproportionate representation. Once the calculation is made for each LEA, the weighted or alternate risk ratios are compared to the two previous years’ weighted or alternate risk ratios. LEAs are flagged if, for three consecutive years, they exhibit a weighted or alternate risk ratio of 4.0 or greater for possible over-representation.

All LEAs identified by way of this quantitative analysis are then subject to a review by LEA staff and MA DESE of the appropriateness of their PPPs for special education eligibility determination and disability identification, along with any other information that may explain the pattern of disproportionate representation. Upon review, if MA DESE identifies that the PPPs are inappropriate or otherwise inconsistent with federal and state regulations and concludes that the PPPs likely caused the disproportionate representation, then the LEA is identified as having disproportionate representation due to inappropriate identification and is required to take corrective action.

For the FFY2021 analysis, Massachusetts used the October 1, 2021 enrollment and child count data that it collects from LEAs through its Student Information Management System (SIMS). Four hundred LEAs were in operation in Massachusetts in October 2021, and 41 LEAs did not have at least 10 students with disabilities in any racial/ethnic disability group, leaving 359 LEAs that met the state’s n size requirement for at least one racial/ethnic disability group.

Of the seven LEAs flagged, the LEAs were flagged for the following reasons:

- One Charter School: Hispanic and Latino Students with Emotional Disabilities
- One School District: African American and Black Students with Specific Learning Disabilities
- Two Charter Schools: Hispanic and Latino Students with Specific Learning Disabilities
- One School District and One Charter School: Hispanic and Latino Students with a Communication Disabilities
- One Charter School: White Students with a Health Disabilities

MA DESE reviewed the policies, practices, and procedures of each of these 7 LEAs and determined that the disproportionate representation was not the result of inappropriate identification and no findings of non-compliance were made.

**Describe how the State made its annual determination as to whether the disproportionate overrepresentation it identified of racial and ethnic groups in specific disability categories was the result of inappropriate identification.**

If an LEA displays a weighted or alternate risk ratio that exceeds 4.0 for three consecutive years for any racial/ethnic group in any disability area, MA DESE follows up to review the appropriateness of the LEA’s policies, practices, and procedures. MA DESE requires the LEA to submit its policies, practices, and procedures regarding eligibility determination, along with any other data and information that may explain the pattern of disproportionate representation, including:

- LEA policies and practices regarding child find, student support teams, and special education referral and evaluation.
- Descriptions of tiered systems of support and/or other supports for struggling students in place within the LEA prior to referral for special education
- Information regarding the LEA’s collaboration with other organizations (such as sending districts, local Early Intervention providers, etc.), if applicable.

• Information regarding any training or support that the LEA provides staff around cultural competency. MA DESE then reviews this information to determine whether the disproportionate representation is the result of inappropriate identification.

MA DESE reviewed the policies, practices, and procedures, as described above, of the seven LEAs identified as having disproportionate representation of racial and ethnic groups in a specific disability area. MA DESE determined for each LEA that the disproportionate representation of racial and ethnic groups in specific disability areas was not the result of inappropriate identification.

**Provide additional information about this indicator (optional)**

**Correction of Findings of Noncompliance Identified in FFY 2020**

Findings of Noncompliance Identified	Findings of Noncompliance Verified as Corrected Within One Year	Findings of Noncompliance Subsequently Corrected	Findings Not Yet Verified as Corrected
0	0	0	0

**Correction of Findings of Noncompliance Identified Prior to FFY 2020**

Year Findings of Noncompliance Were Identified	Findings of Noncompliance Not Yet Verified as Corrected as of FFY 2020 APR	Findings of Noncompliance Verified as Corrected	Findings Not Yet Verified as Corrected

**10 - Prior FFY Required Actions**

None

**10 - OSEP Response**

**10 - Required Actions**

## Indicator 11: Child Find

### Instructions and Measurement

**Monitoring Priority:** Effective General Supervision Part B / Child Find

**Compliance indicator:** 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.

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

#### Data Source

Data to be taken from State monitoring or State data system and must be based on actual, not an average, number of days. Indicate if the State has established a timeline and, if so, what is the State's timeline for initial evaluations.

#### Measurement

- a. # of children for whom parental consent to evaluate was received.
  - b. # of children whose evaluations were completed within 60 days (or State-established timeline).
- Account for children included in (a), but not included in (b). Indicate the range of days beyond the timeline when the evaluation was completed and any reasons for the delays.

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

#### Instructions

*If data are from State monitoring, describe the method used to select LEAs for monitoring. If data are from a State database, include data for the entire reporting year.*

Describe the results of the calculations and compare the results to the target. Describe the method used to collect these data, and if data are from the State's monitoring, describe the procedures used to collect these data. Provide the actual numbers used in the calculation.

Note that under 34 CFR §300.301(d), the timeframe set for initial evaluation does not apply to a public agency if: (1) the parent of a child repeatedly fails or refuses to produce the child for the evaluation; or (2) a child enrolls in a school of another public agency after the timeframe for initial evaluations has begun, and prior to a determination by the child's previous public agency as to whether the child is a child with a disability. States should not report these exceptions in either the numerator (b) or denominator (a). If the State-established timeframe provides for exceptions through State regulation or policy, describe cases falling within those exceptions and include in b.

Targets must be 100%.

Provide detailed information about the timely correction of noncompliance as noted in OSEP's response for the previous SPP/APR. If the State did not ensure timely correction of the previous noncompliance, provide information on the extent to which noncompliance was subsequently corrected (more than one year after identification). In addition, provide information regarding the nature of any continuing noncompliance, improvement activities completed (e.g., review of policies and procedures, technical assistance, training, etc.) and any enforcement actions that were taken.

If the State reported less than 100% compliance for the previous reporting period (e.g., for the FFY 2021 SPP/APR, the data for FFY 2020), and the State did not identify any findings of noncompliance, provide an explanation of why the State did not identify any findings of noncompliance.

## 11 - Indicator Data

### Historical Data

Baseline Year	Baseline Data
2017	96.50%

FFY	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Target	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Data	95.83%	96.50%	91.69%	97.28%	93.49%

### Targets

FFY	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Target	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

### FFY 2021 SPP/APR Data

(a) Number of children for whom parental consent to evaluate was received	(b) Number of children whose evaluations were completed within 60 days (or State-established timeline)	FFY 2020 Data	FFY 2021 Target	FFY 2021 Data	Status	Slippage
1,231	1,088	93.49%	100%	88.38%	Did not meet target	Slippage

**Provide reasons for slippage**

MA DESE is reporting slippage of 5.11 percentage points from FFY 2020 to FFY 2021.

MA DESE largely attributes the overall slippage in state compliance rate to one large MA LEA reporting significant delays. This LEA accounted for almost 20.50% of all records in the Indicator 11 data set (252 records) and accounted for 60.14% of the records with noncompliance. The LEA itself demonstrated a compliance percentage of 65.87%. Should this LEA's data be removed from the overall data set, the compliance rate for the reporting cohort would be 94.18%, which is slightly higher than the compliance rate for FFY 2020 (93.49%) and more consistent with the compliance rates reported in prior SPP/APRs.

In addition, MA DESE observed a statewide increase in limited staff availability and scheduling challenges as reasons for noncompliance, which also contributed to the slippage in compliance percentage. There was a 242.86 percent increase from FFY 2020 to FFY 2021 in the number of noncompliant records attributing the reason of noncompliance to "delay due to district/school having a scheduling conflict;" a 190 percent increase from FFY 2020 to FFY 2021 in the number of noncompliant records attributing the reason for noncompliance to "delay due to insufficient staff availability; and an 85.71 percent increase from FFY 2020 to FFY 2021 in the number of noncompliant records attributing the reason for noncompliance to "delay due to district evaluator reports not received on time."

MA DESE will report on the results of all corrective action activities with the large LEA contributing significantly to the slippage observed for this indicator, and with any other LEAs for which noncompliance was identified, in the anticipated clarification period in April 2023, or in the next SPP/APR reporting cycle.

**Number of children included in (a) but not included in (b)**

143

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

In FFY 2021, there were 143 students in 20 LEAs for whom initial evaluations were not completed within the State-established timeline of 45 days. Out of the 143 records with noncompliance, 6.92% of records did not yet have eligibility determined at the time the data were collected. Of the records with eligibility determined, on average those delays exceeded the State-established timeline by 18.37 school working days. MA DESE also analyzed the range of days beyond the timeline using the mean, median, and mode for the number of school working days beyond the 45-day timeline. The mean number of days beyond the 45-day timeline, as reported above, was 18.37 days, the median was 11 days beyond the 45-day timeline, and the mode was 1 day beyond the 45-day timeline.

LEA-related issues with scheduling and timing of evaluations, as well as staffing shortages, are not acceptable reasons for delay and those records with these reasons for delay reported were determined to be noncompliant in the FFY 2021 data set. Of the delays reported in FFY 2021, 20.28% were attributed to insufficient staff availability (includes staff out for illness or schools closing for a period of time due to COVID-19); 16.78% were attributed to LEAs or schools having a scheduling conflict; 10.49% were attributed to lack of qualified staff; 9.09% were attributed to LEAs' evaluators' reports not received on time; and the remaining 43.36% of noncompliant records had noncompliance attributed other reasons that included issues like LEAs incorrectly calculating evaluation timelines.

**Indicate the evaluation timeline used:**

The State established a timeline within which the evaluation must be conducted

**What is the State's timeline for initial evaluations? If the State-established timeframe provides for exceptions through State regulation or policy, describe cases falling within those exceptions and include in (b).**

MA DESE's timeline for initial evaluations is 45 school working days. See 603 CMR 28.05(1): Special Education - Education Laws and Regulations (<https://www.doe.mass.edu/lawsregs/603cmr28.html?section=05>).

603 CMR 28.05: The Team Process and Development of the IEP states:

Within 45 school working days after receipt of a parent's written consent to an initial evaluation or reevaluation, the school district shall: provide an evaluation; convene a Team meeting to review the evaluation data, determine whether the student requires special education and, if required, develop an IEP in accordance with state and federal laws; and provide the parents with two copies of the proposed IEP and proposed placement, except that the proposal of placement may be delayed according to the provisions of 603 CMR 28.06(2)(e); or, if the Team determines that the student is not eligible for special education, the school district shall send a written explanation of the finding that the student is not eligible. The evaluation assessments shall be completed within 30 school working days after receipt of parental consent for evaluation. Summaries of such assessments shall be completed so as to ensure their availability to parents at least two days prior to the Team meeting. If consent is received within 30 to 45 school working days before the end of the school year, the school district shall ensure that a Team meeting is scheduled so as to allow for the provision of a proposed IEP or written notice of the finding that the student is not eligible no later than 14 days after the end of the school year.

**What is the source of the data provided for this indicator?**

State monitoring

**Describe the method used to collect these data, and if data are from the State's monitoring, describe the procedures used to collect these data.**

MA DESE collected Indicator 11 data through the Tiered Focused Monitoring (TFM) review process conducted by MA DESE's Public School Monitoring Office (PSM). Please see the Introduction section for a detailed explanation of this process. As noted in the SPP/APR Introduction, the only LEA exception to this process is Boston Public Schools, for which MA DESE continues to oversee data collection on an annual basis for all Indicators.

When gathering data for this FFY 2021 submission, MA DESE conducted a two-step verification process, in which data validation and clarification occurred when MA DESE contacted LEAs to explain their data reporting prior to issuing formal letters of finding alongside the required correction activities. This process resulted in 20 LEAs with findings of non-compliance. The 20 LEAs are currently developing and implementing their comprehensive corrective action plans, and/or submitting subsequent data to the MA DESE to demonstrate compliance with regulatory requirements.

**Provide additional information about this indicator (optional)**

Of all the evaluations completed and reported in this FFY 2020 submission, 869 students were determined eligible for special education services, 349 students were determined not eligible for special education services, and 13 students did not yet have eligibility determined when the data were collected.

While COVID-19 did not have an impact on data collection, completeness, validity, and reliability for the indicator, the performance on this indicator was likely impacted by COVID-19. The state identified through LEA-reported reasons for delays and additional LEA comments that challenges related to COVID-19 contributed to evaluations not being completed by the 45-school working day timeline. Some of the COVID-19 related reasons for delay included: parent requests to reschedule meetings and evaluations due to increases in cases of COVID-19; staffing shortages due to COVID-19 outbreaks in schools and quarantining requirements; and student illness. In efforts to mitigate this impact, the state provided trainings and guidance documents to LEAs regarding practices to help LEAs meet evaluation timelines despite challenges presented by COVID-19.

**Correction of Findings of Noncompliance Identified in FFY 2020**

Findings of Noncompliance Identified	Findings of Noncompliance Verified as Corrected Within One Year	Findings of Noncompliance Subsequently Corrected	Findings Not Yet Verified as Corrected
12	12		0

**FFY 2020 Findings of Noncompliance Verified as Corrected**

**Describe how the State verified that the source of noncompliance is correctly implementing the regulatory requirements**

In its FFY 2020 SPP/APR, MA DESE made 12 findings of noncompliance for Indicator 11. MA DESE required each LEA to assess the root cause(s) of noncompliance and to take corrective actions to amend policy or practice, and/or to develop and implement appropriate systems that ensure timelines are met and eligible students receive services in a timely manner. MA DESE verified that these corrective action activities occurred by reviewing documentation provided by the LEAs. Additionally, MA DESE examined a second, supplementary data set submitted by each LEA and verified that each LEA was reporting 100% compliance with the requirements following the implementation of corrective action activities and within one year of issuing findings of noncompliance, consistent with OSEP Memorandum 09-02.

Actions LEAs engaged in to address non-compliance for FFY 2020 included the aforementioned completion of root cause analysis; creation of new initial evaluation protocols; adoption of new tracking tools to monitor timelines; training relevant staff on revised procedures for initial evaluations; periodic/monthly internal reviews to ensure compliance is sustained; weekly meetings with the Special Education Director, Evaluation Team Leaders and Special Education Coordinators to assess progress towards meeting timelines; and comprehensive review of the district's policies, practices, and procedures for conducting bilingual special education evaluations.

**Describe how the State verified that each individual case of noncompliance was corrected**

The state verified that each individual case of noncompliance in FFY 2020 was corrected within one year of issuing findings of noncompliance by examining corrective action reports and documentary evidence of correction of noncompliance, including subsequent data as appropriate. Each LEA was able to provide evidence that evaluations had been completed for all students affected by the noncompliance, consistent with the OSEP Memorandum 09-02.

**Correction of Findings of Noncompliance Identified Prior to FFY 2020**

Year Findings of Noncompliance Were Identified	Findings of Noncompliance Not Yet Verified as Corrected as of FFY 2020 APR	Findings of Noncompliance Verified as Corrected	Findings Not Yet Verified as Corrected
FFY 2019	1	1	0

**FFY 2019**

**Findings of Noncompliance Verified as Corrected**

**Describe how the State verified that the source of noncompliance is correctly implementing the regulatory requirements**

The state verified that the LEA with noncompliance identified in FFY 2019 completed all components of its corrective action plan by a deadline agreed upon by MA DESE. These corrective action components included a review of IEP timelines for staff at professional development sessions led by the Coordinator of Special Education (COSE); presentation of initial evaluation timeline document to staff; use of the data dashboard for monitoring compliance created by the Office of Special Education (OSE) data team, to be used by central office staff to monitor schools; provision of a monthly compliance report to schools, noting progress toward completion of initial evaluations and reevaluations; monthly meetings with the LEA's Assistant Directors of Special Education and their schools to review initial evaluation timeline data; and schools' submission of proposals to remedy issues related to missing compliance timelines to the LEA's Assistant Superintendent of Special Education. All requisite evidence of these corrective action plan components were provided to MA DESE and verified as completed.

Additionally, MA DESE pulled a second data set of additional student records in the state's web-based monitoring system for Indicator 11, subsequent to the implementation of the corrective action plan, to determine systemic compliance. Upon monitoring the additional data set, MA DESE determined 100% compliance across the reviewed records. Based on evidence of completion of the LEA's corrective action plan and verification that subsequent records pulled for monitoring demonstrated 100% compliance, the state verified that the LEA is correctly implementing the regulatory requirements, per OSEP Memorandum 09-02.

**Describe how the State verified that each individual case of noncompliance was corrected**

The state verified that each individual case of noncompliance identified for this LEA in FFY 2019 was corrected by examining corrective action reports and documentary evidence of correction, including subsequent data as appropriate. Each LEA was able to provide evidence that evaluations had been completed for all individual students affected by the noncompliance, consistent with the OSEP Memorandum 09-02.

### **11 - Prior FFY Required Actions**

Because the State reported less than 100% compliance for FFY 2020, the State must report on the status of correction of noncompliance identified in FFY 2020 for this indicator. In addition, the State must demonstrate, in the FFY 2021 SPP/APR, that the remaining one uncorrected finding of noncompliance identified in FFY 2019 was corrected. When reporting on the correction of noncompliance, the State must report, in the FFY 2021 SPP/APR, that it has verified that each LEA with findings of noncompliance identified in FFY 2020 and each LEA with remaining noncompliance identified in FFY 2019: (1) is correctly implementing the specific regulatory requirements (i.e., achieved 100% compliance) based on a review of updated data such as data subsequently collected through on-site monitoring or a State data system; and (2) has corrected each individual case of noncompliance, unless the child is no longer within the jurisdiction of the LEA, consistent with OSEP Memo 09-02. In the FFY 2021 SPP/APR, the State must describe the specific actions that were taken to verify the correction.

If the State did not identify any findings of noncompliance in FFY 2020, although its FFY 2020 data reflect less than 100% compliance, provide an explanation of why the State did not identify any findings of noncompliance in FFY 2020.

### **Response to actions required in FFY 2020 SPP/APR**

See information on the correction of noncompliance for FFY 2020 reported above in the section "Correction of Findings of Noncompliance Identified in FFY 2020".

### **11 - OSEP Response**

OSEP notes the State referenced an incorrect fiscal year in its narrative. Specifically, the State reported, "[o]f all the evaluations completed and reported in this FFY 2020 submission, 869 students were determined eligible for special education services, 349 students were determined not eligible for special education services, and 13 students did not yet have eligibility determined when the data were collected."

### **11 - Required Actions**

## Indicator 12: Early Childhood Transition

### Instructions and Measurement

**Monitoring Priority:** Effective General Supervision Part B / Effective Transition

**Compliance indicator:** 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))

#### Data Source

Data to be taken from State monitoring or State data system.

#### Measurement

- # of children who have been served in Part C and referred to Part B for Part B eligibility determination.
- # of those referred determined to be NOT eligible and whose eligibility was determined prior to their third birthdays.
- # of those found eligible who have an IEP developed and implemented by their third birthdays.
- # of children for whom parent refusal to provide consent caused delays in evaluation or initial services or to whom exceptions under 34 CFR §300.301(d) applied.
- # of children determined to be eligible for early intervention services under Part C less than 90 days before their third birthdays.
- # of children whose parents chose to continue early intervention services beyond the child's third birthday through a State's policy under 34 CFR §303.211 or a similar State option.

Account for children included in (a), but not included in b, c, d, e, or f. 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 - e - f)] times 100.

#### Instructions

*If data are from State monitoring, describe the method used to select LEAs for monitoring. If data are from a State database, include data for the entire reporting year.*

Describe the results of the calculations and compare the results to the target. Describe the method used to collect these data, and if data are from the State's monitoring, describe the procedures used to collect these data. Provide the actual numbers used in the calculation.

Targets must be 100%.

Category f is to be used only by States that have an approved policy for providing parents the option of continuing early intervention services beyond the child's third birthday under 34 CFR §303.211 or a similar State option.

Provide detailed information about the timely correction of noncompliance as noted in OSEP's response for the previous SPP/APR. If the State did not ensure timely correction of the previous noncompliance, provide information on the extent to which noncompliance was subsequently corrected (more than one year after identification). In addition, provide information regarding the nature of any continuing noncompliance, improvement activities completed (e.g., review of policies and procedures, technical assistance, training, etc.) and any enforcement actions that were taken.

If the State reported less than 100% compliance for the previous reporting period (e.g., for the FFY 2021 SPP/APR, the data for FFY 2020), and the State did not identify any findings of noncompliance, provide an explanation of why the State did not identify any findings of noncompliance.

## 12 - Indicator Data

### Not Applicable

Select yes if this indicator is not applicable.

NO

#### Historical Data

Baseline Year	Baseline Data
2021	64.55%

FFY	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Target	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Data	99.17%	92.12%	82.93%	72.45%	57.58%

#### Targets

FFY	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Target	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

#### FFY 2021 SPP/APR Data

a. Number of children who have been served in Part C and referred to Part B for Part B eligibility determination.	236
b. Number of those referred determined to be NOT eligible and whose eligibility was determined prior to third birthday.	27

c. Number of those found eligible who have an IEP developed and implemented by their third birthdays.	71
d. Number for whom parent refusals to provide consent caused delays in evaluation or initial services or to whom exceptions under 34 CFR §300.301(d) applied.	91
e. Number of children who were referred to Part C less than 90 days before their third birthdays.	8
f. Number of children whose parents chose to continue early intervention services beyond the child's third birthday through a State's policy under 34 CFR §303.211 or a similar State option.	0

Measure	Numerator (c)	Denominator (a-b-d-e-f)	FFY 2020 Data	FFY 2021 Target	FFY 2021 Data	Status	Slippage
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.	71	110	57.58%	100%	64.55%	N/A	N/A

**Number of children who served in Part C and referred to Part B for eligibility determination that are not included in b, c, d, e, or f**  
39

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

In FFY 2021, there were 39 children in 15 LEAs who were referred by Part C prior to age 3 who were either not eligible but did not have eligibility determined prior to their third birthdays or who were eligible but who did not have an IEP developed and implemented by their third birthdays. Of these 39 records, 12.82% of the children were determined not eligible after their third birthdays (average of 29 days between the third birthday and eligibility meeting in which children were found not eligible) and 87.18% of the 39 noncompliant records were for children determined eligible who had IEPs implemented after their third birthdays (average of 15.22 days between the third birthday and the IEP meeting in which the IEP was developed).

Of the delays reported in FFY 2021, 29.41% were attributed to LEA delays in sending or following up on consents; 23.53% were attributed to LEA scheduling issues, staff availability issues, LEA miscalculations of timelines, and other LEA-specific challenges; 17.65% were attributed to delays in parents and families returning signed IEPs, parents delaying enrollment and thus electing not to have IEPs implemented by their child's third birthday, as well as challenges with obtaining transportation for meetings; 11.76% were attributed to parents and LEAs collectively agreeing on extended evaluation timeframes; 11.76% were attributed to weather; and 5.88% were attributed to delays in the Part C early intervention program notifying LEAs of referral.

Through this process to date, LEAs with identified noncompliance are currently developing and implementing their comprehensive corrective action plans, and/or submitting subsequent data to the MA DESE to demonstrate compliance with regulatory requirements. Corrective action activities and demonstration of compliance through MA DESE's analysis of subsequent LEA data sets are set to be completed within one year of the state's finding of noncompliance.

**Attach PDF table (optional)**

**What is the source of the data provided for this indicator?**

State monitoring

**Describe the method used to collect these data, and if data are from the State's monitoring, describe the procedures used to collect these data.**

FFY 2021 Indicator 12 data activities were managed by the MA DESE office of Public School Monitoring as part of the Tiered Focused Monitoring (TFM) review process. For Indicator 12 reporting, LEAs submitted information in the MA DESE web-based monitoring system for student records that included the following data points: dates of referral, dates of evaluation, IEP Team meeting, and written consent for services received, as well as information about reasons for delay if any. For the FFY 2021 reporting period, participating LEAs were required to report data and referrals from EI, eligibility determination, and IEP implementation for children turning three in January, February, and March of 2022.

**Provide additional information about this indicator (optional)**

Of all the evaluations completed in and reported in this FFY 2021 submission, 190 children were deemed to be eligible for Part B special education services and 46 children were deemed not eligible for Part B special education services.

The baseline for Indicator 12 has been reset to FFY 2021, with the FFY 2021 compliance rate of 64.55% reflecting the new baseline data. Revisions to response options in the data collection tool used for state monitoring (data source) as well as revised guidance from MA DESE around this indicator's measures, resulted in data that will no longer be comparable to data reported in prior years, including data reported in the previous baseline year of FFY 2017. For this reason, MA DESE has updated the baseline to ensure data will be comparable in subsequent years.

While COVID-19 did not have an impact on data collection, completeness, validity, and reliability for the indicator, the performance on this indicator was likely impacted by COVID-19. The state identified through LEA-reported reasons for delays and additional LEA comments that challenges related to COVID-19 contributed to evaluations not being completed and, as appropriate, IEPs not being implemented by the child's third birthday. Some of the COVID-19 related reasons for delay included: parent requests to reschedule meetings and evaluations due to increases in cases of COVID-19; meeting cancellations due to family and students testing positive for COVID-19; and staffing shortages due to COVID-19 outbreaks in schools and quarantining requirements. In efforts to mitigate this impact, the state provided trainings and guidance documents to LEAs regarding practices to help LEAs meet evaluation timelines despite challenges presented by COVID-19.

**Correction of Findings of Noncompliance Identified in FFY 2020**

Findings of Noncompliance Identified	Findings of Noncompliance Verified as Corrected Within One Year	Findings of Noncompliance Subsequently Corrected	Findings Not Yet Verified as Corrected
7	7		0

**FFY 2020 Findings of Noncompliance Verified as Corrected**

**Describe how the State verified that the source of noncompliance is correctly implementing the regulatory requirements**

In its FFY 2020 APR, MA DESE made 7 findings of noncompliance for Indicator 12. MA DESE required each LEA to take corrective actions to amend policy or practice, and/or to develop and implement appropriate systems, to ensure that timelines are met and eligible students receive services in a timely manner. MA DESE verified that these activities occurred by reviewing supplemental documentation provided by the LEAs. Additionally, MA DESE examined a second, supplementary data set submitted by each LEA and verified that all 7 LEAs are now reporting 100% in compliance with the requirements following the implementation of corrective action activities and within one year of issuing findings of noncompliance, consistent with OSEP Memorandum 09-02.

The LEAs with noncompliance were required to create focused corrective action plans, and examples of actions in these LEA-created plans included implementing an online referral process and revising LEA online tracking systems to capture all relevant information, creating immediate access for preschool program administrators and staff; creation of new bi-weekly preschool staff meetings to review tracking data and troubleshoot referrals and evaluations; creation of new monthly meetings of preschool administrators to review referrals and evaluations and discuss the efficacy of processes and procedures to ensure compliant timelines and immediate provision of services; trainings for Early Intervention (EI) evaluation team members; sending notices/materials to EI staff and LEA staff around Indicator 12 timelines; training on Indicator 12 timelines for staff, including LEA and school administrators; participation of preschool special education administrator in Regional Collaborative Early Childhood meetings; and collaboration with an LEA's Family Resource Center to get information to families.

**Describe how the State verified that each individual case of noncompliance was corrected**

MA DESE verified that each individual incident of noncompliance was corrected by examining the LEA's data submission, consistent with OSEP Memorandum 09-02. These verification activities included requiring LEAs to submit the subsequent date of IEP implementation for noncompliant records, a subsequent corrective action report completed for LEAs with noncompliant records, and documentation of evidence of correction of individual records with noncompliance (using subsequent data as appropriate). Each LEA was able to provide evidence that each evaluation for those children affected by the noncompliance had been completed and, as appropriate, the IEP was implemented after the receipt of the signed IEP for the children affected by the noncompliance.

**Correction of Findings of Noncompliance Identified Prior to FFY 2020**

Year Findings of Noncompliance Were Identified	Findings of Noncompliance Not Yet Verified as Corrected as of FFY 2020 APR	Findings of Noncompliance Verified as Corrected	Findings Not Yet Verified as Corrected

**12 - Prior FFY Required Actions**

Because the State reported less than 100% compliance for FFY 2020, the State must report on the status of correction of noncompliance identified in FFY 2020 for this indicator. When reporting on the correction of noncompliance, the State must report, in the FFY 2021 SPP/APR, that it has verified that each LEA with noncompliance identified in FFY 2020 for this indicator: (1) is correctly implementing the specific regulatory requirements (i.e., achieved 100% compliance) based on a review of updated data such as data subsequently collected through on-site monitoring or a State data system; and (2) has corrected each individual case of noncompliance, unless the child is no longer within the jurisdiction of the LEA, consistent with OSEP Memo 09-02. In the FFY 2021 SPP/APR, the State must describe the specific actions that were taken to verify the correction.

If the State did not identify any findings of noncompliance in FFY 2020, although its FFY 2020 data reflect less than 100% compliance, provide an explanation of why the State did not identify any findings of noncompliance in FFY 2020.

**Response to actions required in FFY 2020 SPP/APR**

See information on the correction of noncompliance for FFY 2020 reported above in the section "Correction of Findings of Noncompliance Identified in FFY 2020".

**12 - OSEP Response**

The State has revised the baseline for this indicator, using data from FFY 2021, and OSEP accepts that revision.

The State did not demonstrate that the LEA corrected the findings of noncompliance identified in FFY 2020 because it did not report that it verified correction of those findings, consistent with OSEP Memo 09-02. Specifically, the State did not report that that it verified that each LEA with noncompliance identified in FFY 2020 is correctly implementing the specific regulatory requirements (i.e., achieved 100% compliance) based on a review of updated data such as data subsequently collected through on-site monitoring or a State data system.

**12 - Required Actions**

## Indicator 13: Secondary Transition

### Instructions and Measurement

**Monitoring Priority:** Effective General Supervision Part B / Effective Transition

**Compliance indicator:** Percent of youth with IEPs aged 16 and above with an IEP that includes appropriate measurable postsecondary goals that are annually updated and based upon an age appropriate transition assessment, transition services, including courses of study, that will reasonably enable the student to meet those postsecondary goals, and annual IEP goals related to the student's transition services needs. There also must be evidence that the student was invited to the IEP Team meeting where transition services are to be discussed and evidence that, if appropriate, a representative of any participating agency that is likely to be responsible for providing or paying for transition services, including, if appropriate, pre-employment transition services, was invited to the IEP Team meeting with the prior consent of the parent or student who has reached the age of majority.

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

#### Data Source

Data to be taken from State monitoring or State data system.

#### Measurement

Percent = [(# of youth with IEPs aged 16 and above with an IEP that includes appropriate measurable postsecondary goals that are annually updated and based upon an age appropriate transition assessment, transition services, including courses of study, that will reasonably enable the student to meet those postsecondary goals, and annual IEP goals related to the student's transition services needs. There also must be evidence that the student was invited to the IEP Team meeting where transition services are to be discussed and evidence that, if appropriate, a representative of any participating agency that is likely to be responsible for providing or paying for transition services, including, if appropriate, pre-employment transition services, was invited to the IEP Team meeting with the prior consent of the parent or student who has reached the age of majority) divided by the (# of youth with an IEP age 16 and above)] times 100.

If a State's policies and procedures provide that public agencies must meet these requirements at an age younger than 16, the State may, but is not required to, choose to include youth beginning at that younger age in its data for this indicator. If a State chooses to do this, it must state this clearly in its SPP/APR and ensure that its baseline data are based on youth beginning at that younger age.

#### Instructions

*If data are from State monitoring, describe the method used to select LEAs for monitoring. If data are from a State database, include data for the entire reporting year.*

Describe the results of the calculations and compare the results to the target. Describe the method used to collect these data and if data are from the State's monitoring, describe the procedures used to collect these data. Provide the actual numbers used in the calculation.

Targets must be 100%.

Provide detailed information about the timely correction of noncompliance as noted in OSEP's response for the previous SPP/APR. If the State did not ensure timely correction of the previous noncompliance, provide information on the extent to which noncompliance was subsequently corrected (more than one year after identification). In addition, provide information regarding the nature of any continuing noncompliance, improvement activities completed (e.g., review of policies and procedures, technical assistance, training, etc.) and any enforcement actions that were taken.

If the State reported less than 100% compliance for the previous reporting period (e.g., for the FFY 2021 SPP/APR, the data for FFY 2020), and the State did not identify any findings of noncompliance, provide an explanation of why the State did not identify any findings of noncompliance.

## 13 - Indicator Data

### Historical Data

Baseline Year	Baseline Data
2017	97.09%

FFY	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Target	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Data	99.80%	97.09%	96.99%	97.45%	97.46%

### Targets

FFY	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Target	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

### FFY 2021 SPP/APR Data

Number of youth aged 16 and above with IEPs that contain each of the required components for secondary transition	Number of youth with IEPs aged 16 and above	FFY 2020 Data	FFY 2021 Target	FFY 2021 Data	Status	Slippage
1,658	1,750	97.46%	100%	94.74%	Did not meet target	Slippage

Provide reasons for slippage, if applicable

MA DESE is reporting slippage of 2.72 percentage points from FFY 2020 to FFY 2021.

MA DESE has identified multiple reasons for slippage. First, MA DESE, attributes the slippage in part to notable increases in noncompliance reported for several components in the Massachusetts Postsecondary Transition Planning Checklist for Indicator 13, specifically three of the checklist items. For one of these three checklist items with significant changes in compliance, the compliance percentage decreased from 100% compliance in FFY 2020 to 72.83% compliance in FFY 2021 (decrease of 27.17 percentage points) and 26.88% of the noncompliant records for FFY 2021 reported noncompliance for this checklist item. For the second of the three checklist items with significant changes in compliance, the compliance percentage decreased from 94.74% compliance in FFY 2020 to 64.13% compliance in FFY 2021 (decrease of 30.61 percentage points) and 35.48% of the noncompliant records for FFY 2021 reported noncompliance for this checklist item. For the third and final of the three checklist items with significant changes in compliance, the compliance percentage decreased from 84.21% compliance in FFY 2020 to 68.48% compliance in FFY 2021 (decrease of 15.73 percentage points) and 32.26% of the noncompliant records for FFY 2021 reported noncompliance for this checklist item.

MA DESE also attributes the overall slippage in state compliance rate to three LEAs comprising a significant portion of the noncompliant records. These LEAs accounted for only 5.49% of the total number of records reviewed but for 79.35% of the records with noncompliance. These three LEAs had low compliance rates; one LEA had a compliance percentage of 11.54% and the remaining two LEAs each had compliance percentages of 28.57%. Should these three LEAs' data be removed from the overall data set, the compliance rate for the reporting cohort would be 98.85%, which is higher than the compliance rate for FFY 2020 (97.46%) and more consistent with the compliance rates reported in prior SPP/APRs.

MA DESE will report on the results of all corrective action activities with these three large LEA contributing significantly to the slippage observed for this indicator, and with any other LEAs for which noncompliance was identified, in the anticipated clarification period in April 2023, or in the next SPP/APR reporting cycle.

**What is the source of the data provided for this indicator?**

State monitoring

**Describe the method used to collect these data, and if data are from the State's monitoring, describe the procedures used to collect these data.**

MA DESE collected Indicator 13 data through its Tiered Focused Monitoring (TFM) system, through which the indicator is integrated into LEAs' comprehensive self-assessment on a six-year rotating cohort cycle. Using the Massachusetts Postsecondary Transition Planning Checklist for Indicator 13, all LEAs in the cohort evaluated a representative sample of files for students aged 14-22 with IEPs and provided responses to the checklist in the web-based monitoring system.

Question	Yes / No
Do the State's policies and procedures provide that public agencies must meet these requirements at an age younger than 16?	YES
If yes, did the State choose to include youth at an age younger than 16 in its data for this indicator and ensure that its baseline data are based on youth beginning at that younger age?	YES
If yes, at what age are youth included in the data for this indicator	14

**Provide additional information about this indicator (optional)**

For FFY 2021, MA DESE identified 92 records with noncompliance and issued Indicator 13 findings for 8 LEAs with this noncompliance and engaged with those LEAs in corrective activities such as those detailed below for FFY 2020. These corrections of noncompliance are consistent with the OSEP Memorandum 09-02 and will entail the state verifying correction of individual instances of noncompliance (92 records) as well as verifying that source of noncompliance (8 LEAs) is correctly implementing the regulatory requirements. MA DESE will report on the compliance status of these 8 LEAs in the FFY 2022 APR.

MA DESE does not find that COVID-19 had an impact on data collection, completeness, validity, and reliability for the indicator.

**Correction of Findings of Noncompliance Identified in FFY 2020**

Findings of Noncompliance Identified	Findings of Noncompliance Verified as Corrected Within One Year	Findings of Noncompliance Subsequently Corrected	Findings Not Yet Verified as Corrected
6	6		0

**FFY 2020 Findings of Noncompliance Verified as Corrected**

**Describe how the State verified that the source of noncompliance is correctly implementing the regulatory requirements**

In its FFY 2020 APR, MA DESE made 6 findings of noncompliance for Indicator 13. MA DESE required each LEA to take corrective actions to amend policy or practice and/or to develop and implement systems that ensure appropriate and compliant postsecondary transition plans are in place for students ages 14-22. Through active communication to ensure oversight and through the submission of subsequent data documenting compliance, MA DESE verified that these corrective action plans were appropriate. LEA plans included elements such as conducting root cause analysis to determine the source of noncompliance; revising procedures and protocols for postsecondary transition plans; conducting staff training on postsecondary transition plans; establishing a regular schedule of staff training; and instituting periodic reviews of student records to verify compliance.

The 6 LEAs were also required to submit subsequent student records to demonstrate systemic compliance after completion of corrective actions and within one year of issuing findings of noncompliance. Through completion of both the corrective actions (verified as compliant and complete by the state) and demonstrated 100% compliance in review of subsequent student records, the state verified that all 6 LEAs that were the source of noncompliance are now correctly implementing the regulatory requirements (100% compliance), per OSEP Memorandum 09-02.

**Describe how the State verified that each individual case of noncompliance was corrected**

MA DESE required each LEA to reconvene IEP meetings for students whose records indicated noncompliance to ensure that these students would now have 100% compliant transition planning and services. In the case of each reconvened meeting, LEAs submitted relevant documents to MA DESE, so that compliance could be verified. For example, if the Indicator 13 review indicated that the student had not been invited to their IEP meeting, the LEA submitted documentation of student invitation for the reconvened meeting. As an additional example, if the Indicator 13 review indicated that the student lacked measurable annual IEP goals related to the student's transition needs, then the LEA submitted to MA DESE the new IEP from the reconvened

meeting, with compliant annual IEP goals. The state has verified that all individual cases of noncompliance from FFY 2020 have been corrected and are now 100% compliant, consistent with OSEP Memorandum 09-02.

**Correction of Findings of Noncompliance Identified Prior to FFY 2020**

Year Findings of Noncompliance Were Identified	Findings of Noncompliance Not Yet Verified as Corrected as of FFY 2020 APR	Findings of Noncompliance Verified as Corrected	Findings Not Yet Verified as Corrected

**13 - Prior FFY Required Actions**

Because the State reported less than 100% compliance for FFY 2020, the State must report on the status of correction of noncompliance identified in FFY 2020 for this indicator. When reporting on the correction of noncompliance, the State must report, in the FFY 2021 SPP/APR, that it has verified that each LEA with noncompliance identified in FFY 2020 for this indicator: (1) is correctly implementing the specific regulatory requirements (i.e., achieved 100% compliance) based on a review of updated data such as data subsequently collected through on-site monitoring or a State data system; and (2) has corrected each individual case of noncompliance, unless the child is no longer within the jurisdiction of the LEA, consistent with OSEP Memo 09-02. In the FFY 2021 SPP/APR, the State must describe the specific actions that were taken to verify the correction.

If the State did not identify any findings of noncompliance in FFY 2020, although its FFY 2020 data reflect less than 100% compliance, provide an explanation of why the State did not identify any findings of noncompliance in FFY 2020.

**Response to actions required in FFY 2020 SPP/APR**

See information on the correction of noncompliance for FFY 2020 reported above in the section "Correction of Findings of Noncompliance Identified in FFY 2020".

**13 - OSEP Response**

**13 - Required Actions**

## Indicator 14: Post-School Outcomes

### Instructions and Measurement

**Monitoring Priority:** Effective General Supervision Part B / Effective Transition

**Results indicator:** Percent of youth who are no longer in secondary school, had IEPs in effect at the time they left school, and were:

- A. Enrolled in higher education within one year of leaving high school.
- B. Enrolled in higher education or competitively employed within one year of leaving high school.
- C. Enrolled in higher education or in some other postsecondary education or training program; or competitively employed or in some other employment within one year of leaving high school.

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

#### Data Source

State selected data source.

#### Measurement

- A. Percent enrolled in higher education =  $[(\# \text{ of youth who are no longer in secondary school, had IEPs in effect at the time they left school and were enrolled in higher education within one year of leaving high school}) \div (\# \text{ of respondent youth who are no longer in secondary school and had IEPs in effect at the time they left school})] \times 100$ .
- B. Percent enrolled in higher education or competitively employed within one year of leaving high school =  $[(\# \text{ of youth who are no longer in secondary school, had IEPs in effect at the time they left school and were enrolled in higher education or competitively employed within one year of leaving high school}) \div (\# \text{ of respondent youth who are no longer in secondary school and had IEPs in effect at the time they left school})] \times 100$ .
- C. Percent enrolled in higher education, or in some other postsecondary education or training program; or competitively employed or in some other employment =  $[(\# \text{ of youth who are no longer in secondary school, had IEPs in effect at the time they left school and were enrolled in higher education, or in some other postsecondary education or training program; or competitively employed or in some other employment}) \div (\# \text{ of respondent youth who are no longer in secondary school and had IEPs in effect at the time they left school})] \times 100$ .

#### Instructions

*Sampling of youth who had IEPs and are no longer in secondary school is allowed. When sampling is used, submit a description of the sampling methodology outlining how the design will yield valid and reliable estimates of the target population. (See [General Instructions](#) on page 2 for additional instructions on sampling.)*

Collect data by September 2022 on students who left school during 2020-2021, timing the data collection so that at least one year has passed since the students left school. Include students who dropped out during 2020-2021 or who were expected to return but did not return for the current school year. This includes all youth who had an IEP in effect at the time they left school, including those who graduated with a regular diploma or some other credential, dropped out, or aged out.

#### I. Definitions

*Enrolled in higher education* as used in measures A, B, and C means youth have been enrolled on a full- or part-time basis in a community college (two-year program) or college/university (four or more year program) for at least one complete term, at any time in the year since leaving high school.

*Competitive employment* as used in measures B and C: States have two options to report data under "competitive employment":

Option 1: Use the same definition as used to report in the FFY 2015 SPP/APR, i.e., competitive employment means that youth have worked for pay at or above the minimum wage in a setting with others who are nondisabled for a period of 20 hours a week for at least 90 days at any time in the year since leaving high school. This includes military employment.

Option 2: States report in alignment with the term "competitive integrated employment" and its definition, in section 7(5) of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended by Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA). For the purpose of defining the rate of compensation for students working on a "part-time basis" under this category, OSEP maintains the standard of 20 hours a week for at least 90 days at any time in the year since leaving high school. This definition applies to military employment.

*Enrolled in other postsecondary education or training* as used in measure C, means youth have been enrolled on a full- or part-time basis for at least 1 complete term at any time in the year since leaving high school in an education or training program (e.g., Job Corps, adult education, workforce development program, vocational technical school which is less than a two-year program).

*Some other employment* as used in measure C means youth have worked for pay or been self-employed for a period of at least 90 days at any time in the year since leaving high school. This includes working in a family business (e.g., farm, store, fishing, ranching, catering services, etc.).

#### II. Data Reporting

States must describe the metric used to determine representativeness (e.g., +/- 3% discrepancy in the proportion of responders compared to target group).

Provide the total number of targeted youth in the sample or census.

Provide the actual numbers for each of the following mutually exclusive categories. The actual number of "leavers" who are:

1. Enrolled in higher education within one year of leaving high school;
2. Competitively employed within one year of leaving high school (but not enrolled in higher education);
3. Enrolled in some other postsecondary education or training program within one year of leaving high school (but not enrolled in higher education or competitively employed);
4. In some other employment within one year of leaving high school (but not enrolled in higher education, some other postsecondary education or training program, or competitively employed).

"Leavers" should only be counted in one of the above categories, and the categories are organized hierarchically. So, for example, "leavers" who are enrolled in full- or part-time higher education within one year of leaving high school should only be reported in category 1, even if they also

happen to be employed. Likewise, “leavers” who are not enrolled in either part- or full-time higher education, but who are competitively employed, should only be reported under category 2, even if they happen to be enrolled in some other postsecondary education or training program.

States must compare the response rate for the reporting year to the response rate for the previous year (e.g., in the FFY 2021 SPP/APR, compare the FFY 2021 response rate to the FFY 2020 response rate), and describe strategies that will be implemented which are expected to increase the response rate year over year, particularly for those groups that are underrepresented.

The State must also analyze the response rate to identify potential nonresponse bias and take steps to reduce any identified bias and promote response from a broad cross section of youth who are no longer in secondary school and had IEPs in effect at the time they left school.

### III. Reporting on the Measures/Indicators

Targets must be established for measures A, B, and C.

Measure A: For purposes of reporting on the measures/indicators, please note that any youth enrolled in an institution of higher education (that meets any definition of this term in the Higher Education Act (HEA)) within one year of leaving high school must be reported under measure A. This could include youth who also happen to be competitively employed, or in some other training program; however, the key outcome we are interested in here is enrollment in higher education.

Measure B: All youth reported under measure A should also be reported under measure B, in addition to all youth that obtain competitive employment within one year of leaving high school.

Measure C: All youth reported under measures A and B should also be reported under measure C, in addition to youth that are enrolled in some other postsecondary education or training program, or in some other employment.

Beginning with the FFY 2021 SPP/APR, due February 1, 2023, include the State’s analysis of the extent to which the response data are representative of the demographics of youth who are no longer in secondary school and had IEPs in effect at the time they left school. States must include race/ethnicity in their analysis. In addition, the State’s analysis must include at least one of the following demographics: disability category, gender, geographic location, and/or another demographic category approved through the stakeholder input process. If the analysis shows that the response data are not representative of the demographics of youth who are no longer in secondary school and had IEPs in effect at the time they left school, describe the strategies that the State will use to ensure that in the future the response data are representative of those demographics. In identifying such strategies, the State should consider factors such as how the State collected the data.

## 14 - Indicator Data

### Historical Data

Measure	Baseline	FFY	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
A	2020	Target >=	51.00%	53.00%	50.20%	50.40%	40.00%
A	39.91%	Data	49.64%	50.00%	41.18%	34.79%	39.91%
B	2020	Target >=	86.00%	88.00%	79.60%	79.80%	73.00%
B	72.26%	Data	83.13%	79.37%	70.88%	56.55%	72.26%
C	2020	Target >=	93.00%	95.00%	87.30%	87.50%	79.00%
C	78.68%	Data	94.43%	87.09%	79.02%	62.35%	78.68%

### FFY 2020 Targets

FFY	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Target A >=	42.00%	44.00%	46.00%	48.00%	50.00%
Target B >=	74.00%	75.00%	76.00%	77.00%	78.00%
Target C >=	80.00%	81.00%	82.00%	83.00%	84.00%

### Targets: Description of Stakeholder Input

MA DESE is committed to a continuous system of engaging stakeholders to develop targets and set priorities for improvement in each of the areas reported in the SPP/APR.

The Special Education Advisory Panel (SEAP) and Special Education State Advisory Council (SAC), comprised of parents, individuals with disabilities, educators, administrators, and representatives from state agencies, higher education, and other stakeholder groups, meets at least four times each school year to review data, discuss policy priorities, and identify unmet needs in the area of special education consistent with state law and IDEA Part B. At each meeting, the group addressed various aspects of the SPP/APR and the State’s general supervision systems, as well as relevant policy matters. In FFY2020 MA DESE facilitated discussions with the SEAP and SAC to establish baselines and targets for the performance Indicators. In FFY2021, MA DESE discussed each Indicator’s performance and impacts on the LEA Determinations and Accountability and Assistance systems. MA DESE is committed to keep members of the SEAP and SAC up to date on processes and supports provided to LEA’s in order to improve outcomes for students with disabilities. MA DESE will continue discussions around and current data, longitudinal targets, historical rates of performance and compliance and

the trajectory for improvement for each of the Indicators, and the effectiveness of focused improvement activities within the context of the state's Results Driven Accountability framework.

The SAC is required by Massachusetts General Law (M.G.L. c. 15, § 1G <https://malegislature.gov/Laws/GeneralLaws/PartI/TitleII/Chapter15/Section1G>). The purpose of the SAC is to advise the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education and to make other programmatic recommendations as it deems necessary to fulfill the goals established by the board.

The SEAP is required by IDEA (34 CFR §§ 300.167-300.169 [https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-34/subtitle-B/chapter-III/part-300#sg34.2.300\\_1166.sg15](https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-34/subtitle-B/chapter-III/part-300#sg34.2.300_1166.sg15)). The purpose of the SEAP is to advise the State Education Authority (SEA) of unmet needs within the State regarding the education of children with disabilities. The Panel comments publicly on proposed rules or regulations regarding the education of children with disabilities. The Panel's advisory function to the State Education Authority (SEA) in developing evaluations and reporting 618 data (IDEA data) to USED and in developing corrective action plans to address findings in Federal monitoring reports under IDEA Part B. The Panel also advises the SEA in developing and implementing policies relating to the coordination of services for children with disabilities.

MA DESE has set a high priority on expanding the agency's capacity to solicit broad and diverse stakeholder input to set SPP/APR targets, analyze data, develop improvement strategies, and evaluate progress. For FFY2021, MA DESE sought to continue stakeholder Indicator knowledge that began in FFY2020. A new SPP/APR webpage, previously linked above, was created and posted along with new webpages for Indicators 4, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 15, 16, and 17. Small changes were made to previously created webpages for Indicators 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, 8, and 14 with Quick Reference Guides (QRGs) and PowerPoints for each Indicator. These QRGs and PowerPoints were available in six languages that correspond to the most common languages spoken in Massachusetts: English, Spanish, Portuguese, Chinese, Vietnamese, and Haitian Creole. Narrated versions of each PowerPoint were also available in English on the YouTube page of our partner, the Federation for Children with Special Needs (the Massachusetts Parent Training and Information Center/PTIC). MA DESE hosted six virtual stakeholder information and feedback sessions to broaden stakeholder knowledge on Indicators 4, 9, 10, 11, 12, and 13, while also soliciting feedback for Indicators 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, 8, 14, and 17 and presenting information to stakeholders, such as performance towards the targets set in FFY2020. These informational sessions featured a large group presentation on each topic, that was simultaneously translated into Spanish, Portuguese, Chinese, Vietnamese, and Haitian Creole. After each large group presentation, breakout rooms were opened in each of the previously mentioned languages, where stakeholders would be able to communicate and ask questions, in their native language, to MA DESE staff.

MA DESE also consults regularly, on a monthly or at least quarterly basis, with Massachusetts Administrators of Special Education, <http://www.asepage.org/>, the Federation for Children with Special Needs, <https://fcsn.org/>, Massachusetts Advocates for Children, <https://www.massadvocates.org/>, the Massachusetts Association of Approved Special Education Schools, <https://maaps.org/>, Massachusetts Urban Special Education Leadership Collaborative, and the Special Needs Advocacy Network, [www.spanmass.org](http://www.spanmass.org). In addition, the Massachusetts State Special Education Director at MA DESE gives monthly virtual presentations to statewide special education leaders on a wide array of special education compliance and performance topics. During all of these meetings, MA DESE solicits and receives significant feedback that informs the development of special education policy and guidance.

As needed, MA DESE also convenes stakeholder working groups throughout the year to provide focused input on specific projects and policy priorities. Examples of these focused groups include the Early Childhood Interagency Coordinating Council, with membership that includes community members and state agencies, a Statewide Systemic Improvement Plan (SSIP) leadership team and working group, a family engagement workgroup, an advisory group for the Dropout Prevention and Re-engagement Network, and secondary transition stakeholder groups. MA DESE also consults with educators, parents, advocates, and others on an ad hoc basis to inform policy and practice.

MA DESE engages with stakeholders on the direction of Indicator 17, the State's Systemic Improvement Plan (SSIP), at the state, district, classroom, and community levels. Stakeholders are provided with information about activities and goals, training events and embedded supports statewide, and the availability of resources to support and expand implementation. Stakeholders at the district and school levels participate in ongoing decision making about the direction of the SSIP by providing feedback about the quality of events and supports, observed benefits for their own stakeholders, and needs for moving forward with implementation most successfully. In May of 2022, MA DESE met with stakeholders to discuss revisions to the Theory of Action and the Evaluation Plan for the SSIP. Through frequent communication and input from stakeholders revisions to the Theory of Action and Evaluation Plan were made for incorporation and use during the FFY2022 SPP/APR reporting cycle. For additional information on stakeholder engagement related to Indicator 17, please see the Indicator 17 APR.

Stakeholder engagement is an essential component of MA DESE's special education agenda.

#### FFY 2021 SPP/APR Data

Total number of targeted youth in the sample or census	2,735
Number of respondent youth who are no longer in secondary school and had IEPs in effect at the time they left school	921
Response Rate	33.67%
1. Number of respondent youth who enrolled in higher education within one year of leaving high school	273
2. Number of respondent youth who competitively employed within one year of leaving high school	383
3. Number of respondent youth enrolled in some other postsecondary education or training program within one year of leaving high school (but not enrolled in higher education or competitively employed)	19
4. Number of respondent youth who are in some other employment within one year of leaving high school (but not enrolled in higher education, some other postsecondary education or training program, or competitively employed).	37

Measure	Number of respondent youth	Number of respondent youth who are no longer in secondary school and had IEPs in effect at the time they left school	FFY 2020 Data	FFY 2021 Target	FFY 2021 Data	Status	Slippage
A. Enrolled in higher education (1)	273	921	39.91%	42.00%	29.64%	Did not meet target	Slippage
B. Enrolled in higher education or competitively employed within one year of leaving high school (1 +2)	656	921	72.26%	74.00%	71.23%	Did not meet target	Slippage
C. Enrolled in higher education, or in some other postsecondary education or training program; or competitively employed or in some other employment (1+2+3+4)	712	921	78.68%	80.00%	77.31%	Did not meet target	Slippage

Part	Reasons for slippage, if applicable
A	Between FFY2020 and FFY2021 the data shows a significant drop in the number of students who were enrolled in two- or four-year college programs (423 in FFY2020 and 273 in FFY2021). This is likely due to high school graduates and their families postponing enrollment in and going to college due to the continued challenges brought on the COVID-19 pandemic. During the Fall of 2020 there were a variety of disruptions at colleges across the nation due to COVID-19. These disruptions included, cancelling of classes, or moving to remote and/or hybrid learning, even including some schools continuing to send residential students' home from their dorms during the height of the pandemic. It can be inferred that these challenges led to a decreased number of students deciding to attend a two- or four-year college after leaving high school. If the number of exiters enrolled in higher education had remained the same as in FFY2020, all three measurements would have met and exceeded targets.
B	The slippage in Measurement B between FFY2020 and FFY2021 can be attributed to the challenges mentioned above, the number of students enrolled in higher education. There was a slight increase in the number of exiters who obtained some form of competitive employment between FFY2020 and FFY2021. In FFY2020 a reported number of 343 respondents were employed in competitive employment, while in FFY2021 383 respondents were competitively employed.
C	The slippage in Measurement C is again contributed to the decline in Measurement A. There was an increase in the number of exiters who were competitively employed from FFY2020 to FFY2021, considering that the additional number of exiters that are included in Measurement C (other postsecondary education or training program and other employment) is largely the same as in FFY2020.

**Please select the reporting option your State is using:**

Option 1: Use the same definition as used to report in the FFY 2015 SPP/APR, i.e., competitive employment means that youth have worked for pay at or above the minimum wage in a setting with others who are nondisabled for a period of 20 hours a week for at least 90 days at any time in the year since leaving high school. This includes military employment.

**Response Rate**

FFY	2020	2021
Response Rate	37.64%	33.67%

**Describe strategies that will be implemented which are expected to increase the response rate year over year, particularly for those groups that are underrepresented.**

To improve response rates, MA DESE provides emails with detailed information to district staff annually along with Technical Assistance (TA) documents that include background and updates about Indicator 14 that includes information about how to prepare for and field the survey, as well as how to submit survey data on time. MA DESE publicizes Indicator 14 data collection through the agency's special education listserv, in the agency's online FAQs, and through regular statewide special education leaders' meetings. MA DESE emphasizes with districts that all eligible former students

should be included in the survey and uses strategies to help ensure that all former students have equal opportunity to respond. For example, MA DESE ensures that the survey is available in English, Spanish, Portuguese, Chinese, Haitian Creole, and Vietnamese to better engage diverse former students and family members. English and translated versions of the survey are available online and as paper forms. Twenty-four percent of survey respondents identified as Hispanic or Latino, close to the statewide prevalence of 24.2% for Hispanic or Latino students ages 3-21.

MA DESE encourages districts to work with their dropout re-engagement centers, to collaborate with staff conducting the Perkins post-school survey, and recommends that former students be contacted by school staff who are familiar to them. MA DESE and the State University of New York (SUNY) Potsdam Institute for Applied Research (PIAR) staff were readily available to districts to troubleshoot methods of contacting exiters and to provide guidance for best practices. Additionally, MA DESE staff and PIAR staff at SUNY Potsdam provide continuous support to district staff throughout the surveying process. Districts receive regular updates from PIAR staff to let them know which individual former students have completed the survey. These are weekly compiled into a statewide accounting of progress, by district, and are provided to MA DESE to monitor statewide progress. MA DESE sends regular reminders to all districts and provides additional personalized TA. Although MA DESE expects the response rate to increase over time, slight decreases year-to-year are not seen as a significant variation from year to year, and the decrease compared to FFY2020 is not considered an immediate concern.

FFY2021 is the last year that survey data for Indicator 14 will be collected in a cohort model. Starting with FFY2022 MA DESE is moving to statewide data collecting, in all districts, every year. MA DESE expects that with the increase in the number of districts completing Indicator 14 data collection, that response rates will increase. MA DESE plans to provide TA regarding best practices for outreach for all districts when it comes to Indicator 14 data collection.

MA DESE commends our districts, which largely maintained historical survey response rates at a time of significant COVID-related challenges, including staffing shortages.

**Describe the analysis of the response rate including any nonresponse bias that was identified, and the steps taken to reduce any identified bias and promote response from a broad cross section of youth who are no longer in secondary school and had IEPs in effect at the time they left school.**

Additional analysis was conducted on the potential implications of former students identified as being disproportionately represented. The following subpopulations were analyzed: Learning Disabilities, Emotional Disturbance, Intellectual Disabilities, All Other Disability Categories, Female, Minority, English Language Learner, Dropout, and Economically Disadvantaged.

All but three of these groups were found to be proportionally represented within the + or - 3 percentage point criteria. The disproportionality of the other six ranged from -1.06 to +1.56 percentage points. In both the total exiter and response pools, about one in three are identified as Female. Among the 921 respondents, Females are underrepresented by -3.18 percentage points (or ~29 too few respondents were Female). This cycle Female and Male respondents were engaged, per 14B engagement definitions, equally at 77%, but Females reported 2- or 4- Year College more often as they typically do (Females 36% vs. Males 27%).

In the total exiter pool about eight in twenty (1139/2735) are reported as Minority and nine in twenty (420/921) are among the response pool. They are overrepresented in the response pool by +3.96 percentage points (or ~36 extra Minority respondents). This year's data reports that Minority Exiters are engaged below the state average of 77% by three or four percent, but those Exiters reported as White are engaged above the average by about 3 percentage points.

In the total exiter pool about one in twelve Exiters Dropped Out (219/2735), but in the response pool one in twenty Dropped Out (45/921) and are underrepresented by -3.12 percentage points (~29 too few respondents who Dropped out). Annually, those who Dropped Out are engaged much less often than the state average and are again this cycle at 46% vs. 77%. They trail even further behind those who Graduated with a Competency Determination (46% vs. 83%).

Based on this analysis, the overall Engagement rate is slightly higher than it would be if Female, Minority, and former students who Dropped Out were proportionally represented (~estimated to be +2 to 3 percentage points higher).

In order to ensure representativeness and to reduce bias, MA DESE emphasizes with districts that all eligible former students should be included in the survey and uses strategies to help ensure that all former students have equal opportunity to respond. For example, MA DESE ensures that the survey is available in English, Spanish, Portuguese, Chinese, Haitian Creole, and Vietnamese to better engage diverse former students and family members. English and translated versions of the survey are available online and as paper forms.

**Include the State's analyses of the extent to which the response data are representative of the demographics of youth who are no longer in secondary school and had IEPs in effect at the time they left school. States must include race/ethnicity in its analysis. In addition, the State's analysis must include at least one of the following demographics: disability category, gender, geographic location, and/or another demographic category approved through the stakeholder input process.**

MA DESE used the Representativeness Calculator adapted from the template that is available from the NTACTION website. This year's analysis examines the following demographic subpopulations: Specific Learning Disabilities, Emotional Disabilities, Intellectual Disabilities, All Other Disabilities, Female, Minority, ELL/LLP, Dropout, and Economically Disadvantaged. The proportion, as a percentage, that each group contributed to the Survey Pool and Respondent Pool were compared to assess if there were any with a difference of more than plus or minus 3.00 percentage points (based on the recommendations of both the Post-School Outcomes Center and NTACTION). This analysis indicates that six out of the nine examined sub-populations are represented within the plus or minus 3.00 percentage point benchmark. There are two under-represented groups, Dropout at -3.12 and Female at -3.18. There is one over-represented sub-population, Minority at +3.96 percentage points. Note that these calculations examine one demographic characteristic category at a time and do not examine the interaction of the multiple characteristics that each of us possess. One characteristic does not influence us in the absence of other characteristics. Future analysis of the interaction between characteristics may help us understand the influence multiple characteristics may have on post-school outcomes. Of note is that while the representativeness of the Dropout subgroup perhaps still shows some underrepresentation, it is improved from FFY2020 (-4.15 percentage points/ 38 leavers responded to the survey). MA DESE is committed to reducing the Drop Out percentage for all students with disabilities, but also realizes that students who do drop out often feel disconnected from their previous school and that can cause challenges to getting those exiters to respond to the survey when contacted from their previous LEA. MA DESE encourages all LEAs to reach out to dropouts to respond to the survey. Considering the overall Response Rate and the analysis of disproportionality, DESE expects that the actual Engagement Rate for all B14 Exiters is lower than the survey data indicates.

**The response data is representative of the demographics of youth who are no longer in school and had IEPs in effect at the time they left school. (yes/no)**

NO

**If no, describe the strategies that the State will use to ensure that in the future the response data are representative of those demographics.**

To improve representativeness, MA DESE provides emails with detailed information to district staff annually along with Technical Assistance (TA) documents that include background and updates about Indicator 14 as well as information about how to prepare for and field the survey, and how to submit survey data on time. MA DESE publicizes Indicator 14 data collection through the agency's special education listserv, in the agency's online FAQs, and through regular statewide special education leaders' meetings. MA DESE emphasizes with districts that all eligible former students should be included in the survey and uses strategies to help ensure that all former students have equal opportunity to respond. For example, MA DESE ensures that the survey is available in English, Spanish, Portuguese, Chinese, Haitian Creole, and Vietnamese to better engage diverse former students and family members. English and translated versions of the survey are available online and as paper forms. Twenty-four percent of survey respondents identified as Hispanic or Latino, close to the statewide prevalence of 24.2% for Hispanic or Latino students ages 3-21.

MA DESE encourages districts to work with their dropout re-engagement centers, to collaborate with staff conducting the Perkins post-school survey, and recommends that former students be contacted by school staff who are familiar to them. Additionally, MA DESE staff and PIAR staff at SUNY Potsdam provide continuous support to district staff throughout the surveying process. Districts receive regular updates from PIAR staff to let them know which individual former students have completed the survey. These are weekly compiled into a statewide accounting of progress, by district, and are provided to MA DESE to monitor statewide progress. MA DESE sends regular reminders to all districts and provides additional personalized TA. MA DESE plans to provide TA regarding best practices for outreach for all districts when it comes to Indicator 14 data collection. FFY2021 is the last year that survey data for Indicator 14 will be collected in a cohort model. Starting with FFY2022 MA DESE is moving to statewide data collecting, all districts, every year. MA DESE expects that with the increase in the number of districts completing Indicator 14 data collection, the representativeness of the survey respondents will also increase. MA DESE plans to provide TA regarding best practices for outreach for all districts when it comes to Indicator 14 data collection.

For FFY2021, MA DESE is continuing to work with Parent Training and Information Center (PTI) staff to create a parent and student brochure on Indicator 14 in six languages, to increase the survey's visibility.

**Describe the metric used to determine representativeness (e.g., +/- 3% discrepancy in the proportion of responders compared to target group).**

Subpopulations were judged representative using the metric of plus or minus 3 percentage points.

Sampling Question	Yes / No
Was sampling used?	YES
If yes, has your previously approved sampling plan changed?	NO

**Describe the sampling methodology outlining how the design will yield valid and reliable estimates.**

For FFY2021, MA DESE continued to use the OSEP-approved cohort sampling method, to yield valid and reliable estimates. MA DESE divides its more than 400 LEAs into four cohorts, each of which is representative of the state as a whole. Indicator 14 data is collected from each cohort in turn over the course of four years, with the exception of the city of Boston, which conducts Indicator 14 data collection every year because of its average daily membership of over 50,000 students.

LEAs are assigned to one of four cohorts so that each cohort represents the state's overall percentages of demographic information reported by the LEAs, i.e., Student Race and Ethnicity (African American, Asian, Hispanic, Native American, Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander, White or Multi-Race/Non-Hispanic) and Selected Populations (Economically Disadvantaged, English Language Learner, First Language not English and Students with Disabilities). An analysis of the cohorts indicates that each sample cohort is representative of LEAs statewide within plus or minus 1.5 percent.

As part of each cycle, an in-depth analysis of cohort demographic representativeness is calculated as fluctuations of student demographics and LEA closures or reorganizations do occur. This analysis is conducted regularly to verify that the sampling plan remains representative. Systematically, districts are moved to new cohorts as needed to ensure that each cohort remains representative of the state as a whole, while maintaining regular data collection.

MA DESE uses a two-step data collection protocol to assess post-school outcomes for students with disabilities. The first step in the process is for LEAs to collect contact information to use during the survey process. The second step is LEAs' distribution of the "Massachusetts After High School Survey" instrument to students with disabilities who exited high school in the prior year. Before the beginning of each annual data collection cycle, DESE provides each sample LEA with a list of their exiters to be included, thereby ensuring that those who are surveyed fully meet Indicator 14 criteria and reducing the chance that any former student with an IEP is overlooked.

Each year MA DESE notifies participating LEAs of their responsibilities to collect student contact information and data. MA DESE also provides them with necessary technical assistance about data collection activities and responsibilities. These include:

- An overview of the process in a letter to each sample LEA's contact
- Step-by-Step Instructions
- Sample Script (for interviewers)

MA DESE requires LEAs to make a minimum of three attempts to contact exiters to complete the survey. To encourage participation by respondents regardless of their preferred language, the student/family outreach letter and the survey are available in Chinese, English, Haitian Creole, Portuguese, Spanish, and Vietnamese. The survey translations are available as printable documents, emails, and online forms. The online survey may be completed by school staff or former students with or without support from family.

To help LEAs plan their interviewing, LEAs receive daily updates from our contractor, including a list of surveys submitted. LEA personnel administer the "Massachusetts After High School Survey" instrument between June and September, using one or more data collection methods (e.g., mailings, telephone surveys, in-person interviews, email, social media), and enter survey responses into the online survey hosted by our Indicator 14 contractor, as it is collected, or as soon as possible afterward.

Throughout the data collection window, our contractor provides reminders of timelines and recommended engagement, data collection procedures, and information detailing surveys that have been completed.

Once data collection is complete, MA DESE then collaborates with our Indicator 14 contractor to analyze and report the collected survey responses. Detailed analysis assesses representativeness, considers how any disproportionality across subpopulations may influence engagement rates, and informs strategies to increase our response rate, representativeness, and equity across subpopulations.

Given that the Massachusetts cohort system for Indicator 14 data collection is representative of the state as a whole, MA DESE's data collection design for Indicator 14 yields valid and reliable estimates.

For the FFY2022 SPP/APR, MA DESE plans to suspend its four-cohort sampling plan and move to statewide data collection and reporting for Indicator 14.

Survey Question	Yes / No
Was a survey used?	YES
If yes, is it a new or revised survey?	NO

**Provide additional information about this indicator (optional)**

**14 - Prior FFY Required Actions**

In the FFY 2021 SPP/APR, the State must report whether the FFY 2021 data are representative of the demographics of youth who are no longer in secondary school and had IEPs in effect at the time they left school, and, if not, the actions the State is taking to address this issue. The State must also include its analysis of the extent to which the response data are representative of the demographics of youth who are no longer in secondary school and had IEPs in effect at the time they left school.

OSEP notes that one or more of the Indicator 14 attachment(s) included in the State's FFY 2020 SPP/APR submission are not in compliance with Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended (Section 508), and will not be posted on the U.S. Department of Education's IDEA website. Therefore, the State must make the attachment(s) available to the public as soon as practicable, but no later than 120 days after the date of the determination letter.

**Response to actions required in FFY 2020 SPP/APR**

Please see sections above that describe MA DESE's analysis of the representativeness of the state's FFY2021 data, as well as steps MA DESE is taking to address this issue.

MA DESE sent an updated SPP/APR to OSEP in the Spring of 2022, in which the Indicator 14 attachment was edited to be in compliance with Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973.

**14 - OSEP Response**

**14 - Required Actions**

## Indicator 15: Resolution Sessions

### Instructions and Measurement

**Monitoring Priority:** Effective General Supervision Part B / General Supervision

**Results Indicator:** 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))

#### Data Source

Data collected under section 618 of the IDEA (IDEA Part B Dispute Resolution Survey in the ED Facts Metadata and Process System (EMAPS)).

#### Measurement

Percent = (3.1(a) divided by 3.1) times 100.

#### Instructions

*Sampling is not allowed.*

Describe the results of the calculations and compare the results to the target.

States are not required to establish baseline or targets if the number of resolution sessions is less than 10. In a reporting period when the number of resolution sessions reaches 10 or greater, develop baseline and targets and report on them in the corresponding SPP/APR.

States may express their targets in a range (e.g., 75-85%).

If the data reported in this indicator are not the same as the State's data under IDEA section 618, explain.

States are not required to report data at the LEA level.

### 15 - Indicator Data

Select yes to use target ranges

Target Range is used

#### Prepopulated Data

Source	Date	Description	Data
SY 2021-22 EMAPS IDEA Part B Dispute Resolution Survey; Section C: Due Process Complaints	11/02/2022	3.1 Number of resolution sessions	23
SY 2021-22 EMAPS IDEA Part B Dispute Resolution Survey; Section C: Due Process Complaints	11/02/2022	3.1(a) Number resolution sessions resolved through settlement agreements	11

Select yes if the data reported in this indicator are not the same as the State's data reported under section 618 of the IDEA.

NO

#### Targets: Description of Stakeholder Input

MA DESE is committed to a continuous system of engaging stakeholders to develop targets and set priorities for improvement in each of the areas reported in the SPP/APR.

The Special Education Advisory Panel (SEAP) and Special Education State Advisory Council (SAC), comprised of parents, individuals with disabilities, educators, administrators, and representatives from state agencies, higher education, and other stakeholder groups, meets at least four times each school year to review data, discuss policy priorities, and identify unmet needs in the area of special education consistent with state law and IDEA Part B. At each meeting, the group addressed various aspects of the SPP/APR and the State's general supervision systems, as well as relevant policy matters. In FFY2020 MA DESE facilitated discussions with the SEAP and SAC to establish baselines and targets for the performance Indicators. In FFY2021, MA DESE discussed each Indicator's performance and impacts on the LEA Determinations and Accountability and Assistance systems. MA DESE is committed to keep members of the SEAP and SAC up to date on processes and supports provided to LEA's in order to improve outcomes for students with disabilities. MA DESE will continue discussions around and current data, longitudinal targets, historical rates of performance and compliance and the trajectory for improvement for each of the Indicators, and the effectiveness of focused improvement activities within the context of the state's Results Driven Accountability framework.

The SAC is required by Massachusetts General Law (M.G.L. c. 15, § 1G

<https://malegislature.gov/Laws/GeneralLaws/PartI/TitleII/Chapter15/Section1G>). The purpose of the SAC is to advise the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education and to make other programmatic recommendations as it deems necessary to fulfill the goals established by the board.

The SEAP is required by IDEA (34 CFR §§ 300.167-300.169 [https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-34/subtitle-B/chapter-III/part-300#sg34.2.300\\_1166.sg15](https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-34/subtitle-B/chapter-III/part-300#sg34.2.300_1166.sg15)).

The purpose of the SEAP is to advise the State Education Authority (SEA) of unmet needs within the State regarding the education of children with disabilities. The Panel comments publicly on proposed rules or regulations regarding the education of children with disabilities. The Panel's advisory function to the State Education Authority (SEA) in developing evaluations and reporting 618 data (IDEA data) to USED and in developing corrective action plans to address findings in Federal monitoring reports under IDEA Part B. The Panel also advises the SEA in developing and implementing policies relating to the coordination of services for children with disabilities.

MA DESE has set a high priority on expanding the agency's capacity to solicit broad and diverse stakeholder input to set SPP/APR targets, analyze data, develop improvement strategies, and evaluate progress. For FFY2021, MA DESE sought to continue stakeholder Indicator knowledge that began in FFY2020. A new SPP/APR webpage, previously linked above, was created and posted along with new webpages for Indicators 4, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 15, 16, and 17. Small changes were made to previously created webpages for Indicators 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, 8, and 14 with Quick Reference Guides (QRGs) and PowerPoints for each Indicator. These QRGs and PowerPoints were available in six languages that correspond to the most common languages

spoken in Massachusetts: English, Spanish, Portuguese, Chinese, Vietnamese, and Haitian Creole. Narrated versions of each PowerPoint were also available in English on the YouTube page of our partner, the Federation for Children with Special Needs (the Massachusetts Parent Training and Information Center/PTIC). MA DESE hosted six virtual stakeholder information and feedback sessions to broaden stakeholder knowledge on Indicators 4, 9, 10, 11, 12, and 13, while also soliciting feedback for Indicators 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, 8, 14, and 17 and presenting information to stakeholders, such as performance towards the targets set in FFY2020. These informational sessions featured a large group presentation on each topic, that was simultaneously translated into Spanish, Portuguese, Chinese, Vietnamese, and Haitian Creole. After each large group presentation, breakout rooms were opened in each of the previously mentioned languages, where stakeholders would be able to communicate and ask questions, in their native language, to MA DESE staff.

MA DESE also consults regularly, on a monthly or at least quarterly basis, with Massachusetts Administrators of Special Education, <http://www.asepage.org/>, the Federation for Children with Special Needs, <https://fcsn.org/>, Massachusetts Advocates for Children, <https://www.massadvocates.org/>, the Massachusetts Association of Approved Special Education Schools, <https://maaps.org/>, Massachusetts Urban Special Education Leadership Collaborative, and the Special Needs Advocacy Network, [www.spanmass.org](http://www.spanmass.org). In addition, the Massachusetts State Special Education Director at MA DESE gives monthly virtual presentations to statewide special education leaders on a wide array of special education compliance and performance topics. During all of these meetings, MA DESE solicits and receives significant feedback that informs the development of special education policy and guidance.

As needed, MA DESE also convenes stakeholder working groups throughout the year to provide focused input on specific projects and policy priorities. Examples of these focused groups include the Early Childhood Interagency Coordinating Council, with membership that includes community members and state agencies, a Statewide Systemic Improvement Plan (SSIP) leadership team and working group, a family engagement workgroup, an advisory group for the Dropout Prevention and Re-engagement Network, and secondary transition stakeholder groups. MA DESE also consults with educators, parents, advocates, and others on an ad hoc basis to inform policy and practice.

MA DESE engages with stakeholders on the direction of Indicator 17, the State's Systemic Improvement Plan (SSIP), at the state, district, classroom, and community levels. Stakeholders are provided with information about activities and goals, training events and embedded supports statewide, and the availability of resources to support and expand implementation. Stakeholders at the district and school levels participate in ongoing decision making about the direction of the SSIP by providing feedback about the quality of events and supports, observed benefits for their own stakeholders, and needs for moving forward with implementation most successfully. In May of 2022, MA DESE met with stakeholders to discuss revisions to the Theory of Action and the Evaluation Plan for the SSIP. Through frequent communication and input from stakeholders revisions to the Theory of Action and Evaluation Plan were made for incorporation and use during the FFY2022 SPP/APR reporting cycle. For additional information on stakeholder engagement related to Indicator 17, please see the Indicator 17 APR.

Stakeholder engagement is an essential component of MA DESE's special education agenda.

**Historical Data**

Baseline Year	Baseline Data
2005	48.00%

FFY	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Target >=	48.00% - 58.00%	48.00% - 58.00%	48.00% - 75.00%	48.00%-75.00%	48.00%-75.00%
Data	57.14%	53.85%	70.83%	25.00%	100.00%

**Targets**

FFY	2021 (low)	2021 (high)	2022 (low)	2022 (high)	2023 (low)	2023 (high)	2024 (low)	2024 (high)	2025 (low)	2025 (high)
Target >=	48.00%	75.00%	48.00%	75.00%	48.00%	75.00%	48.00%	75.00%	48.00%	75.00%

**FFY 2021 SPP/APR Data**

3.1(a) Number resolutions sessions resolved through settlement agreements	3.1 Number of resolutions sessions	FFY 2020 Data	FFY 2021 Target (low)	FFY 2021 Target (high)	FFY 2021 Data	Status	Slippage
11	23	100.00%	48.00%	75.00%	47.83%	Did not meet target	Slippage

**Provide reasons for slippage, if applicable**

It seems reasonable to infer that the COVID-19 pandemic continues to persist into the 2021-22 school year which impacted the ability for LEAs to hold and resolve resolution sessions through settlement agreements. A low number of resolution sessions in FFY2020 seemed to have been an anomaly, with numbers for FFY2021 returning to a higher number consistent with historical data.

**Provide additional information about this indicator (optional)**

The Bureau of Special Education Appeals (BSEA) conducts due process hearings to resolve disputes among parents, LEAs, private schools, and state agencies relating to any matter concerning the eligibility, evaluation, placement, individualized education program (IEP), provision of special education, or procedural protections for students with disabilities, in accordance with state and federal law. The BSEA also conducts due process hearings on issues involving the denial of a free appropriate public education guaranteed by Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 <https://www.dol.gov/oasam/regs/statutes/sec504.htm>.

In response to guidance provided by the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) as part of a review of the Massachusetts special education due process system, the BSEA amended the administrative rules that govern due process hearings. The amended Hearing Rules for Special Education Appeals went into effect in March 2019, and are published at: [https://www.mass.gov/doc/hearing-rules/download?\\_ga=2.146613044.1028742503.1551115478-2142834074.1517856845](https://www.mass.gov/doc/hearing-rules/download?_ga=2.146613044.1028742503.1551115478-2142834074.1517856845)

### **15 - Prior FFY Required Actions**

None

### **15 - OSEP Response**

### **15 - Required Actions**

## Indicator 16: Mediation

### Instructions and Measurement

**Monitoring Priority:** Effective General Supervision Part B / General Supervision

**Results indicator:** Percent of mediations held that resulted in mediation agreements.

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

#### Data Source

Data collected under section 618 of the IDEA (IDEA Part B Dispute Resolution Survey in the ED Facts Metadata and Process System (EMAPS)).

#### Measurement

Percent = (2.1(a)(i) + 2.1(b)(i)) divided by 2.1 times 100.

#### Instructions

*Sampling is not allowed.*

Describe the results of the calculations and compare the results to the target.

States are not required to establish baseline or targets if the number of mediations is less than 10. In a reporting period when the number of resolution mediations reaches 10 or greater, develop baseline and targets and report on them in the corresponding SPP/APR.

States may express their targets in a range (e.g., 75-85%).

If the data reported in this indicator are not the same as the State's data under IDEA section 618, explain.

States are not required to report data at the LEA level.

## 16 - Indicator Data

### Select yes to use target ranges

Target Range is used

### Prepopulated Data

Source	Date	Description	Data
SY 2021-22 EMAPS IDEA Part B Dispute Resolution Survey; Section B: Mediation Requests	11/02/2022	2.1 Mediations held	520
SY 2021-22 EMAPS IDEA Part B Dispute Resolution Survey; Section B: Mediation Requests	11/02/2022	2.1.a.i Mediations agreements related to due process complaints	12
SY 2021-22 EMAPS IDEA Part B Dispute Resolution Survey; Section B: Mediation Requests	11/02/2022	2.1.b.i Mediations agreements not related to due process complaints	417

Select yes if the data reported in this indicator are not the same as the State's data reported under section 618 of the IDEA.

NO

### Targets: Description of Stakeholder Input

MA DESE is committed to a continuous system of engaging stakeholders to develop targets and set priorities for improvement in each of the areas reported in the SPP/APR.

The Special Education Advisory Panel (SEAP) and Special Education State Advisory Council (SAC), comprised of parents, individuals with disabilities, educators, administrators, and representatives from state agencies, higher education, and other stakeholder groups, meets at least four times each school year to review data, discuss policy priorities, and identify unmet needs in the area of special education consistent with state law and IDEA Part B. At each meeting, the group addressed various aspects of the SPP/APR and the State's general supervision systems, as well as relevant policy matters. In FFY2020 MA DESE facilitated discussions with the SEAP and SAC to establish baselines and targets for the performance Indicators. In FFY2021, MA DESE discussed each Indicator's performance and impacts on the LEA Determinations and Accountability and Assistance systems. MA DESE is committed to keep members of the SEAP and SAC up to date on processes and supports provided to LEA's in order to improve outcomes for students with disabilities. MA DESE will continue discussions around and current data, longitudinal targets, historical rates of performance and compliance and the trajectory for improvement for each of the Indicators, and the effectiveness of focused improvement activities within the context of the state's Results Driven Accountability framework.

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The SEAP is required by IDEA (34 CFR §§ 300.167-300.169 [https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-34/subtitle-B/chapter-III/part-300#sg34.2.300\\_1166.sg15](https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-34/subtitle-B/chapter-III/part-300#sg34.2.300_1166.sg15)).

The purpose of the SEAP is to advise the State Education Authority (SEA) of unmet needs within the State regarding the education of children with disabilities. The Panel comments publicly on proposed rules or regulations regarding the education of children with disabilities. The Panel's advisory function to the State Education Authority (SEA) in developing evaluations and reporting 618 data (IDEA data) to USED and in developing corrective action plans to address findings in Federal monitoring reports under IDEA Part B. The Panel also advises the SEA in developing and implementing policies relating to the coordination of services for children with disabilities.

MA DESE has set a high priority on expanding the agency's capacity to solicit broad and diverse stakeholder input to set SPP/APR targets, analyze data, develop improvement strategies, and evaluate progress. For FFY2021, MA DESE sought to continue stakeholder Indicator knowledge that began in FFY2020. A new SPP/APR webpage, previously linked above, was created and posted along with new webpages for Indicators 4, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13,

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MA DESE also consults regularly, on a monthly or at least quarterly basis, with Massachusetts Administrators of Special Education, <http://www.asepage.org/>, the Federation for Children with Special Needs, <https://fcsn.org/>, Massachusetts Advocates for Children, <https://www.massadvocates.org/>, the Massachusetts Association of Approved Special Education Schools, <https://maaps.org/>, Massachusetts Urban Special Education Leadership Collaborative, and the Special Needs Advocacy Network, [www.spanmass.org](http://www.spanmass.org). In addition, the Massachusetts State Special Education Director at MA DESE gives monthly virtual presentations to statewide special education leaders on a wide array of special education compliance and performance topics. During all of these meetings, MA DESE solicits and receives significant feedback that informs the development of special education policy and guidance.

As needed, MA DESE also convenes stakeholder working groups throughout the year to provide focused input on specific projects and policy priorities. Examples of these focused groups include the Early Childhood Interagency Coordinating Council, with membership that includes community members and state agencies, a Statewide Systemic Improvement Plan (SSIP) leadership team and working group, a family engagement workgroup, an advisory group for the Dropout Prevention and Re-engagement Network, and secondary transition stakeholder groups. MA DESE also consults with educators, parents, advocates, and others on an ad hoc basis to inform policy and practice.

MA DESE engages with stakeholders on the direction of Indicator 17, the State's Systemic Improvement Plan (SSIP), at the state, district, classroom, and community levels. Stakeholders are provided with information about activities and goals, training events and embedded supports statewide, and the availability of resources to support and expand implementation. Stakeholders at the district and school levels participate in ongoing decision making about the direction of the SSIP by providing feedback about the quality of events and supports, observed benefits for their own stakeholders, and needs for moving forward with implementation most successfully. In May of 2022, MA DESE met with stakeholders to discuss revisions to the Theory of Action and the Evaluation Plan for the SSIP. Through frequent communication and input from stakeholders revisions to the Theory of Action and Evaluation Plan were made for incorporation and use during the FFY2022 SPP/APR reporting cycle. For additional information on stakeholder engagement related to Indicator 17, please see the Indicator 17 APR.

Stakeholder engagement is an essential component of MA DESE's special education agenda.

#### Historical Data

Baseline Year	Baseline Data
2005	83.40%

FFY	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Target >=	77.00% - 87.00%	77.00% - 87.00%	77.00% - 87.00%	77.00%-87.00%	77.00%-87.00%
Data	82.85%	85.29%	82.87%	83.23%	78.57%

#### Targets

FFY	2021 (low)	2021 (high)	2022 (low)	2022 (high)	2023 (low)	2023 (high)	2024 (low)	2024 (high)	2025 (low)	2025 (high)
Target >=	77.00%	87.00%	77.00%	87.00%	77.00%	87.00%	77.00%	87.00%	77.00%	87.00%

#### FFY 2021 SPP/APR Data

2.1.a.i Mediation agreements related to due process complaints	2.1.b.i Mediation agreements not related to due process complaints	2.1 Number of mediations held	FFY 2020 Data	FFY 2021 Target (low)	FFY 2021 Target (high)	FFY 2021 Data	Status	Slippage
12	417	520	78.57%	77.00%	87.00%	82.50%	Met target	No Slippage

Provide additional information about this indicator (optional)

**16 - Prior FFY Required Actions**

None

**16 - OSEP Response**

**16 - Required Actions**

## Indicator 17: State Systemic Improvement Plan

### Instructions and Measurement

**Monitoring Priority:** General Supervision

The State's SPP/APR includes a State Systemic Improvement Plan (SSIP) that meets the requirements set forth for this indicator.

#### Measurement

The State's SPP/APR includes an SSIP that is a comprehensive, ambitious, yet achievable multi-year plan for improving results for children with disabilities. The SSIP includes each of the components described below.

#### Instructions

**Baseline Data:** The State must provide baseline data that must be expressed as a percentage and which is aligned with the State-identified Measurable Result(s) for Children with Disabilities.

**Targets:** In its FFY 2021 SPP/APR, due February 1, 2023, the State must provide measurable and rigorous targets (expressed as percentages) for each of the six years from FFY 2021 through FFY 2025. The State's FFY 2025 target must demonstrate improvement over the State's baseline data.

**Updated Data:** In its FFYs 2021 through FFY 2025 SPPs/APRs, due February 1, 2023, the State must provide updated data for that specific FFY (expressed as percentages) and that data must be aligned with the State-identified Measurable Result(s) for Children with Disabilities. In its FFYs 2021 through FFY 2025 SPPs/APRs, the State must report on whether it met its target.

#### Overview of the Three Phases of the SSIP

It is of the utmost importance to improve results for children with disabilities by improving educational services, including special education and related services. Stakeholders, including parents of children with disabilities, local educational agencies, the State Advisory Panel, and others, are critical participants in improving results for children with disabilities and should be included in developing, implementing, evaluating, and revising the SSIP and included in establishing the State's targets under Indicator 17. The SSIP should include information about stakeholder involvement in all three phases.

##### **Phase I: Analysis:**

- Data Analysis;
- Analysis of State Infrastructure to Support Improvement and Build Capacity;
- State-identified Measurable Result(s) for Children with Disabilities;
- Selection of Coherent Improvement Strategies; and
- Theory of Action.

**Phase II: Plan** (which, in addition to the Phase I content (including any updates) outlined above:

- Infrastructure Development;
- Support for local educational agency (LEA) Implementation of Evidence-Based Practices; and
- Evaluation.

**Phase III: Implementation and Evaluation** (which, in addition to the Phase I and Phase II content (including any updates) outlined above:

- Results of Ongoing Evaluation and Revisions to the SSIP.

#### Specific Content of Each Phase of the SSIP

Refer to FFY 2013-2015 Measurement Table for detailed requirements of Phase I and Phase II SSIP submissions.

Phase III should only include information from Phase I or Phase II if changes or revisions are being made by the State and/or if information previously required in Phase I or Phase II was not reported.

##### **Phase III: Implementation and Evaluation**

In Phase III, the State must, consistent with its evaluation plan described in Phase II, assess and report on its progress implementing the SSIP. This includes: (A) data and analysis on the extent to which the State has made progress toward and/or met the State-established short-term and long-term outcomes or objectives for implementation of the SSIP and its progress toward achieving the State-identified Measurable Result(s) for Children with Disabilities (SiMR); (B) the rationale for any revisions that were made, or that the State intends to make, to the SSIP as the result of implementation, analysis, and evaluation; and (C) a description of the meaningful stakeholder engagement. If the State intends to continue implementing the SSIP without modifications, the State must describe how the data from the evaluation support this decision.

###### A. Data Analysis

As required in the Instructions for the Indicator/Measurement, in its FFYs 2021 through 2025 SPP/APR, the State must report data for that specific FFY (expressed as actual numbers and percentages) that are aligned with the SiMR. The State must report on whether the State met its target. In addition, the State may report on any additional data (e.g., progress monitoring data) that were collected and analyzed that would suggest progress toward the SiMR. States using a subset of the population from the indicator (e.g., a sample, cohort model) should describe how data are collected and analyzed for the SiMR if that was not described in Phase I or Phase II of the SSIP.

###### B. Phase III Implementation, Analysis and Evaluation

The State must provide a narrative or graphic representation, e.g., a logic model, of the principal activities, measures and outcomes that were implemented since the State's last SSIP submission (i.e., Feb 2022). The evaluation should align with the theory of action described in Phase I and the evaluation plan described in Phase II. The State must describe any changes to the activities, strategies, or timelines described in Phase II and include a rationale or justification for the changes. If the State intends to continue implementing the SSIP without modifications, the State must describe how the data from the evaluation support this decision.

The State must summarize the infrastructure improvement strategies that were implemented, and the short-term outcomes achieved, including the measures or rationale used by the State and stakeholders to assess and communicate achievement. Relate short-term outcomes to one or more areas of a systems framework (e.g., governance, data, finance, accountability/monitoring, quality standards, professional development and/or technical assistance) and explain how these strategies support system change and are necessary for: (a) achievement of the SiMR; (b) sustainability of systems improvement efforts; and/or (c) scale-up. The State must describe the next steps for each infrastructure improvement strategy and the anticipated outcomes to be attained during the next fiscal year (e.g., for the FFY 2021 APR, report on anticipated outcomes to be obtained during FFY 2022, i.e., July 1, 2022-June 30, 2023 for the FFY 2021 APR, report on anticipated outcomes to be obtained during FFY 2022, i.e., July 1, 2022-June 30, 2023).

The State must summarize the specific evidence-based practices that were implemented and the strategies or activities that supported their selection and ensured their use with fidelity. Describe how the evidence-based practices, and activities or strategies that support their use, are intended to impact the SiMR by changing program/district policies, procedures, and/or practices, teacher/provider practices (i.e., behaviors), parent/caregiver outcomes,

and/or child outcomes. Describe any additional data (i.e., progress monitoring data) that was collected to support the on-going use of the evidence-based practices and inform decision-making for the next year of SSIP implementation.

**C. Stakeholder Engagement**

The State must describe the specific strategies implemented to engage stakeholders in key improvement efforts and how the State addressed concerns, if any, raised by stakeholders through its engagement activities.

**Additional Implementation Activities**

The State should identify any activities not already described that it intends to implement in the next fiscal year (e.g., for the FFY 2021 APR, report on activities it intends to implement in FFY 2022, i.e., July 1, 2022-June 30, 2023 for the FFY 2021 APR, report on activities it intends to implement in FFY 2022, i.e., July 1, 2022-June 30, 2023)) including a timeline, anticipated data collection and measures, and expected outcomes that are related to the SIMR. The State should describe any newly identified barriers and include steps to address these barriers.

**17 - Indicator Data**

**Section A: Data Analysis**

**What is the State-identified Measurable Result (SiMR)?**

The Massachusetts SSIP (MA SSIP) is designed to improve social and emotional outcomes for preschool children with disabilities. The SiMR is aligned with the MA SSIP Theory of Action and is assessed using statewide results for Indicator 7: Preschool Outcomes, Outcome A: Percent of preschool children ages 3–5 with IEPs [individualized education programs] who demonstrate improved positive social-emotional skills (including social relationships). To address Indicator 7, child-level data are collected through the Child Outcomes Summary (COS) process. Results are analyzed according to two summary statements: Summary Statement 1 = Of those preschool children who entered the preschool program below age expectations in Outcome A, the percent who substantially increased their rate of growth by the time they turned 6 or exited the program, and Summary Statement 2 = The percent of preschool children who were functioning within age expectations in Outcome A by age 6 or exited from the program.

**Has the SiMR changed since the last SSIP submission? (yes/no)**

NO

**Is the State using a subset of the population from the indicator (e.g., a sample, cohort model)? (yes/no)**

NO

**Is the State’s theory of action new or revised since the previous submission? (yes/no)**

NO

**Please provide a link to the current theory of action.**

<https://www.doe.mass.edu/sped/spp/maspp.html>

**Progress toward the SiMR**

**Please provide the data for the specific FFY listed below (expressed as actual number and percentages).**

**Select yes if the State uses two targets for measurement. (yes/no)**

YES

**Historical Data**

Part	Baseline Year	Baseline Data
A	2017	85.61%
B	2017	47.00%

**Targets**

FFY	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Target A >=	86.00%	86.00%	86.50%	87.00%	88.00%
Target B >=	50.00%	50.00%	50.25%	50.50%	51.00%

**FFY 2021 SPP/APR Data**

Part	For Part A, the numerator is the sum of all children in Indicator 7 OSEP Progress Categories c and d. For Part B, the numerator is the sum of all children in Indicator 7 OSEP	For Part A, the denominator is the sum of all children in Indicator 7 OSEP Progress Categories a, b, c, and d. For Part B, the denominator is the sum of all children in	FFY 2020 Data	FFY 2021 Target	FFY 2021 Data	Status	Slippage

	Progress Categories d and e.	all Indicator 7 OSEP Progress Categories a through e.					
A	1,535	1,790	80.09%	86.00%	85.75%	Did not meet target	No Slippage
B	958	2,105	44.53%	50.00%	45.51%	Did not meet target	No Slippage

**Provide the data source for the FFY 2021 data.**

Indicator 7 child-level data are collected through the Child Outcomes Summary (COS) process. Results are analyzed according to two summary statements: Summary Statement 1 = Of those preschool children who entered the preschool program below age expectations in Outcome A, the percent who substantially increased their rate of growth by the time they turned 6 or exited the program, and Summary Statement 2 = The percent of preschool children who were functioning within age expectations in Outcome A by age 6 or exited from the program.

**Please describe how data are collected and analyzed for the SiMR.**

The SiMR is assessed using statewide results for Indicator 7: Preschool Outcomes, Outcome A. Districts collected child-level entry and exit COS data for preschool aged children (3–5 years of age) receiving special education services. For the 2021–22 school year, MA DESE developed and implemented the Early Childhood Outcomes Summary (ECOS) database to assist districts with submitting data gathered through the COS process. The ECOS database is linked with the Student Information Management System (SIMS). All students identified in SIMS as receiving early childhood special education are populated in the ECOS database. Part 1 of ECOS includes fields for the date services started and entry ratings for the three child outcomes (i.e., positive social-emotional skills, acquisition and use of knowledge and skills, and use of appropriate behaviors to meet needs). For districts participating in Pyramid Model implementation through the SSIP, there is a field to indicate if the child was in a classroom that was implementing the Pyramid Model. Part 2 of ECOS includes fields for the date the child exited preschool special education, an indicator for if the child left the district without exit data being collected, and exit ratings and progress questions for the three outcomes. A reporting feature within ECOS is currently being developed. For the 2021-22 school year, reporting districts were required to submit data by August 31, 2022. MA DESE and the external evaluator supported districts with data collection and submission through frequent communication and technical assistance (TA). For FFY 2021, this included TA on data entry and navigation of the new online database.

After the data collection deadline, the external evaluator identified records meeting OSEP-established criteria (exited during the 2021–22 school year, received services for at least 6 months, has exit data, was 3 years old when services started, and was 5 years old at exit [defined as 6 years minus 1 day]). The external evaluator then ran a check on OSEP progress category calculations using the ECTA Center algorithm ([https://ectacenter.org/eco/assets/pdfs/Summary\\_of\\_Rules\\_COSF\\_to\\_OSEP\\_8-9-07.pdf](https://ectacenter.org/eco/assets/pdfs/Summary_of_Rules_COSF_to_OSEP_8-9-07.pdf)) to ensure accuracy, and, upon verification, analyzed the counts of each progress category. Finally, the external evaluator used the ECTA Center Summary Statement Calculator (<https://ectacenter.org/eco/assets/xls/SummaryStatementCalculator.xls>) to calculate the summary statements as well as the ECTA Center Meaningful Differences Calculator (<https://ectacenter.org/eco/assets/xls/MeaningfulDifferencesCalculator.xlsx>) to compare FFY 2021 summary statements with FFY 2020 summary statements.

**Optional: Has the State collected additional data (i.e., benchmark, CQI, survey) that demonstrates progress toward the SiMR? (yes/no)**

YES

**Describe any additional data collected by the State to assess progress toward the SiMR.**

The external evaluator collected survey data from Pyramid Model district leadership teams, external coaches, teachers, and training participants. Surveys included items asking participants to reflect on the perceived benefits of Pyramid Model implementation on the social and emotional outcomes of children with disabilities. Results from these surveys are discussed below. In addition, the external evaluator analyzed fidelity of implementation data from the Early Childhood Benchmarks of Quality (EC-BOQ). Data from this self-rating tool was submitted by external coaches supporting Pyramid Model leadership teams. EC-BOQ results are discussed below.

**Did the State identify any general data quality concerns, unrelated to COVID-19, that affected progress toward the SiMR during the reporting period? (yes/no)**

YES

**Describe any data quality issues, unrelated to COVID-19, specific to the SiMR data and include actions taken to address data quality concerns.**

DESE identified two data quality issues specific to the SiMR data:

1. Lack of data completeness. The total number of complete entry and exit records collected from districts (n = 2,105) represents 20% of the FFY21 three to five year old child count (N = 10,397), which is an improvement over the 12% representation last year. Technical assistance (TA) providers from the Early Childhood Technical Assistance Center (ECTA) and the Center for IDEA Early Childhood Data Systems (DaSy) recommend 12% as a minimum standard of completeness (MA State Child Outcomes Profile: Part B 619 FFY 2020). However, this approximate FFY21 representation figure of 20% is still considerably below the approximately 50% national average. Therefore, the child outcomes data collected for the SiMR may not accurately represent the actual outcomes of all students receiving early childhood special education services in Massachusetts. Reasons for the lack of data completeness include the use of a statewide cohort model for data collection and limited capacity within some districts to collect data for all students receiving preschool special education services. To address these issues, beginning in the 2022–23 school year DESE is no longer using a cohort model for data collection and will require all districts to submit entry and exit data on an annual basis. To support the shift to annual reporting and to build district capacity to collect data, DESE is providing districts with additional training and support in collaboration with the external evaluator and TA providers from ECTA, DaSy, and The IDEA Data Center (IDC). The ECOS database also supports data completeness by being more user friendly than the previous SmartForms and being accessible on both Mac and PC systems. MA DESE continues to work toward increasing districts' capacity for reporting high-quality data to ensure valid and reliable results.

2. Validity of ratings. Through conversations with districts and survey data, DESE has identified a need for additional TA for districts on collecting child outcomes data through the COS process. DESE is working with the external evaluator and TA providers from ECTA, DaSy, and IDC on providing additional supports for districts. As an example, DESE is analyzing child outcomes data to identify districts that report data with unexpected outcome patterns and will provide targeted support to these districts. DESE is also planning on updating guidance materials and providing additional universal

supports on COS data collection processes. In addition, the ECOS database supports valid ratings because it includes edit checks that produce error messages to alert the user of data entry issues, such as “impossible” combinations of ratings and exit progress question answers.

**Did the State identify any data quality concerns directly related to the COVID-19 pandemic during the reporting period? (yes/no)**

YES

**If data for this reporting period were impacted specifically by COVID-19, the State must include in the narrative for the indicator: (1) the impact on data completeness, validity and reliability for the indicator; (2) an explanation of how COVID-19 specifically impacted the State’s ability to collect the data for the indicator; and (3) any steps the State took to mitigate the impact of COVID-19 on the data collection.**

The child outcomes data for this reporting period may have been impacted by COVID-19 due to the impact on COS entry ratings that were collected following the onset of COVID-19 in March 2020. District teams’ ability to convene meetings for COS ratings with all stakeholders present, full access to all prior assessments/documentation, and day-to-day interactions with students and families may all have been affected to some extent during the 2019–20 and 2020–21 school years. Therefore, it is reasonable to infer that the overall reliability and validity of the measure may have been impacted for students who exited from preschool special education during FFY 2021. To mitigate these impacts, DESE provided TA to districts on entry and exit data collection processes and shared resources from ECTA via phone calls and e-mail.

**Section B: Implementation, Analysis and Evaluation**

**Please provide a link to the State’s current evaluation plan.**

<https://www.doe.mass.edu/sped/spp/maspp.html>

**Is the State’s evaluation plan new or revised since the previous submission? (yes/no)**

NO

**Provide a summary of each infrastructure improvement strategy implemented in the reporting period:**

**Pyramid Model External Coaching:** DESE continues to collaborate with the Pyramid Model Consortium (PMC) to provide district staff with coaching and training to support Pyramid Model implementation at the local level. PMC external coaches continued to provide individualized support to districts during the 2021–22 school year. External coaches guide the sites in all aspects of Pyramid Model implementation, with the goal of gradually fading support as leadership teams establish processes that can be sustained locally. External coaches provide a wide range of services, including supporting the formation and functioning of district Pyramid Model leadership teams.

**Pyramid Model Training:** In addition to external coaching, PMC offered virtual statewide professional learning opportunities to support Pyramid Model implementation. The statewide trainings include topics such as Practice-Based Coaching (PBC) for internal coaches who support teaching staff, the Teaching Pyramid Observation Tool (TPOT) reliability training, Prevent-Teach-Reinforce for Young Children, devoted to intensive intervention strategies, and Behavior Incident Report (BIR) System, which guides participants in learning about the decision-making process using the BIR. Districts also have access to foundational Pyramid Model practice trainings. These trainings are facilitated by the external coach or by using the online ePyramid Modules through the Massachusetts learning management system for self-paced learning.

**Pyramid Model Statewide Summit:** The 9th annual statewide summit, Cultivating Happier Environments for Children and Early Childhood Providers, was held virtually in April and May 2022. The event featured a positive psychology speaker and author who shared strategies for increasing happiness and wellbeing among teachers and school leaders. It also included the following sessions: Feel Happier (even in tough times); Resilience, Relationships, and Relief: Using Positive Psychology to Thrive in Tough Times; and Act As If: A Science-based Approach to a Happier, More Confident You!

**Collaboration with Project ReAct:** MA DESE and PMC have engaged experts from the University of Oregon College of Education to advise on efforts to promote equity in Pyramid Model districts, using a professional development model (Project ReAct) that aims to reduce racial/ethnic disproportionality in school discipline and special education referrals. During FFY 21, PMC external coaches attended training sessions with Project ReAct professional development providers to develop skills in coaching preschool leaders and educators in implementing effective practices to promote equity and reduce racial and ethnic disproportionality in school discipline.

**Describe the short-term or intermediate outcomes achieved for each infrastructure improvement strategy during the reporting period including the measures or rationale used by the State and stakeholders to assess and communicate achievement. Please relate short-term outcomes to one or more areas of a systems framework (e.g., governance, data, finance, accountability/monitoring, quality standards, professional development and/or technical assistance) and explain how these strategies support system change and are necessary for: (a) achievement of the SiMR; (b) sustainability of systems improvement efforts; and/or (c) scale-up.**

**Pyramid Model External Coaching:** Short-term and intermediate outcomes achieved for Pyramid Model External Coaching include improved capacity to support Pyramid Model implementation among participating personnel and improved fidelity of implementation of Pyramid Model practices. During the 2021–22 school year, 37 school districts participated in Pyramid Model external coaching supports delivered through PMC. External coaching most frequently focused on supporting Pyramid Model leadership teams, including activities such as assisting the team leader in planning meetings, supporting the EC-BOQ process, and assisting with planning professional development for staff. For the 2021–22 school year, monthly coach log data indicated that 95% of participating districts had documented coaching support. Data from the District Leadership Team Survey conducted in April 2022 indicate that out of 25 districts responding to the survey, 21 (84%) reported that they had much or all of the support needed to implement the Pyramid Model successfully. The areas of greatest perceived progress for districts were maintaining fidelity to the Early Childhood Benchmarks of Quality (EC-BOQ) and implementing strategies to promote equity. On the External Coach Survey, conducted in May 2022, 12 out of 16 coaches described their proudest achievement as helping districts remain engaged in the implementation process through the challenges of COVID-19, through consistent connection and flexible and tailored supports. Pyramid Model external coaching supports the professional development and quality standards components of a systems framework. Job-embedded coaching supports preschool educators with implementing Pyramid Model practices with fidelity, which will ultimately lead to improved outcomes for children with disabilities (i.e., achievement of the SiMR). DESE shared data related to external coaching with the Special Education Advisory Panel on January 11, 2022.

**Pyramid Model Statewide Training:** Short-term and intermediate outcomes achieved as a result of Pyramid Model Statewide Training include improved knowledge and skills of participants related to Pyramid Model implementation. Post-event surveys indicated that individuals who participated in statewide trainings reported gains in knowledge and skills in Pyramid Model content and implementation strategies and found the events to be high quality. Ratings across all items for all trainings ranged from 3.1 to 4 on a 4-point scale where 1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = agree, and 4 = strongly agree, indicating the overall value of these experiences for participants. Participation in the statewide training events was relatively low in 2021–22, continuing a downward trend in attendance that began in 2020–21. On the District Leadership Team Survey, respondents cited competing priorities and

difficulty with training dates and times as barriers to attendance. The statewide Pyramid Model trainings support the professional development component of a systems framework and are necessary supports for personnel to implement the Pyramid Model with fidelity, which will ultimately lead to improved outcomes for children with disabilities (i.e., achievement of the SIMR). DESE shared data related to statewide training with the Special Education Advisory Panel (SEAP) on January 11, 2022.

**Pyramid Model Statewide Summit:** Short-term and intermediate outcomes achieved for the Pyramid Model Statewide Summit include improved knowledge of wellness, relationship, and resilience strategies among participants. Post-event participant survey feedback indicated that participants felt that the annual summit met the intended objectives and was high-quality, relevant, and useful. Participants rated the overall quality of each event on a 5-point scale: 1 = poor, 2 = fair, 3 = good, 4 = very good, and 5 = excellent. Out of 128 total survey responses across the three sessions, 118 (92%) indicated that the event was "Excellent" or "Very Good". The Pyramid Model Statewide Summit supports the professional development component of a systems framework and is intended to promote the knowledge, skills, and dispositions that preschool staff need to implement the Pyramid Model with fidelity, which will ultimately lead to improved outcomes for children with disabilities (i.e., achievement of the SIMR).

**Collaboration with Project ReAct:** Short-term and intermediate outcomes achieved as a result of collaboration with Project ReAct include improved knowledge and capacity of external coaches to support district personnel in implementing strategies to promote equity and reduce disproportionate discipline. PMC external coaches met with staff from Project ReAct during four virtual learning sessions in Spring 2022. These learning sessions focused on practices preschool staff and coaches can use to reduce disproportionate use of discipline, including "get to know you" activities, praise preference assessments, and the personal matrix, among others. In addition, the group discussed the importance of understanding implicit bias. The sessions also examined how to use the EC-BOQ Cultural Responsiveness Companion to improve the fit of the Pyramid Model with the needs of all children and families. The equity-focused work with Project ReAct supports the professional development component of a systems framework. The collaboration with project ReAct is intended to support district personnel in using behavior data and culturally responsive behavior strategies to support all students, including students with disabilities.

**Did the State implement any new (newly identified) infrastructure improvement strategies during the reporting period? (yes/no)**

YES

**Describe each new (newly identified) infrastructure improvement strategy and the short-term or intermediate outcomes achieved.**

**ECOS database:** During FFY 2021, DESE began developing the ECOS database. The ECOS database replaced the Microsoft Excel SmartForms previously used by districts to gather Indicator 7 data. ECOS was designed to be securely accessible on any device with a web browser and incorporates automated quality checking features that we anticipate will improve the ease and accuracy of Indicator 7 data collection. The ECOS database includes a reporting feature that will allow districts to access and use their Indicator 7 data, including subgroup data, to guide continuous improvement efforts to support the social-emotional outcomes of preschool children with IEPs. DESE and the external evaluator provided a range of technical assistance to support districts' use of the new database, including developing guidance documents and providing individualized support. In October 2022, DESE provided a webinar detailing Indicator 7 data entry procedures within the new database. Districts began entering data into the ECOS database shortly after it was launched in November 2021 and were required to finalize data entry by August 31, 2022. Short-term and intermediate outcomes achieved for the ECOS database include improved data completeness and data quality. Data completeness increased this year with 2105 usable records, a 60% increase from the previous year. The ECOS database supports DESE's goal of improving data completeness and data quality. In addition, the reporting feature of the database will allow districts to access and use child outcomes data as part of continuous improvement efforts at the local level.

**Indicator 7 and COS technical assistance:** During FFY 2021, DESE engaged in planning discussions with TA providers from ECTA about how to improve the capacity of district personnel to collect valid and reliable Indicator 7 child outcomes data. This collaboration and focus on improving data quality will continue in FFY 2022. DESE will offer universal and targeted training and support for districts in collaboration with TA providers from ECTA. Short-term outcomes achieved include improved plans for supporting districts with Indicator 7 data collection.

**Listening Sessions with SSIP Districts:** In fall 2021, DESE conducted a series of listening sessions with district leaders from SSIP districts to learn more about their experiences implementing the Pyramid Model, current barriers, and needed supports. Several districts expressed a desire for an ongoing time to meet to discuss Pyramid Model implementation with other districts. As a result, DESE will begin offering monthly Communities of Practice for SSIP districts beginning in January 2023. Short-term outcomes achieved include improved communication and collaboration with SSIP districts regarding implementation challenges and needed supports.

**Provide a summary of the next steps for each infrastructure improvement strategy and the anticipated outcomes to be attained during the next reporting period.**

**Pyramid Model External Coaching:** DESE and PMC will continue to provide external coaching to support districts with Pyramid Model implementation during the 2022–23 school year. Due to the impacts of COVID-19, several implementation sites have requested a re-launch of Pyramid Model implementation this school year. DESE and PMC are working with these sites to provide foundational supports as necessary. In addition, coaches are supporting all districts with a renewed emphasis on fidelity of implementation following two school years in which the impacts of COVID-19 affected the ability of leadership teams and staff to attend professional learning sessions and engage in Pyramid Model implementation activities. As part of the renewed focus on fidelity, DESE and PMC have requested that all participating districts sign a letter of commitment/recommitment to ensure that there is mutual understanding about the requirements of the initiative. At this time, 26 districts have signed the commitment/recommitment letter. While increasing the emphasis on fidelity of implementation, DESE and PMC are also offering districts more tailored TA to enhance alignment with district priorities and goals. For example, several districts have expressed an interest in increasing the focus on inclusive practices for young children with disabilities. During the next reporting period, anticipated outcomes include increased engagement and commitment of SSIP districts in implementing Pyramid Model practices with fidelity, increased collection and use of data to drive continuous improvement, and improved coaching and professional development infrastructure.

**Pyramid Model Statewide Training:** DESE and PMC are continuing to provide virtual statewide trainings during the 2022–23 school year. Trainings scheduled for the 2022–23 school year include: Practice-Based Coaching, Targeted Strategies for Inclusion of Children with Disabilities, TPOT Reliability Training, Behavior Incident Report System, Prevent–Teach–Reinforce for Young Children, and Prevent–Teach–Reinforce for Families. Sessions range in duration from two to six hours and are facilitated by national experts in Pyramid Model implementation. PMC is working with LEAs to schedule trainings based on their availability and preferences. PMC is also encouraging LEAs to attend nationwide trainings if the state options are not convenient. During the next reporting period, anticipated outcomes include increased knowledge and skills of training participants and increased reach and scale of Pyramid Model practices.

**Pyramid Model Statewide Summit:** Based on the family focus group findings and ongoing feedback received from the LEAs, the virtual Statewide Summit will provide general and targeted breakout sessions where LEAs and families can learn more about the different aspects of the Pyramid Model program (e.g., COS ratings, using data to inform instruction, enhancing school/family partnership, providing culturally sustaining, inclusive learning

environments, etc.). During the next reporting period, anticipated outcomes include increased knowledge and skills of summit participants in Pyramid Model strategies, increased reach and scale of Pyramid Model practices, increased fidelity of Pyramid Model implementation, improved knowledge and skills in implementing culturally sustaining/responsive practices using Pyramid Model strategies, and enhanced school/parent collaborations to support positive social emotional outcomes in preschool programs.

**Collaboration with Project ReAct:** During the current school year, DESE and PMC will select a set of pilot districts to support with implementing the practices identified by Project ReAct, within the Pyramid Model framework. Pilot sites will participate in professional development and coaching aimed at reducing discipline disproportionality. PMC, in collaboration with Project ReAct staff, will offer monthly virtual training sessions for program staff, virtual coaching and ongoing support for leadership teams, individualized TA with data collection and analysis to support decision making, and individualized planning, training, and support as needed. PMC is currently recruiting districts for this initiative and conducted an informational webinar on November 30, 2022 for interested districts. During the next reporting period, anticipated outcomes include improved knowledge and skills in culturally sustaining/responsive practices and improved motivation to implement culturally sustaining/responsive practices to support children's social-emotional development.

**ECOS database:** DESE is continuing to improve the usability of the ECOS database and develop a reporting feature to allow district-level users to access child outcomes data in a range of visually appealing formats. Districts will be able to compare school and district data, including subgroup data, with state averages for each outcome. Once reports are available, DESE plans to provide technical assistance to support districts with using data and reports for continuous program improvement. DESE and the external evaluator will continue to support districts with entering data within the ECOS database. In addition, DESE will continue to make improvements to the database to improve overall usability. During the next reporting period, anticipated outcomes include improved data completeness, access to data, and data use among districts.

#### **List the selected evidence-based practices implement in the reporting period:**

The MA SSIP is designed to improve social-emotional outcomes for preschool children with disabilities. Massachusetts selected the implementation of the Pyramid Model for Promoting Social Emotional Competence in Infants and Young Children (Pyramid Model) as its evidence-based practice (EBP) to achieve this goal. Practice-based coaching (PBC) is a core feature of Pyramid Model implementation and is an evidence-based approach to coaching in early childhood settings.

#### **Provide a summary of each evidence-based practices.**

The Pyramid Model is a research-based framework supporting the implementation of EBPs in early childhood education settings. Tier 1 universal practices focus on responsive and nurturing relationships, including relationships with families, and supportive environments that promote children's engagement. Tier 2 practices include targeted social-emotional supports in areas such as friendship skills, problem solving, and anger management. Tier 3 practices are intensive and individualized to support children with persistent behavior challenges. An effective workforce provides the foundation for the framework and is supported by the systems and policies needed to ensure that the workforce can adopt and sustain the Pyramid Model EBPs.

At the classroom level, key practice areas of the Pyramid Model, as described in the Teaching Pyramid Observation Tool (TPOT), include: (1) schedules, routines, and activities; (2) transitions between activities are appropriate; (3) engaging in supportive conversations with children; (4) promoting children's engagement; (5) providing directions; (6) collaborative teaming; (7) teaching behavior expectations; (8) teaching social skills and emotional competencies; (9) teaching friendship skills; (10) teaching children to express emotions; (11) teaching problem solving; (12) interventions for persistent challenging behavior; (13) connecting with families; and (14) supporting family use of the Pyramid Model.

At the district/program level, key practice areas of the Pyramid Model, as described in the EC-BOQ, include: (1) Establish Leadership Teams, (2) Staff Buy-In, (3) Family Engagement, (4) Program-Wide Expectations, (5) Professional Development and Staff Support Plan, (6) Procedures for Responding to Challenging Behavior, and (7) Monitoring Implementation and Outcomes.

PBC is a cyclical process for guiding practitioners' use of evidence-based practices for promoting positive child outcomes and includes collaborative partnerships, shared goals and action planning, focused observations, and reflections and feedback.

#### **Provide a summary of how each evidence-based practice and activities or strategies that support its use, is intended to impact the SiMR by changing program/district policies, procedures, and/or practices, teacher/provider practices (e.g. behaviors), parent/caregiver outcomes, and/or child /outcomes.**

Implementation of the Pyramid Model at the classroom level is intended to promote positive child outcomes by building children's social-emotional competence and reducing challenging behaviors through the use of evidence-based and culturally sustaining/responsive practices. When educators implement these practices with fidelity, they create nurturing relationships and supportive, inclusive environments that promote positive social-emotional outcomes in young children. In addition, the model includes targeted and explicit teaching of social and emotional competencies, and intensive intervention to address persistent adult-identified behavior challenges. The long-term goal of Pyramid Model implementation as part of the SSIP is for students with disabilities to enter the K – 12 system with the social-emotional competencies that will allow them to access and participate in the general education curriculum and in all aspects of school. Professional development and ongoing coaching for teachers is a necessary support for successful implementation of Pyramid Model EBPs. At the district/program level, Pyramid Model implementation focuses on creating the conditions that promote successful implementation of Pyramid Model EBPs in schools and classrooms. District leadership teams build the infrastructure and capacity of personnel to implement Pyramid Model EBPs. Professional development and ongoing coaching for leadership teams ensures that districts establish the necessary capacity to facilitate Pyramid Model implementation in schools and classrooms. The ongoing use of data to guide decision making at the classroom, school, and district levels supports the effective implementation of Pyramid Model EBPs that will lead to improved social-emotional outcomes for children with disabilities.

The Pyramid Model framework is a key component of the MA SSIP Theory of Action. As state and interagency early childhood special education (ECSE) initiatives support scale up of implementation of Pyramid Model EBPs, ECSE programs will have access to high-quality PD and develop leadership teams that use data to guide improvements. In turn, as staff implement EBPs and continue to engage families, classroom-level activities will move toward greater fidelity to the model. Therefore, by building local capacity and using data for continuous improvement, social-emotional outcomes for preschool children with disabilities will improve.

#### **Describe the data collected to monitor fidelity of implementation and to assess practice change.**

The EC-BOQ tracks the achievement of program-related implementation goals required for fidelity of implementation and sustainability. Members of district leadership teams collaboratively assess program-wide implementation of the Pyramid Model across seven critical elements. During the 2021–22 school year, 17 districts (46%) completed the EC-BOQ and submitted results as part of the evaluation. District leadership teams reported growth across all EC–BOQ critical elements between the first and most recent use of the EC-BOQ. The greatest growth across time has been in Program-wide

Expectations, followed by Family Engagement, Staff Buy-in, and Procedures for Responding to Challenging Behavior. Districts made the least amount of growth with Monitoring Implementation and Outcomes, which also received the lowest score, on average, by participating districts.

**Describe any additional data (e.g. progress monitoring) that was collected that supports the decision to continue the ongoing use of each evidence-based practice.**

In addition to the EC-BOQ, data regarding the phase of implementation of each site provides information about overall progress in implementation. PMC external coaches reported the phase of implementation of their programs and districts in the monthly coaching log. The Massachusetts Program-wide Implementation in Phases Tool identifies the critical external coach activities, professional development priorities, and Leadership Team “deliverables” for each phase of implementation, from Prelaunch (Phase 0) to Sustainability (Phase 8). Most districts and programs remained in early phases of implementation throughout the year, from Prelaunch (Phase 0) through Begin Data Collection (Phase 3).

On the District Leadership Team Survey, team members were asked to assess the progress of their district or program during the year in five areas: increasing fidelity of implementation at the program/district level as aligned to the EC-BOQ, increasing teachers’ fidelity of implementation as aligned to the TPOT, broadening the use of culturally responsive practices to promote equity, increasing family engagement, and increasing the use of data for program planning and improvement. The areas of greatest perceived progress for districts were EC-BOQ fidelity and Equity (n = 13 reporting “moderate” or better progress in both areas). Survey respondents were asked whether they had established internal coaching and, if they had, whether they had made progress in building the capacity of their internal coaches in the past year. Out of 27 districts responding, 17 (63%) indicated that they had one or more internal coaches in place. Of these 17 districts with internal coaching in place, 5 districts reported improved capacity for internal coaching within the past year.

On the District Leadership Team Survey, respondents were also asked to report the extent to which Pyramid Model implementation has benefitted children and families (“not at all”; “small,” “moderate,” or “great extent”; or “not sure”) in six outcome areas related to improved social competencies, relationships, and behavior practices. Of the 25 districts responding, between 70 and 80 percent reported that Pyramid Model implementation had benefitted children and families to a moderate or great extent on five of the six outcomes, with 76% reporting perceived improvements in the social competencies of children with disabilities as a result of Pyramid Model implementation.

**Provide a summary of the next steps for each evidence-based practices and the anticipated outcomes to be attained during the next reporting period.**

DESE will continue to collaborate with PMC to provide Pyramid Model coaching and training for participating districts. Due to the impacts of COVID-19, several districts have expressed a desire for a relaunch of Pyramid Model implementation during the 2021–22 school year. DESE and PMC are providing these districts with foundational, targeted training and supporting the formation or reformation of Pyramid Model leadership teams. DESE is also having all participating districts sign a commitment/re-commitment letter to clarify the expectations for participation in Pyramid Model training and coaching.

**Does the State intend to continue implementing the SSIP without modifications? (yes/no)**

NO

**If no, describe any changes to the activities, strategies or timelines described in the previous submission and include a rationale or justification for the changes.**

DESE plans to place greater emphasis on fidelity of implementation as participating districts continue to engage in the initiative. For example, DESE and PMC external coaches plan to ensure that all participating districts have collected fidelity data using the EC-BOQ and that most districts (i.e., at least 85%) have collected data using the Teaching Pyramid Observation Tool (TPOT). To assist districts with collecting, managing, and using fidelity data, districts will use the Pyramid Implementation Data System (PIDS). The PIDS is a secure web application that allows data entry, reporting, and administrative functions to be used by early childhood programs that are implementing the Pyramid Model. The data system allows for streamlined data entry and analysis at the child, classroom, program, school, community/regional, and state levels. PMC is currently working with districts to establish data-sharing agreements for Pyramid Model data.

## **Section C: Stakeholder Engagement**

### **Description of Stakeholder Input**

MA DESE is committed to a continuous system of engaging stakeholders to develop targets and set priorities for improvement in each of the areas reported in the SPP/APR.

The Special Education Advisory Panel (SEAP) and Special Education State Advisory Council (SAC), comprised of parents, individuals with disabilities, educators, administrators, and representatives from state agencies, higher education, and other stakeholder groups, meets at least four times each school year to review data, discuss policy priorities, and identify unmet needs in the area of special education consistent with state law and IDEA Part B. At each meeting, the group addressed various aspects of the SPP/APR and the State’s general supervision systems, as well as relevant policy matters. In FFY2020 MA DESE facilitated discussions with the SEAP and SAC to establish baselines and targets for the performance Indicators. In FFY2021, MA DESE discussed each Indicator’s performance and impacts on the LEA Determinations and Accountability and Assistance systems. MA DESE is committed to keep members of the SEAP and SAC up to date on processes and supports provided to LEA’s in order to improve outcomes for students with disabilities. MA DESE will continue discussions around and current data, longitudinal targets, historical rates of performance and compliance and the trajectory for improvement for each of the Indicators, and the effectiveness of focused improvement activities within the context of the state’s Results Driven Accountability framework.

The SAC is required by Massachusetts General Law (M.G.L. c. 15, § 1G

<https://malegislature.gov/Laws/GeneralLaws/PartI/TitleII/Chapter15/Section1G>). The purpose of the SAC is to advise the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education and to make other programmatic recommendations as it deems necessary to fulfill the goals established by the board.

The SEAP is required by IDEA (34 CFR §§ 300.167-300.169 [https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-34/subtitle-B/chapter-III/part-300#sg34.2.300\\_1166.sg15](https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-34/subtitle-B/chapter-III/part-300#sg34.2.300_1166.sg15)). The purpose of the SEAP is to advise the State Education Authority (SEA) of unmet needs within the State regarding the education of children with disabilities. The Panel comments publicly on proposed rules or regulations regarding the education of children with disabilities. The Panel’s advisory function to the State Education Authority (SEA) in developing evaluations and reporting 618 data (IDEA data) to USED and in developing corrective action plans to address findings in Federal monitoring reports under IDEA Part B. The Panel also advises the SEA in developing and implementing policies relating to the coordination of services for children with disabilities.

MA DESE has set a high priority on expanding the agency's capacity to solicit broad and diverse stakeholder input to set SPP/APR targets, analyze data, develop improvement strategies, and evaluate progress. For FFY2021, MA DESE sought to continue stakeholder Indicator knowledge that began in FFY2020. A new SPP/APR webpage, previously linked above, was created and posted along with new webpages for Indicators 4, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 15, 16, and 17. Small changes were made to previously created webpages for Indicators 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, 8, and 14 with Quick Reference Guides (QRGs) and PowerPoints for each Indicator. These QRGs and PowerPoints were available in six languages that correspond to the most common languages spoken in Massachusetts: English, Spanish, Portuguese, Chinese, Vietnamese, and Haitian Creole. Narrated versions of each PowerPoint were also available in English on the YouTube page of our partner, the Federation for Children with Special Needs (the Massachusetts Parent Training and Information Center/PTIC). MA DESE hosted six virtual stakeholder information and feedback sessions to broaden stakeholder knowledge on Indicators 4, 9, 10, 11, 12, and 13, while also soliciting feedback for Indicators 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, 8, 14, and 17 and presenting information to stakeholders, such as performance towards the targets set in FFY2020. These informational sessions featured a large group presentation on each topic, that was simultaneously translated into Spanish, Portuguese, Chinese, Vietnamese, and Haitian Creole. After each large group presentation, breakout rooms were opened in each of the previously mentioned languages, where stakeholders would be able to communicate and ask questions, in their native language, to MA DESE staff.

MA DESE also consults regularly, on a monthly or at least quarterly basis, with Massachusetts Administrators of Special Education, <http://www.asepage.org/>, the Federation for Children with Special Needs, <https://fcsn.org/>, Massachusetts Advocates for Children, <https://www.massadvocates.org/>, the Massachusetts Association of Approved Special Education Schools, <https://maaps.org/>, Massachusetts Urban Special Education Leadership Collaborative, and the Special Needs Advocacy Network, [www.spanmass.org](http://www.spanmass.org). In addition, the Massachusetts State Special Education Director at MA DESE gives monthly virtual presentations to statewide special education leaders on a wide array of special education compliance and performance topics. During all of these meetings, MA DESE solicits and receives significant feedback that informs the development of special education policy and guidance.

As needed, MA DESE also convenes stakeholder working groups throughout the year to provide focused input on specific projects and policy priorities. Examples of these focused groups include the Early Childhood Interagency Coordinating Council, with membership that includes community members and state agencies, a Statewide Systemic Improvement Plan (SSIP) leadership team and working group, a family engagement workgroup, an advisory group for the Dropout Prevention and Re-engagement Network, and secondary transition stakeholder groups. MA DESE also consults with educators, parents, advocates, and others on an ad hoc basis to inform policy and practice.

MA DESE engages with stakeholders on the direction of Indicator 17, the State's Systemic Improvement Plan (SSIP), at the state, district, classroom, and community levels. Stakeholders are provided with information about activities and goals, training events and embedded supports statewide, and the availability of resources to support and expand implementation. Stakeholders at the district and school levels participate in ongoing decision making about the direction of the SSIP by providing feedback about the quality of events and supports, observed benefits for their own stakeholders, and needs for moving forward with implementation most successfully. In May of 2022, MA DESE met with stakeholders to discuss revisions to the Theory of Action and the Evaluation Plan for the SSIP. Through frequent communication and input from stakeholders revisions to the Theory of Action and Evaluation Plan were made for incorporation and use during the FFY2022 SPP/APR reporting cycle. For additional information on stakeholder engagement related to Indicator 17, please see the Indicator 17 APR.

Stakeholder engagement is an essential component of MA DESE's special education agenda.

DESE sought stakeholder input on the SSIP during SEAP meetings on January 11th and May 10th 2022. At the January 11th meeting, DESE provided an overview of Pyramid Model implementation and shared implementation data collected to date. DESE also summarized findings from FFY20 analysis of child outcomes data. At the May meeting, DESE presented the proposed revisions to the SSIP Theory of Action and the rationale behind these proposed changes. In addition, DESE presented an overview of the evaluation plan and sought feedback from the group on the updated evaluation questions. Panel members provided positive feedback regarding the proposed changes and reinforced the importance of culturally sustaining/responsive practices and family engagement. For example, stakeholders expressed a desire to ensure that the social competencies that the Pyramid Model practices address are reflective of the cultures of the students and that behavioral strategies do not inadvertently reinforce deficit-based approaches to education. Based on the panel's feedback regarding the importance of culturally sustaining/responsive practices and family engagement, DESE revised the evaluation plan to include questions and data sources that will provide more information about how these practices are implemented in SSIP districts.

Beginning in fall 2022, DESE conducted a series of listening sessions with districts participating in Pyramid Model implementation to learn more about district strengths and areas for improvement regarding Pyramid Model implementation and needed supports from DESE. As a result of the listening sessions, DESE is working with PMC to provide more targeted TA and PD around the identified needs and areas for improvement. DESE plans to continue these sessions in the form of a community of practice during which districts will be able to learn from each other and share questions and concerns directly with DESE.

#### **Describe the specific strategies implemented to engage stakeholders in key improvement efforts.**

In collaboration with the external evaluator, DESE conducted focus groups with families of children attending preschools across the state. The focus group goals were to describe families' awareness, experiences, and perceptions of services and supports to enhance social and emotional development among preschool children and apply this knowledge to identify potential innovations to program implementation and refinements to ongoing family engagement efforts. Participants included 20 parents of children with disabilities and 13 parents of children without disabilities. Results of the focus groups will be shared with the SEAP to obtain additional feedback and recommendations on how districts can better support children's social/emotional outcomes.

DESE has strategically engaged district and school stakeholders in Indicator 7 child outcomes data collection. DESE presented a webinar in October 2022 on how to use the ECOS database and the process for collecting and submitting Indicator 7 data. As part of the registration for the webinar, registrants posed questions that they hoped would be answered during the session. During the webinar, participants were encouraged to submit questions. Following the webinar, participants shared feedback through an online form. This feedback is being used to plan TA on the COS process and Indicator 7 data collection.

In FFY 2021, the Pyramid Model State Leadership Team (SLT) met bimonthly to collaborate on statewide efforts and provide feedback on the progress of Pyramid Model implementation. The SLT continues to collaborate on statewide planning to extend the reach and support for Pyramid Model implementation. The SLT includes members from DESE, EEC, UMass Boston, Massachusetts Department of Public Health (DPH), Head Start, and program and district leadership team members. A major output of the SLT was planning the tenth annual statewide Pyramid Model Summit, held in April and May 2022. In fall 2022, DESE began working with the SLT to increase the focus on district Pyramid Model implementation. Specifically, the SLT will be tasked with providing ongoing feedback and guidance to DESE regarding strategies for enhancing Pyramid Model implementation efforts in SSIP districts.

District Leadership Team Feedback—The District Leadership Team Survey and external coach collaboration are key avenues for engaging district and school personnel in SSIP improvement efforts. Feedback from surveys is shared with DESE leadership and external coaches regularly share feedback from districts via the monthly coaching log and regular coaching meetings. This feedback is used by coaches and project leaders to guide continuous improvement of Pyramid Model coaching and training.

**Were there any concerns expressed by stakeholders during engagement activities? (yes/no)**

NO

**Additional Implementation Activities**

**List any activities not already described that the State intends to implement in the next fiscal year that are related to the SiMR.**

NA

**Provide a timeline, anticipated data collection and measures, and expected outcomes for these activities that are related to the SiMR.**

NA

**Describe any newly identified barriers and include steps to address these barriers.**

DESE has identified a need for improved data completeness and data quality for child outcomes data. Many districts have expressed a need for foundational training and support with the Child Outcome Summary process. As described previously, DESE is currently collaborating with TA providers from ECTA to develop a plan for supporting districts to improve data quality and completeness.

**Provide additional information about this indicator (optional).**

**17 - Prior FFY Required Actions**

None

**17 - OSEP Response**

**17 - Required Actions**

## **Certification**

### **Instructions**

Choose the appropriate selection and complete all the certification information fields. Then click the "Submit" button to submit your APR.

#### **Certify**

I certify that I am the Chief State School Officer of the State, or his or her designee, and that the State's submission of its IDEA Part B State Performance Plan/Annual Performance Report is accurate.

#### **Select the certifier's role:**

Designated by the Chief State School Officer to certify

#### **Name and title of the individual certifying the accuracy of the State's submission of its IDEA Part B State Performance Plan/Annual Performance Report.**

##### **Name:**

Jamie Camacho

##### **Title:**

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##### **Submitted on:**