

MA  
Part B

FFY2017  
State Performance Plan /  
Annual Performance Report

# FFY 2017 Part B State Performance Plan (SPP)/Annual Performance Report (APR) Introduction to the State Performance Plan (SPP)/Annual Performance Report (APR)

## Attachments

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## General Supervision System:

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

Consistent with the requirements of IDEA as described in 43 CFR § 300.149, each State Education Agency (SEA) is responsible for ensuring that the requirements of IDEA Part B are carried out by Local Education Agencies (LEAs). As the SEA in Massachusetts, the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (MA DESE) is responsible for overseeing this system of general supervision through which states and LEAs are accountable for meeting requirements and ensuring continuous improvement.

The state's system of general supervision is designed to 1) ensure compliance with federal and state legal requirements for special education, and 2) improve services and results for students with IEPs. Aligned with the OSEP-developed model, "Components of General Supervision," MA DESE has an integrated system of general supervision under eight key components:

- State Performance Plan;
- Policies, Procedures and Effective Implementation;
- Integrated Monitoring Activities;
- Fiscal Management;
- Data on Processes and Results;
- Improvement, Correction, Incentives and Sanctions;
- Effective Dispute Resolution; and
- Targeted Technical Assistance and Professional Development

Each component is focused on strategies for improving results and supporting strong outcomes for students with IEPs.

Below is a summary of some of the central elements of Massachusetts' general supervision system under the eight key components.

### State Performance Plan

The Massachusetts State Performance Plan (SPP) serves as the primary blueprint that drives much of MA DESE's work in the area of 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 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 targets and activities.

The annual performance reports (APRs) provide information on Massachusetts' progress toward meeting its annual goals. The APR includes actual target data, 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 and APRs are available at: <http://www.doe.mass.edu/sped/spp/maspp.html>. LEA performance data may be reviewed at: [http://profiles.doe.mass.edu/statereport/special\\_education.aspx](http://profiles.doe.mass.edu/statereport/special_education.aspx) and [http://profiles.doe.mass.edu/gis/sped\\_map.aspx?orgcode=04450000&fycode=2017](http://profiles.doe.mass.edu/gis/sped_map.aspx?orgcode=04450000&fycode=2017).

### Policies, Procedures and Effective Implementation

Massachusetts has in place policies, procedures, and effective implementation strategies to support appropriate implementation of IDEA. Massachusetts special education law (M.G.L. c. 71B) and related regulations promulgated by the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education (603 CMR 28.00) govern the provision by Massachusetts public schools of special education and related services to eligible students, and the approval of special education day and residential school programs seeking to provide special education services to publicly funded eligible students. The requirements set forth in this section of state regulation are in addition to, or in some instances clarify or further elaborate, the special education rights and responsibilities set forth in state statute, and in IDEA (20 U.S.C. §1400 et seq. as amended) and its related regulations (34 CFR Part 300, as amended). Compliance with these requirements is a necessary condition for an LEA to receive state or federal funds to support special education programming.

### Program Plan Statement

Every four years, and more frequently upon request, each LEA must submit to MA DESE a signed copy of the *Special Education Program Plan Statement* that documents state and federal legal requirements for special education and the LEAs assurance of compliance. By submitting and signing the document an LEA's superintendent or school leader, special education administrator, and school committee chairperson, or Board of Trustee Chairperson affirms that the LEA follows state and federal policies and procedures, and has in place policies, programs and services that are consistent with federal and state special education laws and regulations. LEAs are required to maintain the documentation named in each element of the *Program Plan Statement* to demonstrate compliance with IDEA and state law at the local level. Documentation may be reviewed by MA DESE at any time, including during the LEA's Tiered Focused Monitoring process and follow-up to SPP data submissions. Procedures at the local level that reinterpret the law to allow alternative activities must be submitted to MA DESE for review and approval prior to implementation.

The *Program Plan Statement* may be used by MA DESE as the basis for assessing an LEA's compliance and determining where changes in policies, practices, and procedures are needed. A copy of the Special Education Program Plan Statement, with non-substantive administrative revisions to the September of 2018 cover page, is available at: <http://www.doe.mass.edu/sped/advisories/programplan/>.

### Guidance and Model Forms

MA DESE makes available to LEAs and families a variety of written resources that support best practice for implementing the requirements for special education, including model forms, technical assistance resources and advisories, and administrative advisories. MA DESE has developed the IEP Process Guide (<http://www.doe.mass.edu/sped/iepguide.pdf>), an online resource that provides IEP Teams with recommended practices for implementing the Team process for eligibility identification and IEP development. Model IEP forms and notices, which comply with state and federal laws, are translated into multiple languages. Those documents are available at <http://www.doe.mass.edu/sped/iepl/>. Additional guidance and advisories (<http://www.doe.mass.edu/sped/advisories/>) address various programmatic requirements for special education. The MA DESE's special education web pages also include information about state and federal resources, procedures, and links to related materials.

### Integrated Monitoring Activities

Massachusetts' general supervision system includes a comprehensive monitoring system through which the state provides oversight to LEAs, approved special education day and residential school programs, and educational collaboratives, on implementation of legal requirements of IDEA. This system includes SPP data collection, as well as review and monitoring on SPP compliance Indicators. Recently, MA DESE has taken steps to ensure better integration of its monitoring activities with data collection for certain SPP Indicators, as set forth below.

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Prior to FFY16, MA DESE used an OSEP-approved four-year cohort cycle for the collection of SPP Indicator data. This meant that over a four-year period every LEA in the state participated in Indicator data collection activities for certain Indicators (7, 8, 11, 12, 13 and 14) with the exception of Boston Public Schools which, because of its size, participated every year. FFY16 marked the beginning of a change in MA DESE's procedures for data collection on Indicators 8, 11, 12 and 13. As first explained in MA DESE's FFY16 SPP/APR, over three years, the data collection for these Indicators is being phased into the special education monitoring reviews conducted by MA DESE's Office of Public School Monitoring as part of its six-year cycle of Tiered Focused Monitoring (TFM). The only exception to this is for Boston Public Schools for which, because it has an enrollment of over 50,000 students, data collection will continue to occur annually for all Indicators. MA DESE provided notice to OSEP of this change in its cohort model and sampling method for Indicators 11, 12 and 13 in June of 2016, and will provide additional notice to OSEP regarding the inclusion of Indicator 8 into the TFM model in February of 2019.

The integration of these SPP Indicators into the TFM process has eliminated redundancies in paperwork, data collection, and compliance activities for LEAs, enhancing their capacity for self-assessment and service delivery. For MA DESE, it has improved internal coordination and integrated the monitoring and compliance protocols used for Indicators 11, 12 and 13 with those used for other special education issues.

Please see the section below entitled *Monitoring of LEAs* for additional information on the integration of these Indicator data collection activities into Tiered Focused Monitoring.

### *Monitoring of LEAs*

MA DESE conducts its monitoring of LEAs through its Office of Public School Monitoring (PSM). In FFY16, PSM initiated a new monitoring process for LEAs, including charter schools and regional vocational technical school districts, called Tiered Focused Monitoring (TFM). Through TFM, LEAs are monitored on an alternating subset of special education and civil rights criteria. Monitoring standards for special education encompass requirements from IDEA, including statutory and regulatory requirements found in 34 CFR Part 300; M.G.L. c. 71B, state special education law; and the Massachusetts Special Education Regulations (603 CMR 28.00), as amended July 1, 2018. The Tiered Focused Monitoring that occurs in any given year represents the entire range of LEAs in the state, including urban, suburban, rural, large, medium and small LEAs, the full range of LEA program and structure types (charter, virtual, CVTE and comprehensive), as well as the full range of student disability types and need for services.

The six-year cycle used for TFM was carried over from MA DESE's previous monitoring system, called Coordinated Program Reviews, so that each LEA in the state would continue to receive monitoring every three years on different criteria. Thus, all LEAs in the state are on a TFM cycle in which they are reviewed every three years on an alternate set of criteria.

The TFM six-year monitoring cycle includes a self-assessment year using the MA DESE Web-based Monitoring System (WBMS). During this first year of the cycle, LEAs review special education and civil rights documentation for required elements, as well as a representative sample of student records from across grade levels, ages, and disability categories for consistency with established monitoring criteria. LEAs conduct a self-assessment on: specific criteria related to the special education identification process; IEP development; programming and support services or licensure/professional development; parent/student/community engagement; facilities and classrooms; oversight; time and learning; and equal access. The self-assessment year is also the time at which LEAs submit to MA DESE data on compliance Indicators 11, 12, and 13. Once the self-assessment is submitted, PSM staff reviews it to determine areas that will require further follow-up and focus during the next year's onsite monitoring phase, and places the LEA into one of the following Tiers:

- Tier 1: LEA Self-Directed Improvement; No concerns with compliance and performance outcomes and meets requirements of IDEA Part B
- Tier 2: Directed Self-Improvement; Low risk with areas associated with student outcomes
- Tier 3: Corrective Action; Areas of concern include both compliance and student outcomes
- Tier 4: Cross-Unit Support & Corrective Action; Ongoing non-compliance and areas of concern have profound effect on student outcomes

The Tier identification guides the onsite monitoring that occurs in the second year of the TFM cycle, which includes:

- Interviews of administrative and instructional staff consistent with those criteria selected for onsite verification.
- Interviews of parent advisory council (PAC) representatives and other telephone interviews as requested by other parents or members of the general public.
- Review of student records for special education. MA DESE selects a sample of student records from those the LEA reviewed as part of its self-assessment to verify the accuracy of the data, and conducts an independent review of a sample of student records that reflect activities conducted since the beginning of the school year. The onsite team conducts this review, using standard MA DESE procedures, to determine whether procedural and programmatic requirements have been met.
- Surveys of all parents of students with IEPs regarding their experiences with the LEA's implementation of special education programs, related services, and procedural requirements. Responses from the parent surveys are used to inform Indicator 8.
- Observations of classrooms and other facilities. The onsite team visits a sample of classrooms and other school facilities used in the delivery of programs and services to determine general levels of compliance with program requirements.

Under TFM, approximately 2-4 MA DESE staff members conduct onsite monitoring in an LEA. More LEAs were included in TFM monitoring in FFY17, the first year, and thus more student records reviewed, than under previous MA DESE monitoring cycles; however this will level out as TFM moves into its second year of monitoring in FFY18 and beyond.

As noted above, FFY17 marked the second year of a change in MA DESE procedures in which data collection activities for Indicators 11, 12 and 13 were embedded into the TFM process. In addition, in FFY17 MA DESE conducted an Indicator 8 pilot for the 14 LEAs participating in TFM's onsite monitoring. For these 14 LEAs, questions were developed for Indicator 8 and included in the larger TFM parent survey, thus relieving these LEAs of conducting a separate Indicator 8 survey. (The other 60 LEAs participating in the Indicator 8 survey did so through the established MA DESE cohort model, as described in the Indicator 8 APR). In FFY18, for the first time, all Indicator 8 surveys will be conducted through the TFM parent survey process, thus eliminating the need for two separate parent surveys.

Under TFM the process for identification of noncompliance differs somewhat from that previously used for Indicators. In the past, MA DESE implemented a pre-finding process to verify data submitted by LEAs. MA DESE communicated with each LEA with data suggesting noncompliance prior to making a finding. If MA DESE was able to confirm that the LEA had taken action to address the root cause of the noncompliance identified in the data, MA DESE determined that no finding was necessary.

In FFY17, under TFM, MA DESE did not use a pre-finding process in identifying noncompliance. Rather, MA DESE issued a formal letter of finding with required correction activities immediately following its review of data that indicated noncompliance. MA DESE believes that this may have contributed to more findings of noncompliance and corrective action ordered for Indicators 12 and 13 in FFY17 than in recent years.

The TFM process for correction of noncompliance, whether for Indicators or a criterion set forth in the TFM review relating to FAPE, requires the LEA to correct each individual case of noncompliance, develop systems to correct the noncompliance, and submit a report of an internal review of records ensuring full compliance. This process is consistent with OSEP Memorandum 09-02. If the noncompliance is determined through the TFM review process, the criterion will be given a rating of either Partially Implemented or Not Implemented in the Tiered Focused Monitoring Report, along with a narrative explaining the reason for the noncompliance. The LEA will develop either a Continuous Improvement and Monitoring Plan (Tiers 1 & 2) with follow-up to MA DESE on progress, or a Corrective Action Plan (Tiers 3 & 4) with progress reporting submitted to MA DESE. All processes require full compliance as soon as possible, but in all circumstances, within one year.

In the third year of the TFM cycle, the LEA continues its own internal monitoring to ensure continuing compliance, and in the fourth year the LEA completes a self-assessment on the alternate group of special education and civil rights criteria. The process then repeats itself similar to the second and third year of the TFM cycle.

All Final Reports with associated Corrective Action Plans, as well as Continuous Improvement and Monitoring Plans, are posted on the MA DESE website at <http://www.doe.mass.edu/pqa/review/>. The Corrective Action Plans and Continuous Improvement and Monitoring Plans are subject to MA DESE's review and approval. MA DESE staff provides technical assistance and support to LEAs throughout this process to help ensure that the LEA is able to demonstrate effective resolution of noncompliance identified as soon as possible but in no case later than one year from the issuance of the final report. Correction of noncompliance is verified in accordance with the requirements of OSEP Memorandum 09-02.

### *Monitoring of Approved Special Education Day and Residential School Programs*

MA DESE has a separate system for monitoring approved special education day and residential school programs ("programs"). The Program Review (PR) monitoring system is organized on a six-year cycle in which each program is monitored at least once during that cycle. An additional special education follow-up visit, known as the Mid-Cycle Review (MCR), occurs three years after the PR. Monitoring standards for special education encompass requirements from IDEA, including statutory and regulatory requirements found in 34 CFR Part 300; M.G.L. c. 71B, state special education law; the Massachusetts Special Education Regulations (603 CMR 28.00), as amended July 1, 2018; Program and Safety Standards for Approved Public or Private Day and Residential Special Education School Programs (603 CMR 18.00), as amended January 12, 2016; and Prevention of Physical Restraint and Requirements, if used (603 CMR 46.00), as amended January 12, 2016.

In the first year of the two-year PR cycle, programs being monitored participate in a self-assessment phase using the MA DESE Web-based Monitoring System (WBMS). Each program must review special education and civil rights documentation for required elements and implementation; a sample of student records from across grade levels; disability categories of students served; levels of consistency with established monitoring criteria; and a sample of staff records for a representation of the positions approved in each program. Results of the program's self-assessment and related documentation are then submitted to MA DESE. MA DESE's review of this data, along with data from serious incidents, restraint data, including restraint injuries to students or staff, any notifications or requests for prior approval of substantial changes in the program, and three-year trend data from the MA DESE Problem Resolution System, are used to determine the scope and nature of MA DESE's onsite activities that occur in the second year of the PR cycle.

Depending upon the size of the program and number of areas to be reviewed, a team of up to four MA DESE staff members conducts onsite special education monitoring activities. Onsite activities include:

- Interviews of administrative, instructional, and support staff consistent with those criteria selected for onsite verification.
- Interviews of parent advisory group (PAG) representatives and other interviews as requested by other parents or members of the general public.
- Review of student records for special education. MA DESE selects a sample of student records from those the program reviewed as part of its self-assessment to verify the accuracy of the data. MA DESE also

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conducts an independent review of a sample of student records that reflect activities conducted since the beginning of the school year during which the review is taking place. The onsite team conducts this review, using standard MA DESE procedures, to determine whether procedural and programmatic requirements are being implemented as required.

- Surveys of parents/guardians of students with disabilities. Parents/guardians of Massachusetts students with disabilities whose files were selected for the student record review, as well as an equal number of parents/guardians of other students with disabilities, are sent a survey that solicits information regarding their experiences with the program's implementation of special education programs, related services, and procedural requirements.
- The onsite team is provided a tour of the program. The tour includes a sample of classrooms and any other facilities used in the delivery of programs and services to determine compliance with program facility requirements.

Following the onsite visit, the school's Executive Director has an opportunity to review the draft report prepared by MA DESE. The report contains comments from the PR which form the basis for any noncompliance findings made by MA DESE. The Final Report is issued within 60 business days of the conclusion of the onsite visit. All Final Reports are posted on the MA DESE website at <http://www.doe.mass.edu/pqa/review/psr/reports/default.html>. In the Final Report, the onsite team gives a rating for each compliance criterion it has reviewed; those ratings are Implemented, Implementation in Progress, Partially Implemented, Not Implemented, or Not Applicable. The Report also includes a narrative statement for each criterion rated explaining the basis for the rating.

For criteria deemed by MA DESE to be Partially Implemented or Not Implemented, the program must propose corrective action to bring those areas into compliance with the relevant statutes and regulations. This corrective action plan (CAP) is due to MA DESE within 20 business days after the issuance of the Final Report and is subject to MA DESE's review and approval. MA DESE staff offers technical assistance on the content and requirements for developing an approvable CAP. Approved CAPs are posted on the Approved Special Education Day and Residential School Programs Corrective Action Plans webpage: <http://www.doe.mass.edu/pqa/review/psr/>.

During the corrective action period, MA DESE provides ongoing technical assistance to help ensure that the program is able to demonstrate effective resolution of noncompliance identified as soon as possible, but in no case later than one year from the issuance of the MA DESE's Final Program Review Report. For any program where findings of noncompliance have been made, MA DESE staff conducts an unannounced visit to verify the corrective action as submitted by the school and approved by MA DESE is being implemented. Additional unannounced visits and/or technical assistance are also provided by MA DESE staff.

Upon issuance of the Final Report, each approved program will receive an updated approval status. For programs receiving a "Full Approval," this approval will remain in effect for three (3) years expiring on August 31<sup>st</sup> of the third year of approval. This approval will be contingent upon continued compliance with all regulations contained within 603 CMR 18.00, 28.00, 46.00; IDEA-2004; M.G.L. c. 71A; M.G.L. c. 71B; Title VI; civil rights provisions; as well as MA DESE's approval of all required corrective action plans. MA DESE may change this approval status at any point during the three-year period if circumstances arise that warrant such a change. For Approved Special Education School Programs receiving a "Provisional Approval" or "Probationary Approval," MA DESE will clearly indicate the reasons for the reduced approval, along with timelines for compliance and an expiration date of the approval status.

MA DESE is actively working with other relevant state agencies such as the Department of Early Education and Care (EEC) and the Governor's Office on shared oversight, data sharing and professional development. To this end, an Executive Steering Committee, Shared Oversight, Data Sharing and Professional Development Work Groups have been developed. The goals of these groups are to 1) coordinate activities and data related to the initial licensing and approval processes of MA DESE and EEC, as well as Department of Children and Families (DCF) monitoring activities; 2) develop a process for data sharing regarding identified safety factors across oversight agencies as an early warning system to proactively identify possible risk and provide training and technical assistance; and 3) streamline and clarify incident notification and response protocols among the agencies and providers to reduce duplication and coordinate response protocols for serious incidents, including allegations of abuse and neglect.

Other state agencies MA DESE is actively working with include the Department of Mental Health (DMH), the Department of Public Health (DPH) and the Disabled Persons Protection Commission (DPPC), to better streamline procedures and align oversight of the residential programs. There is currently a work group reviewing medication administration in residential programs with representatives from DESE, EEC, DPH, DMH, and DCF.

### *Monitoring of Educational Collaboratives*

The Collaborative Program Review (PR) process used to monitor educational collaboratives (collaboratives) is similar to that used for approved special education day and residential school programs (see above), including that it is organized on a six-year cycle during which all collaboratives are monitored at least once. A follow-up visit, known as the Mid-Cycle Review (MCR), occurs three years after the PR.

Collaborative PRs cover selected requirements in the following areas:

#### Special Education (SE):

- selected requirements from the federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA-2004), the federal regulations promulgated under that Act at 34 CFR Part 300, M.G.L. c. 71B, and the Massachusetts Special Education regulations (603 CMR 28.00), as amended effective July 1, 2018.

#### Civil Rights and Other General Education Requirements (CR):

- selected federal civil rights requirements, including requirements under Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the Equal Educational Opportunities Act of 1974, Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990;
- selected state requirements under M.G.L. c. 76, Section 5 and M.G.L. c. 269 §§ 17 through 19;
- selected requirements under the Massachusetts Board of Elementary and Secondary Education's Physical Restraint regulations (603 CMR 46.00);
- selected requirements under the Massachusetts Board of Elementary and Secondary Education's Student Learning Time regulations (603 CMR 27.00); and
- various requirements under other federal and state laws.

#### Approved Public Day Program Standards:

- selected requirements from the Massachusetts Board of Elementary and Secondary Education Special Education regulations from 603 CMR 28.09; and
- selected requirements from the Massachusetts Program and Safety Standards for Approved Public or Private Day and Residential Special Education School Programs from 603 CMR 18.00.

In the first year of the two-year Collaborative PR process, education collaboratives in the monitoring cohort participate in a self-assessment using the MA DESE Web-based Monitoring System (WBMS). The self-assessment consists of the review of special education and civil rights documentation for required elements, and a review of a sample of student records from across grade levels, disability categories, and levels of need for consistency with established monitoring criteria. Results of the collaboratives' self-assessments and related documentation are then submitted to and reviewed by MA DESE. It is the outcome of the MA DESE review, along with trend data from the Problem Resolution System and review of any serious incident reports, that are used to determine the scope and nature of MA DESE's onsite activities that occur in the second year of the PR cycle.

Depending upon the size of a collaborative and the MA DESE review of the self-assessment, a team of up to three MA DESE staff members conducts onsite monitoring activities. Onsite activities include:

- Review of documentation about the operation of the collaborative programs.
- Interviews of administrative, instructional, and support staff across selected programs.
- Interviews of parent advisory council (PAC) representatives (if the collaborative has a PAC) and other telephone interviews as requested by other parents or members of the general public.
- Review of student records. MA DESE selects a representative sample of student records for the onsite team to review, using standard MA DESE procedures, to determine whether procedural and programmatic requirements have been implemented.
- Review of surveys of parents of students with disabilities: Parents of students with disabilities whose files are selected for the record review, as well as the parents of an equal number of other students with disabilities, are sent a survey that solicits information regarding their experiences with the collaborative.
- Observation of classrooms and other facilities: The onsite team visits a sample of classrooms and other school facilities used in the delivery of programs and services to determine general levels of compliance with program requirements.

At the end of the onsite visit, the onsite team will hold an informal exit meeting to summarize its preliminary findings for the Collaborative Director. Within approximately 45 business days of the onsite visit, the onsite chairperson will forward to the Collaborative Director a Draft Report containing comments from the PR. The collaborative will then have 10 business days to review the report for factual accuracy before the publication of a Final Report. The Final Report is issued within approximately 60 business days after the conclusion of the onsite visit and is posted on the MA DESE website at: <http://www.doe.mass.edu/pqa/review/crs/reports/>.

In the Final Report, the onsite team rates each compliance criterion it has reviewed as Commendable, Implemented, Implementation in Progress, Partially Implemented, Not Implemented, and Not Applicable. The Report also includes a narrative statement for each criterion rated explaining the basis for the rating.

For criteria deemed by MA DESE to be Partially Implemented or Not Implemented, the program must propose corrective action to bring those areas into compliance with the relevant statutes and regulations. This corrective action plan (CAP) is due to MA DESE within 20 business days after the issuance of the Final Report and is subject to MA DESE's review and approval. MA DESE staff offers collaboratives technical assistance on the content and requirements for developing an approvable CAP. During the corrective action period, collaboratives submit progress reports and MA DESE provides ongoing technical assistance to help ensure that the collaborative is able to demonstrate effective resolution of noncompliance identified as soon as possible, but in no case later than one year from the issuance of the MA DESE's Final Program Review Report.

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Collaborative MCRs begin during the third school year following the PR and cover selected requirements in special education, including new requirements. The self-assessment, onsite review and report process are similar to the PR process and occur in year one of an MCR. The MCR consists of a review of selected special education requirements in all collaboratives as well as any special education requirements that were not fully implemented in individual collaboratives at the time of the last PR. The collaborative submits a self-assessment that includes documentation and student record review, and MA DESE reviews the self-assessment and conducts an abbreviated onsite visit in the second year, with documentation review, record review, interviews and observations. Within approximately 45 business days of the onsite visit, the onsite chairperson will forward to the Collaborative Director an MCR Report containing MA DESE findings along with orders for corrective action incorporated into the Report.

### Fiscal Management

Massachusetts' system of general supervision includes mechanisms to provide oversight in the distribution and use of IDEA funds at the state and local level.

MA DESE first reviews budgets and planned expenditures as part of the review of the LEAs' IDEA entitlement grant applications, known in Massachusetts as Fund Code 262 (619 funds) and Fund Code 240 (611 funds). Grant specialists in the MA DESE's consolidated federal grants office are responsible for reviewing and approving applications and their budget, approving grant amendments, providing technical assistance, and monitoring grant processes. The team offers general resources and tools for federal grant programs (<http://www.doe.mass.edu/federalgrants/resources/>) and more specific targeted resources (<http://www.doe.mass.edu/federalgrants/idea/>) for the IDEA grants.

During the life of the grants, MA DESE examines LEAs' use of special education funds to improve results for children and youth with disabilities. As part of this review system, MA DESE reviews, approves, and monitors all LEA proposed grant expenditures, and verifies through the End-of-Year Report (EOY) that expenditures match the stated uses of funds described in the grant applications submitted to and approved by MA DESE. EOY reports are reviewed by LEAs' Independent CPAs, who certify that the information in the report reflects the LEAs' official books and records. Through the EOY report and the independent audit reports, MA DESE reviews and verifies that IDEA payroll expenses are applied to valid fund, function and object codes. Non-payroll expenditures are reviewed to ensure that charges are documented appropriately and that the service or item purchased will support the education of student with disabilities.

MA DESE's Office of Audit and Compliance (MAOAC) additionally conducts fiscal audits of LEAs based on a yearly risk assessment or when considered warranted. MAOAC additionally reviews all audits undertaken locally as part of the A-133 requirements and follows up, if appropriate, with special education findings to ensure that corrective actions are appropriate and completed. Additionally, MAOAC engages in more targeted audits of specific programs related to due process complaints or specific focus areas identified as priorities by MA DESE. Most recently, in FFY18 focused audits targeted LEA implementation of the equitable services requirements for parentally placed private school students in IDEA.

MA DESE has made available to LEAs specific guidance in the areas of Excess Costs, Maintenance of Effort, and Proportionate Share. (See *Technical Assistance Advisory SPED 2011-1: Annual Fiscal Calculations*, at [http://www.doe.mass.edu/sped/advisories/11\\_1ta.html](http://www.doe.mass.edu/sped/advisories/11_1ta.html); *Administrative Advisory SPED 2016-2: Requirements Related to Maintenance of Effort*, at <http://www.doe.mass.edu/sped/advisories/2016-2.html>; and *Administrative Advisory SPED 2018-1: Guidance and Workbook for Calculating and Providing Proportionate Share Services for Students with Disabilities Enrolled by Their Parents in Private Schools*, at <http://www.doe.mass.edu/sped/advisories/2018-1.html>.) Calculations are completed annually for LEAs' use in budgeting appropriately for the costs of special education and related services, and in demonstrating compliance with required fiscal activities. All related documentation is made available to MA DESE upon request and is reviewed by the agency during regular financial audits.

Following an on-site monitoring visit from the Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) in spring 2017 (see Differentiated Monitoring and Support resources at <http://www.doe.mass.edu/sped/osep/>), MA DESE has revised its internal fiscal procedures in consultation with OSEP to ensure compliance with the fiscal requirements of IDEA. MA DESE appreciates the support of OSEP and the Center for IDEA Fiscal Reporting (CIFR) as it engages in this work.

### Data on Processes and Results

Using data and technology to improve results is a cornerstone of Massachusetts' Strategic Plan for education ( <http://www.doe.mass.edu/research/strategicplan.docx>). MA DESE uses data to drive decision-making about program management and improvement as part of the state's general supervision responsibilities. MA DESE routinely examines multiple sources of data to track LEA performance and target technical assistance and resources that will assist LEAs in meeting SPP targets and in improving outcomes for students with disabilities.

The Student Information Management System (SIMS) is a student-level data collection system that allows the MA DESE to collect and analyze more accurate and comprehensive information to meet federal and state reporting requirements, and to inform policy and programmatic decisions. (<http://www.doe.mass.edu/info/services/data/sims/>). The SIMS has two important components: (1) a unique student identifier for all students receiving a publicly funded education in Massachusetts, and (2) transmissions of data from LEAs to the MA DESE for all students via the security portal or SIF (Schools Interoperability Frameworks). Other student level data systems and collections – including the Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS); the School Safety and Discipline Report (SSDR); restraint reporting; LEA data submissions for SPP Indicators 7, 8, 11, 12, 13, and 14; and the Education Personnel Information Management System (EPIMS) - are also used for reporting 618 and SPP/APR data, and for tracking school and LEA performance. Staff routinely examines these data to identify areas in which additional technical assistance and support are needed.

As part of the state's Race to the Top initiative, MA DESE created Edwin Analytics ( <http://www.doe.mass.edu/edwin/>), a powerful reporting and data analysis tool that gives authorized LEAs and state level users access to new information, reports and perspectives on education and programs that specifically support improvements in teaching and learning. Edwin Analytics integrates longitudinal data from pre-kindergarten through public post-secondary education. The available tools and reports are designed to assist educators in making informed decisions about how and where they can improve upon their teaching practices to provide an exceptional learning experience for their students. The tools are also used by MA DESE to inform policy decisions and to set priorities.

### Improvement, Correction, Incentives and Sanctions

Supporting LEAs' improvement and ensuring correction through various means is a key component of the MA DESE general supervision system. MA DESE is authorized through state and federal law to enforce regulations, policies and procedures. Additionally, MA DESE targets specific technical assistance to LEAs to ensure correction of noncompliance and correct implementation of legal requirements for education.

As required by IDEA, Massachusetts annually determines LEAs' specific needs for technical assistance or intervention in the area of special education. Although in prior years MA DESE utilized five special education determination levels, for the 2018 school year MA DESE omitted its determination level of "Meets Requirements – At Risk" and implemented only the following four categories, consistent with IDEA: Meets Requirements (MR), Needs Assistance (NA), Needs Intervention (NI), and Needs Substantial Intervention (NSI).

MA DESE utilized these four determination levels in the context of its revised accountability system (<http://www.doe.mass.edu/accountability/>). MA DESE aligned the annual special education determinations with LEAs' accountability classifications, as well as consideration of the LEAs' demonstration of compliance with state and federal legal requirements regarding special education. The process is described in more detail on the MA DESE publicly posted memorandum entitled, "2018 Determinations of Need for Special Education Technical Assistance or Intervention." (<http://www.doe.mass.edu/accountability/lists-tools.html>) As described in the memorandum, final special education determinations reflect both performance and compliance in the area of special education, consistent with Results Driven Accountability (RDA).

For all LEAs identified as not meeting requirements, the MA DESE Office of Special Education Planning and Policy Development (SEPP) coordinates with other MA DESE offices to offer targeted assistance and/or intervention and support related to identified areas of need. The targeted assistance or intervention may include:

- Directing the use of Fund Code 240 on the area or areas in which the LEA needs assistance;
- Requiring engagement with the MA DESE Statewide System of Support;
- Requiring engagement with the MA DESE Office of Public School Monitoring to address identified noncompliance or as part of Tiered Focused Monitoring activities; and,
- Requiring participation in specified technical assistance activities.

Additional enforcement actions that may be taken by MA DESE based on LEAs' annual special education determinations include:

- Withholding a percentage of the LEAs special education grant funds until the LEA has fully addressed the areas in which the LEA needs intervention;
- Conducting an unscheduled monitoring visit(s);
- Requiring specific policies, procedures, or curriculum improvement activities;
- Recovering state or federal special education funds, as appropriate;
- Conducting a review of the LEAs fiscal effort according to the maintenance of effort requirements of the law;
- Denying the LEA's participation in discretionary grant programs until improvements are completed; and/or
- Requiring specific personnel assignment under MA DESE's direction.

MA DESE also oversees timely correction of noncompliance through a range of oversight strategies and sanctions. The state's monitoring system oversees corrective action activities for LEAs identified as noncompliant with federal or state requirements. Noncompliance may be identified through monitoring activities, SPP/APR indicator reports, the Problem Resolution System, and other state due process systems. Noncompliance must be corrected by the LEA for individual students affected by it, and the LEA must also demonstrate that it is now correctly implementing regulatory requirements. Required corrective action may include educational record and data reviews to verify correction and correct implementation of regulatory requirements; professional development and technical assistance for LEA personnel, with documentary evidence of completion and corrected practices; fiscal records review; and/or recovery of funds, if appropriate.

In FFY18, MA DESE will be refining its process for making special education determinations in the context of the new accountability framework, consistent with input from its Special Education Advisory Panel (SEAP).

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## Effective Dispute Resolution

MA DESE ensures that disputes regarding IDEA and state requirements for special education are resolved timely and effectively through a variety of means, including complaint resolution, due process hearings, mediation, and facilitated IEP Team meetings. These dispute resolution systems, overseen by MA DESE's Problem Resolution System (PRS) unit and the Bureau of Special Education Appeals (BSEA) within the Massachusetts Division of Administrative Law Appeals, are evaluated regularly to ensure that they are effective. Additionally, MA DESE tracks issues identified during dispute resolution to determine whether there are patterns or trends in noncompliance that require additional technical assistance support.

### Problem Resolution System

Through its Problem Resolution System (PRS), MA DESE handles complaints that allege that a school or LEA is not meeting state or federal legal requirements for education. The PRS ensures effective complaint investigation and resolution procedures that allow issues to be resolved in a timely manner for the benefit of the individual student or students affected. The PRS unit investigates written and signed allegations concerning a violation of special education law. The LEA or school about which the complaint is received has 15 calendar days to investigate the complaint and provide a written report to MA DESE. The complainant may also provide MA DESE with a response to the LEA's report and additional relevant information. As a result of MA DESE's review of this information and supplementary investigation into the allegations, MA DESE issues a written determination within 60 days that contains findings of fact and conclusions of law, and the reasons for the decision. If PRS finds that the school or LEA is noncompliant, PRS orders specific corrective action(s) that must be completed as soon as possible, but no later than one year after the finding is made. PRS follows up to ensure that correction occurs, and verifies correction of noncompliance consistent with the requirements of OSEP Memo 09-02. Progress reports are assigned as part of required corrective actions as needed to ensure ongoing compliance with the requirements.

In FFY18, MA DESE implemented procedures that allow PRS to follow-up on hearing decisions issued by the Bureau of Special Education Appeals. Through these procedures, PRS ensures implementation of all hearing officer orders and decisions directed to an LEA, and/or remediation of any LEA noncompliance identified in the hearing officer's decision. All compliance activity is documented and maintained in a secure web-based system that allows PRS to monitor for patterns of noncompliance and to share relevant information with the MA DESE Office of Public School Monitoring.

Additional information about the PRS is available at <http://www.doe.mass.edu/pqa/prs/>.

In response to the IDEA requirement that states establish procedures to provide due process hearings for issues related to identification, evaluation, placement, or provision of a free appropriate public education to a child with a disability, a parent or an LEA may file a hearing request with the Bureau of Special Education Appeals (BSEA), an independent division of the state's Division of Administrative Law Appeals. The BSEA provides additional dispute resolution support through its systems for mediation, facilitated IEP meetings, and settlement conferences. Mediations, settlement conferences, and hearings are conducted by impartial mediators and hearing officers who do not have personal or professional interests that would conflict with their objectivity in the proceeding.

### Due Process Hearing

The 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 is amending the administrative rules that govern due process hearings. The amended Hearing Rules for Special Education Appeals will be effective after January 2019, and will be published at: <https://www.mass.gov/lists/bsea-forms-and-publications>.

### Mediation

Mediation is a voluntary and confidential dispute resolution process available through the BSEA at no cost to participants. When school personnel and parents disagree about the educational needs or appropriate programming regarding a student with a disability, either party may request mediation. Because mediation is voluntary, consent of both parties is necessary in order to access the process. In that process, a trained, impartial third-party mediator from the BSEA assists parents and school staff to clarify the issues and underlying concerns, explore interests, discuss options and collaborate to reach a mutually satisfactory agreement that addresses the needs of the student. The mediator does not decide how to resolve the dispute. If the parties resolve all or some of the issues, they work together with the mediator to put their agreement(s) in writing. This informal, collaborative problem-solving process encourages mutual respect, promotes communication, and often provides the basis for positive working relationships between parents and school staff going forward. Information about the percentage of mediations that result in mediation agreements can be found in SPP Indicator 16.

### IEP Facilitation

Although not required by IDEA or state special education law, the BSEA manages a program of IEP Team meeting facilitation. To utilize this service, a party does not have to first reject an IEP or file a request for a due process hearing. The process is voluntary and thus parents and the LEA must agree to accept the facilitator's services. A trained, impartial facilitator is present to assist team members to: develop and follow an agenda; stay focused on the goal of developing a mutually agreeable IEP; problem solve; resolve conflicts that arise during the meeting; maintain open communication; clarify issues; and timely complete the meeting. The facilitator is not however, part of the Team. The facilitator models effective methods of communicating and listening to support the Team members in improving their collaborative relationship in support of improved services and outcomes for the student.

### Settlement Conference

Also not required by the IDEA or state special education law, the BSEA offers the settlement conference option. This is an informal, voluntary, alternative dispute resolution process available to parties only after a due process hearing request has been filed. It is designed to afford parties a final opportunity to resolve the matter through the BSEA without proceeding to a formal due process hearing.

The settlement conference offers the opportunity for an informed, neutral case assessment (after documents and witnesses to be presented at hearing have been determined by the parties) that can, in many cases, facilitate resolution and obviate the need for hearing. The goal of the settlement conference is not only to reach an agreement in principle, but further, to draft and execute a binding settlement agreement at the close of the conference, thus affording the parties efficiency and finality, as well as mitigation of costs.

Additional information about each of these dispute resolution processes coordinated by the BSEA is available at <http://www.mass.gov/anf/hearings-and-appeals/bureau-of-special-education-appeals-bsea/>.

### Targeted Technical Assistance and Professional Development

MA DESE has a comprehensive system of targeted technical assistance (TA) and professional development (PD) that 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.

The state's two Statewide System of Support (SSoS) regional assistance centers help LEAs and their schools identified in the accountability system as requiring assistance or intervention to strategically access and use professional development and targeted assistance to develop school turnaround plans designed to improve instruction and raise achievement for all students. (<http://www.doe.mass.edu/turnaround/>). In collaboration with partner organizations, the SSoS uses a regional approach that leverages the knowledge, skills, and expertise of local educators to address shared needs through an emphasis on expanding LEA and school capacity for sustained improvement. Specific activities supported by the SSoS include MA DESE-sponsored academies and courses addressing special education and inclusive practices, literacy, and mathematics.

Additional information about the state's systems of technical assistance and professional development are addressed in the sections below.

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## 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.

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The MA DESE provides a coordinated set of guidance documents, technical assistance and support to LEAs working to improving results for students with IEPs. 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.

Central to this work is the state's newly designed framework for district accountability and assistance: <http://www.doe.mass.edu/accountability/>. The new framework creates a coherent structure for linking the state's accountability and assistance activities with LEAs based on their level of need, and provides school and LEA leaders with common indicators and tools for assessing systems and practices, diagnosing challenges, and identifying appropriate interventions.

Under the new system, Massachusetts discontinued its former use of accountability and assistance levels 1-5 and replaced them with accountability categories that define the progress that schools and LEAs are making and the type of support they may receive from MA DESE. LEAs are now classified based on LEA-level data rather than the performance of the LEA's lowest performing school. As noted above, the state's process for making special education determinations was also revised and aligns with the new accountability system.

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 available to all LEAs include Technical Assistance Advisories; Frequently Asked Question (FAQs); webinars on selected special education topics; MA DESE facilitated Regional Meetings for Special Education Directors and their staff; and compliance monitoring. For targeted LEAs, MA DESE has designed a Comprehensive System of Personnel Development (CSPD) to address specific needs and/or deficits in special education topic areas. Finally, for LEAs with specific issues or compliance problems, MA DESE provides direct, one-on-one TA to address the problems and create action plans for improvement. Technical assistance is provided in collaboration with national TA 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 WestEd's National Center for Systemic Improvement.

Further information regarding MA ESE's general accountability and support system can be found here: <http://www.mass.gov/edu/government/departments-and-boards/ese/programs/accountability/>. Additional information specific to special education technical assistance, guidance and policy can be found here: <http://www.doe.mass.edu/sped/ta.html>.

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**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 students with disabilities.

*Educator Preparation*

A core strategy in MA DESE's Strategic Plan ( <http://www.doe.mass.edu/research/StrategicPlan.docx>) is to promote educator development. By improving the depth and quality of preparation for new teachers (<http://www.doe.mass.edu/edprep/resources/pre-practicum.pdf>), MA DESE 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 students with disabilities.

This objective involves improving the licensure system, and supporting and evaluating educator preparation providers. MA DESE continues to streamline state licensure requirements (<http://www.doe.mass.edu/lawsregs/603cmr44.html?section=06>), clarify regulations (<http://www.doe.mass.edu/bese/docs/FY2017/2017-06/item3.html>), and improve processes for obtaining licenses. MA DESE also maintains and updates the Subject-Matter Knowledge Requirements (SMKs) that define what content educators should know in each license field (<http://www.doe.mass.edu/edprep/resources/smk-guidelines.pdf>) and that align to the curriculum standards for students outlined in the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks. Massachusetts licensure tests (MTEL) are based on SMKs, and educator preparation programs rely on SMKs to guide their programming.

Furthermore, MA DESE reviews the quality of programs (<http://www.doe.mass.edu/edprep/pr.html>) offered by educator preparation providers. Over multi-year cycles, trained evaluators review sponsoring organizations (including higher education institutions, non-profits, and LEAs) and examine outcome data for the preparation programs (<http://www.doe.mass.edu/edprep/guidelines.html>). They also consider survey data (<http://www.doe.mass.edu/edprep/surveys/>) collected from a range of program stakeholders. MA DESE also provides organizations with formative feedback based on data on the performance of the candidates they prepare, and shares data tools with educator preparation providers to improve the educational experience of candidates.

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MA DESE is working to offer 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. For example, at the pre-service stage, to complete educator preparation, candidates must demonstrate skills and dispositions reflective of high-quality teaching (<http://www.doe.mass.edu/edprep/cap/>) through the Candidate Assessment of Performance (CAP). MA DESE convenes a series of workshops for educator preparation organizations and LEAs to help CAP evaluators provide high-quality feedback based on classroom observations and a review of teachers' lesson plans. MA DESE highlights effective practices for Induction and Mentoring (<http://www.doe.mass.edu/educators/mentor/reports.html>) based on an annual statewide survey of local education agencies.

Finally, MA DESE has invested in supporting LEAs to implement the Educator Evaluation Framework (<http://www.doe.mass.edu/edeval/>) to provide all teachers and administrators, including new and experienced educators, with meaningful feedback to continuously improve their practice. MA DESE is also leveraging innovative technologies and effective pedagogical approaches to design, develop, and implement E-learning experiences for all educators.

### *Educator Professional Development*

MA DESE continues to dedicate resources to helping all educators improve their practice through participation in High Quality Professional Development (HQPDP). MA DESE defines HQPDP (<http://www.doe.mass.edu/pd/default.html>) as a set of coherent learning experiences that is systematic, purposeful, and structured over a sustained period of time with the goal of improving teacher practice and student outcomes. HQPDP 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. HQPDP conforms to best practices in research, relates to educators' assignments and professional responsibilities, and conforms to the ten Massachusetts Standards for Professional Development:

1. HQPDP has clear goals and objectives relevant to desired student outcomes.
2. HQPDP aligns with state, LEA, school, and/or educator goals or priorities.
3. HQPDP is designed based on the analysis of data relevant to the identified goals, objectives, and audience.
4. HQPDP is assessed to ensure that it is meeting the targeted goals and objectives.
5. HQPDP promotes collaboration among educators to encourage sharing of ideas and working together to achieve the identified goals and objectives.
6. HQPDP advances an educator's ability to apply learnings from the professional development to his/her particular content and/or context.
7. HQPDP models good pedagogical practice and applies knowledge of adult learning theory to engage educators.
8. HQPDP makes use of relevant resources to ensure that the identified goals and objectives are met.
9. HQPDP is taught or facilitated by a professional who is knowledgeable about the identified objectives.
10. HQPDP sessions connect and build upon each other to provide a coherent and useful learning experience for educators.

All professional development offered by MA DESE and providers approved by the agency to award Professional Development Points (PDPs) must align with the HQPDP standards. Through the HQPDP registration and approval process, MA DESE assesses the evidence providers submit to demonstrate alignment with the MA Standards for Professional Development for the grade span and specific content area covered by the professional development. Approval is valid for three years, at which time the provider must reapply in each content area for which approval is sought. Additional information about provider registry is available at <http://www.doe.mass.edu/pd/providers.html>.

MA DESE also supports a HQPDP website. This website provides consistent, reliable access to:

- HQPDP Case Studies (<http://www.doe.mass.edu/pd/CaseStudies/default.html>)
- guidelines and tools for educators to use when pursuing professional development (<http://www.doe.mass.edu/pd/leaders.html>);
- guidelines and HQPDP Registry for providers (<http://www.doe.mass.edu/pd/providers.html>); and
- resources and tools for local professional development leaders, including connecting HQPDP to educator evaluation (<http://www.doe.mass.edu/pd/leaders.html>).

In order to ensure that administrators, educators, and related service providers have the skills to effectively provide services that improve results for students with disabilities, MA DESE offers a range of no cost HQPDP institutes, academies, and courses tailored to participants' levels of experience, content areas, and educational roles. Those particularly relevant to special educators include, but are not limited to:

- Comprehensive System of Personnel Development (CSPD) trainers meet the needs of targeted LEAs by providing customized training, consultation, and mentoring to school personnel on a range of special education topics such as secondary transition and IEP development (<http://www.doe.mass.edu/sped/cspd/modules.html>). Additionally, Early Childhood Special Education (ECSE) specialists support the priorities outlined under the ECSE strategic plan, (<http://www.doe.mass.edu/sped/ecse/>), including improving social emotional and early learning outcomes for young children with disabilities. ECSE trainers also support the implementation and evaluation of SSIP activities.
- Foundations for Inclusive Practice offers online courses to educators and administrators. These courses are self-paced and are one way to earn the 15 professional development points in "effective schooling for students with disabilities and instruction of students with diverse learning styles" that are required to renew a professional license.

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<http://www.doe.mass.edu/evedeval/guidebook/>

- Leading Educational Access Project (LEAP) is focused on a commitment to promote culturally proficient educational access and equity which means that all students, and especially our most vulnerable students — inclusive of low-income students, ELL students, students of color, and students with disabilities — will have access to high-quality educational opportunities and will experience high academic expectations to ensure greater equity in outcomes. <http://www.doe.mass.edu/leap/>
- Massachusetts FOCUS Academy (MFA) in FFY17 offered courses to educators that provide the skills, knowledge and instructional strategies to improve the outcomes for all students, including those with disabilities, in safe and supportive inclusive environments.
- Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS) Academies are designed to aid school and LEA teams with the implementation of tiered systems of instruction and support. Each of these intensive Academies includes regional training sessions, meetings for coaches, in-district targeted assistance, and virtual support over the course of three years. The four Academies are focused on Inclusive Tier 1 Instruction, Tiered Literacy, Tiered Math, and Positive Behavior Intervention and Supports. <http://www.doe.mass.edu/sfss/prof-develop/academies-18-19.html>
- Special Education Administrative Leadership Institutes focus on different populations of special education administrative leaders in the MA DESE public schools:
  - New Special Education Directors (fewer than five years of experience in the role);
  - Experienced Special Education Directors (five or more years of experience in the role);
  - Educational Team Leaders (ETLs, or IEP Team Chairs); and
  - Early Childhood Coordinators
- Special Education Professional Development Series offers twenty-two intensive courses focused on American Sign Language, Excellence in Education, Inclusive Practice, Role-Based professional development, Social Emotional Learning and Technology. A dyslexia course was also recently added to the FFY18 series. <http://www.doe.mass.edu/sped/training/pdseries.html>

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**Stakeholder Involvement:**  apply this to all Part B results indicators

The mechanism for soliciting broad stakeholder input on targets in the SPP, including revisions to targets.

Stakeholders

MA DESE works closely with stakeholders on developing SPP targets and setting priorities for improvement in each of the substantive areas reported in the SPP. As identified in previous years' SPP/APR reports, until school year 2018-2019, MA DESE facilitated two advisory panels, known as the Special Education Advisory Council and the Statewide Special Education Steering Committee. The Steering Committee was comprised of members of the Special Education Advisory Council to the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education (formed under M.G.L. c. 15, § 1G and 34 CFR § 300.167); representatives of state agencies with which the SEA and LEAs work to support children and families (the Departments of Early Education and Care, Public Health, Developmental Disability Services, Mental Health, Children & Families, Youth Services, Transitional Assistance, and the Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission), parents of students with disabilities and representatives of parent serving agencies including the federally funded Parent Training and Information Center; individuals with disabilities; special and general educators and service providers from public school districts, charter schools, approved private special education schools, and educational collaboratives; representatives of higher education; and health care and related service providers.

Since the inception of the SPP, the Steering Committee's primary focus was the annual review of the SPP/APR targets and activities. At an annual meeting facilitated by MA DESE, the Committee reviewed the state's progress toward meeting targets and discussed statewide improvement activities and strategic plans for supporting improved performance and outcomes for students with IEPs. The Advisory Council engaged in a broader approach to discussing policy priorities and advising on the unmet needs in the area of special education, and met multiple times throughout the year.

In order to better support a unified approach to stakeholder engagement and coordination of the advisory bodies mandated by state and federal laws, MA DESE merged these entities into a single state advisory panel. Beginning in October 2018, this group is meeting every other month throughout the year to review data, discuss policy priorities, and to identify unmet needs in the area of special education. At each meeting the group addresses various aspects of the SPP/APR and the state's general supervision systems. At meetings, including one focused exclusively on the SPP/APR, MA DESE facilitates discussion of baseline 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 work. The Panel met most recently in December 2018 to review targets and to discuss preliminary indicator data, with an intensive focus on Indicators 3, 7, and 8.

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 a Statewide Systemic Improvement Plan (SSIP) leadership team and working group, a family engagement workgroup, and a secondary transition stakeholder group. MA DESE also consults with educators, parents, advocates, and others on an ad hoc basis to inform policy and practice. Stakeholder engagement is an essential component of MA DESE's special education agenda.

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**Reporting to the Public:**

How and where the State reported to the public on the FFY 2016 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 2016 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, including any revision if the State has revised the SPP that it submitted with its FFY 2016 APR in 2018, 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

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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 FFY16 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 FFY16 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: [http://profiles.doe.mass.edu/gis/sped\\_map.aspx?orgcode=04450000&fycode=2017](http://profiles.doe.mass.edu/gis/sped_map.aspx?orgcode=04450000&fycode=2017). FFY17 data will be posted at this location in the Winter/Spring of 2019 when all data reports are available.

In response to OSEP's required action in the FFY16 SPP/APR, MA DESE is demonstrating in this SPP/APR that it has publicly reported on the performance of each LEA located in the state in meeting the state targets for each SPP/APR Indicator for FFY15: [http://profiles.doe.mass.edu/gis/sped\\_map.aspx?orgcode=04450000&fycode=2016](http://profiles.doe.mass.edu/gis/sped_map.aspx?orgcode=04450000&fycode=2016). Reports may be selected by LEA or school using the alphabetical drop down menu on the top right of the webpage.

Also in response to OSEP's required action in the FFY16 SPP/APR, MA DESE is demonstrating in this SPP/APR that it has publicly reported on the performance of each LEA located in the state in meeting the state targets for each SPP/APR Indicator for FFY16: [http://profiles.doe.mass.edu/gis/sped\\_map.aspx?orgcode=04450000&fycode=2017](http://profiles.doe.mass.edu/gis/sped_map.aspx?orgcode=04450000&fycode=2017). Reports may be selected by LEA or school using the alphabetical drop down menu on the top right of the webpage.

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>. Please copy the link to the browser to access the statewide reports.

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: <http://profiles.doe.mass.edu/mcas/participation.aspx?orgtypecode=5&linkid=26&fycode=2018&orgcode=04450000>. Reports are selected by school year using the arrow button at the top left of the webpage.

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: [http://profiles.doe.mass.edu/mcas/achievement\\_alt\\_level.aspx?linkid=116&orgcode=06000000&orgtypecode=5&fycode=2017](http://profiles.doe.mass.edu/mcas/achievement_alt_level.aspx?linkid=116&orgcode=06000000&orgtypecode=5&fycode=2017). Reports are selected by school year using the arrow button at the top left of the webpage.

At the instruction of OSEP during the FFY16 clarification period, MA DESE updated its public reporting systems to ensure 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.

**Attachments**

File Name	Uploaded By	Uploaded Date
No APR attachments found.		

**Actions required in FFY 2016 response**

**FFY 2017 Part B State Performance Plan (SPP)/Annual Performance Report (APR)  
Indicator 1: Graduation**

Monitoring Priority: FAPE in the LRE

Results indicator:

Percent of youth with Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) graduating from high school with a regular high school diploma.

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

**Historical Data**

Baseline Data: 2011

FFY	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Target ≥			61.10%	61.70%	65.00%	70.00%	72.50%	75.00%	77.50%	80.00%	82.00%
Data		61.60%	62.80%	64.10%	64.90%	64.90%	64.00%	65.60%	68.60%	67.80%	69.10%

FFY	2015	2016
Target ≥	84.00%	86.00%
Data	69.90%	71.79%

Key:  Gray – Data Prior to Baseline  Yellow – Baseline  Blue – Data Update

**FFY 2017 - FFY 2018 Targets**

FFY	2017	2018
Target ≥	88.00%	90.00%

Key:

**Targets: Description of Stakeholder Input** - Please see the Stakeholder Involvement section of the [introduction](#).

Enter additional information about stakeholder involvement

At its December 2014 meeting in which multi-year targets were set, and annually since, the Statewide Special Education Steering Committee, now called the Special Education Advisory Panel (SEAP) as explained in the Introduction to this SPP/APR, has affirmed its support for balancing the need for rigorous graduation targets with attainable goals that acknowledge progress that LEAs and the state are making in this area.

In the prior State Performance Plan period, targets for Indicator 1 had been set as a five percentage point increase every two years, reflecting a rigorous goal of achieving a significant increase over baseline in the graduation rate for students with disabilities. While performance has improved, targets were not met during this period. In reviewing longitudinal data on performance, MA DESE and its partners and stakeholders decided to maintain the commitment to establishing rigorous graduation targets that reflect high performance expectations for all students. State targets for Indicator 1 are set with a two percentage point increase annually, beginning with 80.0% for FFY13. These targets were again endorsed by the Steering Committee (now identified as the SEAP) in 2015 and 2017.

**Prepopulated Data**

Source	Date	Description	Data	Overwrite Data
SY 2016-17 Cohorts for Regulatory Adjusted-Cohort Graduation Rate (EDFacts file spec C151; Data group 696)	9/28/2018	<a href="#">Number of youth with IEPs graduating with a regular diploma</a>	10,232	
SY 2016-17 Cohorts for Regulatory Adjusted-Cohort Graduation Rate (EDFacts file spec C151; Data group 696)	9/28/2018	<a href="#">Number of youth with IEPs eligible to graduate</a>	14,049	null
SY 2016-17 Regulatory Adjusted Cohort Graduation Rate (EDFacts file spec C150; Data group 695)	9/28/2018	<a href="#">2014-15 Regulatory four-year adjusted-cohort graduation rate table</a>	72.83%	Calculate <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

**FFY 2017 SPP/APR Data**

Number of youth with IEPs in the current year's adjusted cohort graduating with a regular diploma	Number of youth with IEPs in the current year's adjusted cohort eligible to graduate	FFY 2016 Data	FFY 2017 Target	FFY 2017 Data
10,232	14,049	71.79%	88.00%	72.83%

9/21/2020

**FFY 2017 Part B State Performance Plan (SPP)/Annual Performance Report (APR)**  
**Graduation Conditions**

Choose the length of Adjusted Cohort Graduation Rate your state is using: 4-year ACGR

Provide a narrative that describes the conditions youth must meet in order to graduate with a regular high school diploma and, if different, the conditions that youth with IEPs must meet in order to graduate with a regular high school diploma. If there is a difference, explain.

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

1) earn a Competency Determination (CD) which means achieving a specified 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) or MCAS-Alt for students needing an alternate mode of testing; and

2) meet local graduation requirements for the LEA that is awarding the diploma.

State graduation requirements are the same for students with and without IEPs.

Students receiving a diploma in four years or less are counted as graduates for the purposes of reporting these data in the SPP/APR.

**Are the conditions that youth with IEPs must meet to graduate with a regular high school diploma different from the conditions noted above?** No

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

Although MA DESE did not meet its target for this reporting period, the state is reporting an increase of more than a percentage point in its graduation rate for students with IEPs.

**Actions required in FFY 2016 response**

none

**FFY 2017 Part B State Performance Plan (SPP)/Annual Performance Report (APR)  
Indicator 2: Drop Out**

Monitoring Priority: FAPE in the LRE

Results indicator:  
Percent of youth with IEPs dropping out of high school.

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

**Historical Data**

Baseline Data: 2011

FFY	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Target ≤			5.60%	5.10%	5.10%	4.70%	4.70%	4.30%	4.30%	3.30%	3.00%
Data			5.10%	5.80%	5.50%	5.00%	4.70%	4.60%	3.60%	3.30%	3.32%

FFY	2015	2016
Target ≤	2.70%	2.40%
Data	3.50%	3.13%

Key:  Gray – Data Prior to Baseline  Yellow – Baseline  Blue – Data Update

**FFY 2017 - FFY 2018 Targets**

FFY	2017	2018
Target ≤	2.10%	1.80%

Key:

**Targets: Description of Stakeholder Input**

At its December 2014 meeting in which multi-year targets were set, and again at its 2017 meetings, the Statewide Special Education Steering Committee, now called the Special Education Advisory Panel (SEAP), affirmed its support for rigorous targets with attainable goals that acknowledge progress that LEAs and the state are making in this area. State targets for Indicator 2 are set with a 0.3 percentage point decrease annually, beginning with 3.30% for FFY 2013.

**Please indicate whether you are reporting using Option 1 or Option 2.**

- Option 1
- Option 2

Has your State made or proposes to make changes to the data source under Option 2 when compared to the information reported in its FFY 2010 SPP/APR submitted on February 1, 2012? No

**FFY 2017 SPP/APR Data**

Number of youth with IEPs who exited special education due to dropping out	Number of youth with IEPs enrolled in grades 9-12 during the 2016-2017 school year	FFY 2016 Data	FFY 2017 Target	FFY 2017 Data
1,490	45,309	3.13%	2.10%	3.29%

**Use a different calculation methodology**

- Change numerator description in data table
- Change denominator description in data table

**Please explain the methodology used to calculate the numbers entered above.**

OSEP allows states to use the same data source and measurement that the state used to report in its FFY10 APR that was submitted on February 1, 2012 (identified as "Option 2" in the Part B Indicator Measurement Table). In Massachusetts, dropout rate calculations are based on an annual event. Using the calculation of the number of students with IEPs enrolled in grades 9-12 during the 2016-2017 school year as the denominator, and the number of students with IEPs enrolled in grades 9-12 who dropped out during the 2016-2017 school year in the numerator, MA DESE calculates a dropout of 3.29%. This does not meet the annual target of 2.10% and is an increase from the 2015-2016 rate of 3.13%.

## FFY 2017 Part B State Performance Plan (SPP)/Annual Performance Report (APR)

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 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 following October 1.

To calculate this rate, MA DESE uses dropout data obtained through the Student Information Management System (SIMS) October 1 enrollment report. Students who were reported as a "dropout" at the end of the previous year and then enrolled 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? No

### Reasons for Slippage

In order to understand the slight slippage of 0.16 percentage points that occurred in this reporting year, MA DESE engaged in a grade-by-grade review of grades 9-12 statewide dropout data for students with disabilities. In comparing the data from the previous year (SY 2015-2016) to this reporting year (SY 2016-2017), modest improvements were found with regard to dropout rates for students in grades 10-12. However, MA DESE noted that there was an increase in the dropout rate in grade 9 from 2.4% to 3.1%, which may account for the reported slippage. To respond to this, MA DESE is recommending that LEAs to look more deeply at the preparation/transfer process from middle school to high school for students with disabilities, as well as interventions and supports that could be made available to 9th grade students with disabilities who may indicate a desire to leave school.

### Actions required in FFY 2016 response

none

**FFY 2017 Part B State Performance Plan (SPP)/Annual Performance Report (APR)  
Indicator 3B: Participation for Students with IEPs**

Monitoring Priority: FAPE in the LRE

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

- A. Indicator 3A -- Reserved
- B. Participation rate for children with IEPs.
- C. Proficiency rate for children with IEPs against grade level and alternate academic achievement standards.

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

**Historical Data**

	Group Name	Baseline Year	FFY	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Reading	A Overall	2005	Target ≥				99.00%	99.00%	99.00%	99.00%	99.00%	99.00%	99.00%	99.00%
			Data		97.60%	97.90%	97.90%	98.10%	98.10%	98.40%	98.30%	98.20%	98.80%	97.23%
Math	A Overall	2005	Target ≥				99.00%	99.00%	99.00%	99.00%	99.00%	99.00%	99.00%	99.00%
			Data		97.70%	97.70%	98.00%	98.30%	98.20%	98.60%	98.40%	98.40%	99.01%	97.41%

	Group Name	FFY	2015	2016
Reading	A Overall	Target ≥	99.00%	99.00%
		Data	97.75%	98.45%
Math	A Overall	Target ≥	99.00%	99.00%
		Data	97.54%	98.45%

Key:  Gray – Data Prior to Baseline  Yellow – Baseline  Blue – Data Update

**FFY 2017 - FFY 2018 Targets**

	FFY	2017	2018
Reading	A ≥ Overall	99.00%	99.00%
Math	A ≥ Overall	99.00%	99.00%

Key:

**Targets: Description of Stakeholder Input** - Please see the Stakeholder Involvement section of the [introduction](#).

Enter additional information about stakeholder involvement

The Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (MA DESE) with consultation from the Special Education Advisory Panel (SEAP), has set Indicator 3 targets through FFY18. The SEAP is comprised of members of the Statewide Special Education Advisory Council, state agency partners, special educators, related service providers, parents and interested parties. When setting the targets, SEAP reviewed statewide longitudinal data, improvement activities, and state policies, including the ESEA waiver granted by the U.S. Department of Education. The Panel recommended Indicator 3 targets based on the ESEA waiver.

SEAP decided to set 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. The Advisory Panel reviewed the targets most recently at its December 2018 meeting.

Would you like to use the assessment data below to automatically calculate the actual data reported in your FFY 2017 APR by the grade groups you provided on the Reporting Group Selection page? **yes**

Would you like the disaggregated data to be displayed in your final APR? **yes**

**Data Source:** SY 2017-18 Assessment Data Groups - Reading (EDFacts file spec C188; Data Group: 589) **Date:** 12/13/2018

Reading assessment participation data by grade											
Grade	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	HS
a. Children with IEPs	13701	14380	14692	14473	13853	13796	n	12392	n	n	n
b. IEPs in regular assessment with no accommodations	4491	3528	3166	3113	2884	3041		2600			
c. IEPs in regular assessment with accommodations	8023	9542	10260	10071	9741	9512		8563			

## FFY 2017 Part B State Performance Plan (SPP)/Annual Performance Report (APR)

Reading assessment participation data by grade											
Grade	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	HS
d. IEPs in alternate assessment against grade-level standards											
e. IEPs in alternate assessment against modified standards											
f. IEPs in alternate assessment against alternate standards	1036	1172	1116	1130	1026	946		872			

**Data Source:** SY 2017-18 Assessment Data Groups - Math (EDFacts file spec C185; Data Group: 588) **Date:** 12/13/2018

Math assessment participation data by grade											
Grade	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	HS
a. Children with IEPs	13773	14481	14762	14518	13916	13856	n	12394	n	n	n
b. IEPs in regular assessment with no accommodations	3842	2525	2068	2037	1940	2000		2430			
c. IEPs in regular assessment with accommodations	8757	10637	11423	11172	10724	10608		8658			
d. IEPs in alternate assessment against grade-level standards											
e. IEPs in alternate assessment against modified standards											
f. IEPs in alternate assessment against alternate standards	1044	1190	1130	1150	1035	964		883			

### FFY 2017 SPP/APR Data: Reading Assessment

Group Name	Number of Children with IEPs	Number of Children with IEPs Participating	FFY 2016 Data	FFY 2017 Target	FFY 2017 Data
A Overall	97,287	95,833	98.45%	99.00%	98.51%

### FFY 2017 SPP/APR Data: Math Assessment

Group Name	Number of Children with IEPs	Number of Children with IEPs Participating	FFY 2016 Data	FFY 2017 Target	FFY 2017 Data
A Overall	97,700	96,217	98.45%	99.00%	98.48%

### Public Reporting Information

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

In accordance with 34 CFR § 300.160(d), MA DESE 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 page: <http://profiles.doe.mass.edu/statereport/participation.aspx>. Please copy the link into the browser to access the statewide reports.

MA DESE publicly reports participation and performance results for the MCAS-Alt in a separate report found here: [http://profiles.doe.mass.edu/statereport/mcas\\_alt.aspx](http://profiles.doe.mass.edu/statereport/mcas_alt.aspx).

At the instruction of OSEP during the FFY16 clarification period, MA DESE updated its public reporting systems to ensure that MA DESE made 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 following assessment pages: <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).

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

The above participation rates include in the denominator all children with IEPs in Massachusetts, including children who did not participate in MCAS. Reasons for non-participation, broken down by assessment type, are as follows:

- For English Language Arts (ELA), 309 students did not participate because they were first year English Language Learners, and 132 students did not participate due to a medically documented absence; and,
- For Math, 161 students did not participate due to a medically documented absence.

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 (<http://www.doe.mass.edu/mcas/participation.html?section=gr3-8and10>) and information about accessibility and accommodations (<http://www.doe.mass.edu/mcas/accessibility/>) to support students' access to statewide assessments.

**Actions required in FFY 2016 response**

none

**FFY 2017 Part B State Performance Plan (SPP)/Annual Performance Report (APR)  
Indicator 3C: Proficiency for Students with IEPs**

Monitoring Priority: FAPE in the LRE

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

- A. Indicator 3A -- Reserved
- B. Participation rate for children with IEPs.
- C. Proficiency rate for children with IEPs against grade level and alternate academic achievement standards.

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

**Historical Data**

	Group Name	Baseline Year	FFY	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Reading	A Overall	2016	Target ≥											
			Data										29.80%	30.79%
Math	A Overall	2016	Target ≥											
			Data										22.30%	22.48%

	Group Name	FFY	2015	2016
Reading	A Overall	Target ≥		50.00%
		Data	33.73%	19.68%
Math	A Overall	Target ≥		50.00%
		Data	24.71%	17.39%

Key:  Gray – Data Prior to Baseline  Yellow – Baseline  Blue – Data Update

**FFY 2017 - FFY 2018 Targets**

	FFY	2017	2018
Reading	A ≥ Overall	60.00%	70.00%
Math	A ≥ Overall	60.00%	70.00%

Key:

**Targets: Description of Stakeholder Input** - Please see the Stakeholder Involvement section of the [introduction](#).

Enter additional information about stakeholder involvement

In FFY16, MA DESE introduced a new statewide assessment, the Next-Generation Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS). With this new statewide assessment, MA DESE will no longer report proficiency rates and CPI scores, as it has in the past.

Throughout the multi-year process of designing and implementing the Next-Generation MCAS, and corresponding updates to the MA Curriculum Frameworks, MA DESE developed a robust stakeholder engagement process, led by an oversight committee, inclusive of members of the MA DESE Board of Education and a Next-Generation MCAS steering committee. Further, MA DESE formed the following project advisory teams and work groups comprised of stakeholders and experts:

- Project Communications
- Procurement Management
- Test Administration
- High School Testing
- English Language Arts and Mathematics Curriculum Standards Review Panels
- Standard Setting Policy Committee
- MCAS Accessibility
- Standard-Setting Committee
- Digital Learning Advisory Council
- Test Content Review panels
- MCAS Technical Advisory Committee
- School and District Accountability and Assistance Advisory Council
- History and Social Science

To solicit participation in these work groups, MA DESE contacted approximately fifty associations and groups representing families and students, the state Special Education Advisory Council (SAC), curricular experts, special education stakeholders, teachers, and administrators, among others.

In December 2018, MA DESE and the MA Special Education Advisory Panel (SEAP, formerly SAC) engaged in a dialogue about the implementation of the Next-Generation MCAS and its impact on students with disabilities. The panel was interested in understanding and discussing the proficiency measurements on the Next-Generation MCAS. MA DESE also reviewed with SEAP the state's newly implemented accountability system (<http://www.doe.mass.edu/accountability/>). Moving forward, MA DESE will continue to work with its special education stakeholders to engage them in discussions around proficiency and participation in the Next-Generation MCAS.

Please see the FFY17 Data tab in the "Additional Information" section for a more detailed description of the MA DESE's new statewide assessment and the implications for this report.

**FFY 2017 Part B State Performance Plan (SPP)/Annual Performance Report (APR)**

Would you like to use the assessment data below to automatically calculate the actual data reported in your FFY 2017 APR by the grade groups you provided on the Reporting Group Selection page? **yes**

Would you like the disaggregated data to be displayed in your final APR? **yes**

**Data Source:** SY 2017-18 Assessment Data Groups - Reading (EDFacts file spec C178; Data Group: 584) **Date:** 12/13/2018

Reading proficiency data by grade											
Grade	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	HS
a. Children with IEPs who received a valid score and a proficiency was assigned	13550	14242	14542	14314	13651	13499	n	12035	n	n	n
b. IEPs in regular assessment with no accommodations scored at or above proficient against grade level	1138	873	811	577	442	603		1885			
c. IEPs in regular assessment with accommodations scored at or above proficient against grade level	1208	1499	1603	1247	919	1213		6445			
d. IEPs in alternate assessment against grade-level standards scored at or above proficient against grade level											
e. IEPs in alternate assessment against modified standards scored at or above proficient against grade level											
f. IEPs in alternate assessment against alternate standards scored at or above proficient against grade level	n	n	n	n	n	n		n			

**Data Source:** SY 2017-18 Assessment Data Groups - Math (EDFacts file spec C175; Data Group: 583) **Date:** 12/13/2018

Math proficiency data by grade											
Grade	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	HS
a. Children with IEPs who received a valid score and a proficiency was assigned	13559	14252	14542	14298	13632	13520	n	11939	n	n	n
b. IEPs in regular assessment with no accommodations scored at or above proficient against grade level	1202	717	536	462	406	448		1106			
c. IEPs in regular assessment with accommodations scored at or above proficient against grade level	1308	1535	1450	1350	1163	1223		3713			
d. IEPs in alternate assessment against grade-level standards scored at or above proficient against grade level											
e. IEPs in alternate assessment against modified standards scored at or above proficient against grade level											
f. IEPs in alternate assessment against alternate standards scored at or above proficient against grade level	n	n	n	n	n	n		n			

**FFY 2017 SPP/APR Data: Reading Assessment**

Group Name	Children with IEPs who received a valid score and a proficiency was assigned	Number of Children with IEPs Proficient	FFY 2016 Data	FFY 2017 Target	FFY 2017 Data
A Overall	95,833	20,463	19.68%	60.00%	21.35%

**FFY 2017 SPP/APR Data: Math Assessment**

Group Name	Children with IEPs who received a valid score and a proficiency was assigned	Number of Children with IEPs Proficient	FFY 2016 Data	FFY 2017 Target	FFY 2017 Data
A Overall	95,742	16,621	17.39%	60.00%	17.36%

## FFY 2017 Part B State Performance Plan (SPP)/Annual Performance Report (APR) Public Reporting Information

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

In accordance with 34 CFR § 300.160(d), Massachusetts reports data on the proficiency of students with IEPs in statewide assessments at the state, LEA and school levels. State level information is available on the assessment results pages at <http://profiles.doe.mass.edu/statereport/nextgenmcas.aspx> and <http://profiles.doe.mass.edu/statereport/mcas.aspx>. Please copy the links into the browser to access the statewide reports.

MA DESE publicly reports participation and performance results for the MCAS-Alt in a separate report found here: [http://profiles.doe.mass.edu/statereport/mcas\\_alt.aspx](http://profiles.doe.mass.edu/statereport/mcas_alt.aspx)

At the instruction of OSEP during the FFY16 clarification period, MA DESE worked with its assessment team and Part B Data Manager to update its public reporting systems to ensure that MA DESE made 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 following assessment pages: <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).

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

#### Assessment and Accountability System Changes

##### *New Accountability System*

In the 2017-2018 school year, Massachusetts began implementing a new statewide accountability system (<http://www.doe.mass.edu/accountability/>). The system measures school and LEA performance in meeting student needs, as well as the type and amount of support that schools and LEAs need from the state. This new accountability system includes additional accountability indicators that provide a more in-depth analysis of school and LEA needs. The new system eliminates the five assistance levels that characterized the previous accountability system and replaces them with accountability categories that define progress and the support that LEAs are receiving from MA DESE. The system also shifted away from measuring an LEA based on its lowest performing school and now focuses on LEA-level data.

##### *Next-Generation MCAS*

Along with the new accountability system, MA DESE continues the gradual implementation of a new statewide assessment—the Next-Generation MCAS. Compared to the legacy MCAS, the Next-Generation MCAS better aligns to the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks and better measures 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.

For the 2017-2018 school year, students in grades 3-8 were assessed using the Math and ELA Next-Generation MCAS, while 10<sup>th</sup> grade students continued to be assessed using the legacy MCAS. Beginning in the spring of 2019, students in grade 10 will start to take the Math and ELA Next-Generation MCAS. For reporting purposes as required by the SPP/APR, MA DESE has reported Meeting Expectations and Exceeding Expectations scores on the Next-Generation MCAS as Proficient. For the legacy MCAS, MA DESE has reported Advanced and Proficient scores as Proficient for SPP/APR reporting requirements.

More information on the Next-Gen MCAS is available here: <http://www.doe.mass.edu/mcas/nextgen/resources.html>

FFY16 was the baseline year for the Next-Generation MCAS for grades 3-8. For this reason, Indicator 3C proficiency scores should not be compared to scores reported in years before FFY16. As Massachusetts transitions to the Next-Generation MCAS, MA DESE has maintained its previous targets as set by its advisory panel. Once all students are being assessed using the Next-Generation MCAS, with IDC support, MA DESE will review all data and targets with the SEAP. MA DESE will look to continue to set targets that are rigorous yet attainable.

Resources and general information related to the MCAS are available here: <http://www.doe.mass.edu/mcas/>. Detailed information about the Next-Generation MCAS, including updates and resources, is available here: <http://www.doe.mass.edu/mcas/nextgen/>.

##### *Improving Outcomes for Students with Disabilities*

MA DESE is committed to improving outcomes for all students, especially for students with disabilities. MA DESE recognizes that the low percentage of students with disabilities who are Meeting Expectations on the Next-Generation MCAS is unacceptable. Therefore, MA DESE is increasing focus on improving instruction by:

1. supporting LEAs in the building of robust multi-tiered system of supports;
2. emphasizing Universal Design for Learning in inclusive environments which are at the forefront of the professional development activities across the state;
3. providing professional development and intensive intervention strategies in literacy, math and inclusive practices;
4. focusing on supporting students with neurological learning disabilities, in particular dyslexia; and
5. implementing the new accountability system to support LEAs to find direct connections between compliance and performance.

To this end, MA DESE and districts work together to support students with disabilities to:

- individualize instruction to meet the needs of diverse learners,
- create universally designed learning opportunities,
- teach with poverty in mind,
- build cultural competency,
- address disproportionate and excessive student suspensions,
- support homeless students, and
- make schools safe for vulnerable students, such as LGBTQ students, recent immigrants, and others.

As MA DESE and the Massachusetts Board of Education in collaboration with stakeholders move this work forward, MA DESE looks forward to continuing to report, in future SPP/APR reporting cycles, on the continued implementation of the Next-Generation MCAS, the new accountability system, and revised student accountability targets for students with IEPs.

### Actions required in FFY 2016 response

none

**FFY 2017 Part B State Performance Plan (SPP)/Annual Performance Report (APR)  
Indicator 4A: Suspension/Expulsion**

*Monitoring Priority: FAPE in the LRE*

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

- A. Percent of districts that have a significant discrepancy in the rate of suspensions and expulsions of greater than 10 days in a school year for children with IEPs; and
- B. Percent of districts that have: (a) a significant discrepancy, 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 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))

# FFY 2017 Part B State Performance Plan (SPP)/Annual Performance Report (APR)

## Historical Data

Baseline Data: 2016

FFY	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Target ≤			0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Data		0%	0.29%	0.57%	0.57%	0.57%	0.56%	1.10%	0.70%	0.75%	1.00%

FFY	2015	2016
Target ≤	0%	0%
Data	1.25%	1.92%

Key:  Gray – Data Prior to Baseline  Yellow – Baseline  Blue – Data Update

## FFY 2017 - FFY 2018 Targets

FFY	2017	2018
Target ≤	0%	0%

Key:

**Targets: Description of Stakeholder Input** - Please see the Stakeholder Involvement section of the [introduction](#).

Enter additional information about stakeholder involvement

Targets for this compliance indicator are set to 0% annually. MA DESE annually reviews with its stakeholders historical data regarding the state's reported rates of suspension and expulsion, and statewide activities in this focus area. Stakeholders most recently endorsed MA DESE's efforts toward meeting the target at its December 2017 meeting, and updated data was shared at a December 2018 meeting. Below is a detailed description of MA DESE's special education advisory panels and membership.

As identified in previous years' SPP/APR reports, until school year 2018-2019, MA DESE facilitated two advisory panels, known as the Special Education Advisory Council and the Statewide Special Education Steering Committee. The Steering Committee was comprised of members of the Special Education Advisory Council to the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education (formed under M.G.L. c. 15, § 1G and 34 CFR § 300.167); representatives of state agencies with which the SEA and LEAs work to support children and families (the Departments of Early Education and Care, Public Health, Developmental Disability Services, Mental Health, Children & Families, Youth Services, Transitional Assistance, and the Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission), parents of students with disabilities and representatives of parent serving agencies including the federally funded Parent Training and Information Center; individuals with disabilities; special and general educators and service providers from public school districts, charter schools, approved private special education schools, and educational collaboratives; representatives of higher education; and health care and related service providers.

Since the inception of the SPP, the Steering Committee's primary focus was the annual review of the SPP/APR targets and activities. At an annual meeting facilitated by MA DESE, the Committee reviewed the state's progress toward meeting targets and discussed statewide improvement activities and strategic plans for supporting improved performance and outcomes for students with IEPs. The Advisory Council engaged in a broader approach to discussing policy priorities and advising on the unmet needs in the area of special education, and met multiple times throughout the year.

In order to better support a unified approach to stakeholder engagement and coordination of the advisory bodies mandated by state and federal laws, MA DESE merged these entities into a single state advisory panel. Beginning in October 2018, this group is meeting every other month throughout the year to review data, discuss policy priorities, and to identify unmet needs in the area of special education. At each meeting the group addresses various aspects of the SPP/APR and the state's general supervision systems. At meetings, including one focused exclusively on the SPP/APR, MA DESE facilitates discussion of baseline 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 work.

## FFY 2017 SPP/APR Data

Has the State Established a minimum n-size requirement?  Yes  No

The State may only include, in both the numerator and the denominator, districts that met the State-established n size. Report the number of districts excluded from the calculation as a result of the requirement. 35

Number of districts that have a significant discrepancy	Number of districts that met the State's minimum n-size	FFY 2016 Data	FFY 2017 Target	FFY 2017 Data

**FFY 2017 Part B State Performance Plan (SPP)/Annual Performance Report (APR)**

Number of districts that have a significant discrepancy	Number of districts that met the State's minimum n-size	FFY 2016 Data	FFY 2017 Target	FFY 2017 Data
5	369	1.92%	0%	1.36%

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
- The rates of suspensions and expulsions of greater than 10 days in a school year for children with IEPs in each LEA compared to the rates for nondisabled children in the same LEA

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

Massachusetts' definition of "significant discrepancy" in the rate of suspensions and expulsions for greater than 10 days in a school year of students with IEPs is a suspension/expulsion rate of five times the state rate for two consecutive years. Because of the data lag required for Indicator 4 reporting, data reported here are from school years 2015-2016 and 2016-2017. In the 2016-2017 school year, 0.614% (state rate) of all students with IEPs statewide were suspended or expelled for greater than 10 days. In the 2015-2016 school year, 0.650% (state rate) of all students with IEPs statewide were suspended or expelled for greater than 10 days. Therefore, all districts that 1) met the minimum n size, and 2) in which more than 3.1% (5x the state rate) of students with IEPs were suspended/expelled for greater than 10 days over the course of the 2016-2017 school year, and 3) in which more than 3.2% (5x the state rate) of students with IEPs were suspended/expelled for greater than 10 days over the course of the 2015-2016 school year, met the state definition of significant discrepancy.

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 which removes the student from their regular educational environment, including both in-school and out-of-school suspensions.

Although 404 LEAs were in operation during 2016-2017, the reporting period, MA DESE has overwritten the data for Indicator 4A. Only 369 LEAs met the state's minimum n-size requirement in 2016-2017; 35 LEAs did not meet the state's established n-size requirement for having 30 or more students with IEPs in 2016-2017, and therefore were excluded from the calculation. As a result, data is reported here on the 369 LEAs that met the state's n-size requirement for Indicator 4A.

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

MA DESE has significantly changed its approach to addressing significant discrepancy identified under Indicator 4 from that used in past reporting cycles. All LEAs identified under Indicator 4 as having a significant discrepancy, regardless of the outcome of the review of PPPs, are now participants in the MA DESE Rethinking Discipline Initiative.

The Rethinking Discipline initiative commenced during the 2016-2017 school year as part of a comprehensive statewide plan to support LEAs in making systemic change to local practices and procedures in order to reduce disciplinary exclusions, address disciplinary disparities, and improve school climate. MA DESE developed this initiative in response to a new state law, known as Chapter 222, that requires MA DESE to annually identify LEAs that suspend/expel a significant percentage of students for more than 10 cumulative days in a school year, as well as LEAs with significant disparities in rates among different racial and ethnic groups or among students with and without disabilities. The state law also requires MA DESE to provide best practices that can help LEAs reduce the use of suspension/expulsion when appropriate and help improve school climate. To align Indicator 4 activities with state requirements, LEAs identified as having significant discrepancy under Indicator 4A and 4B participate in the initiative.

In June 2016, MA DESE initiated the Rethinking Discipline Professional Learning Network (PLN) for LEAs that MA DESE identified as having some of the highest rates of suspension and expulsion and/or the most disproportionate rates of suspension/expulsion based on the data used to calculate significant discrepancy under Indicator 4.

The Rethinking Discipline PLN commenced with a series of focused targeted assistance conversations with LEA staff and staff from the MA DESE Offices of Student and Family Support, Special Education Planning and Policy, and Charter School and School Redesign. This engagement included discussion of LEA-specific data and successful strategies that LEAs have implemented and challenges they are facing related to student discipline practices. At later PLN meetings, LEA participants heard from local experts on best practice, participated in breakout sessions during which they discussed challenges and options with other LEA teams using a case consultancy model of engagement, explored MA DESE and federal resources for identifying student needs, and learned about creation and implementation of tiered systems of support for students, among other things. Participating LEAs were required to create and submit to MA DESE a series of Action Plans documenting identified courses of action to address the identified root causes of discrepancy in disciplinary removal of students.

The new state and federal reporting and data analysis requirements have resulted in a heightened level of awareness and a critical examination of the use of suspensions that is not unique to Massachusetts. National and Massachusetts data shows that black students, Hispanic students, and students with disabilities are suspended at greater rates than students overall, and research has found that suspended students are more likely to drop out. School leaders in Massachusetts and across the country have found that supports and strategies that reinforce

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positive behavior, include conflict resolution, and improve classroom management not only reduce suspensions but also promote school safety, decrease the need for out-of-class discipline referrals, and improve academic success.

**Actions required in FFY 2016 response**

none

Note: Any actions required in last year's response table that are related to correction of findings should be responded to on the "Correction of Previous Findings of Noncompliance" page of this indicator. If your State's only actions required in last year's response are related to findings of noncompliance, a text field will not be displayed on this page.

**FFY 2016 Identification of Noncompliance**

**Review of Policies, Procedures, and Practices** (completed in FFY 2017 using 2016-2017 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 having significant discrepancy in Indicators 4A and 4B. Although it is not required that the state review PPPs to identify significant discrepancy in Indicator 4A, it is required by MA DESE that LEAs amend any noncompliant PPPs as part of their corrective action activities.

Assessing the appropriateness of the policies, practices, and procedures (PPPs) regarding the development and implementation of IEPs, the use of positive behavioral interventions and support, and procedural safeguards has been a collaborative process among several offices at MA DESE. MA DESE verifies compliance of LEA PPPs through its monitoring review processes, including the special education monitoring criteria that address these focus areas. MA DESE also assesses corrective action reports and progress reports completed by the LEA in all other areas of identified noncompliance to assess whether the noncompliance contributed to the discrepancy. Any deficiencies in PPPs must be corrected by the LEA within one year from data of notification, and the LEA must submit evidence of correction to MA DESE to verify correction.

In this focused process, MA DESE verified that the five LEAs identified as having significant discrepancy through data analysis are in compliance with the appropriate IDEA requirements and there are no findings of noncompliance for FFY17 that must be corrected. MA DESE will continue to support their participation in the Rethinking Discipline PLN, however, as a means of reflecting on policies, practices, and procedures to support students with IEPs and to 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 identify noncompliance with Part B requirements as a result of the review required by 34 CFR §300.170(b). If YES, select one of the following:

**Correction of Findings of Noncompliance Identified in FFY 2016**

Findings of Noncompliance Identified	Findings of Noncompliance Verified as Corrected Within One Year	Findings of Noncompliance Subsequently Corrected	Findings Not Yet Verified as Corrected
2	2	0	0

**FFY 2016 Findings of Noncompliance Verified as Corrected**

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

By reviewing subsequent information and student level data for each LEA in the FFY16 APR identified as noncompliant - inclusive of monitoring progress reports, revised policies and procedures, and action plans - MA DESE verified that the LEAs for which noncompliance was identified were correctly implementing all regulatory requirements related to the development and implementation of IEPs, the use of positive behavioral interventions and support, and procedural safeguards and had corrected each individual case of noncompliance as appropriate within one year of identification. MA DESE has determined that any noncompliance has been corrected within one year of identification, and there is no outstanding noncompliance identified in the FFY16 SPP/APR.

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

MA DESE reviewed LEA PPPs regarding the development and implementation of IEPs, the use of positive behavioral interventions and support, and procedural safeguards through its public school monitoring processes. MA DESE verified each individual case of noncompliance was corrected through review of corrective action plans, progress reports, and related student-level incident data. The two LEAs found noncompliant were ordered to take corrective action to address areas of identified noncompliance with regard to their PPPs by submitting a corrective action plan with corresponding progress reports through the public school monitoring process, and a Rethinking Discipline action plan for review and approval. MA DESE then reviewed this information and additional LEA information to determine

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that the LEAs had submitted evidence of correction. Within one year of identification of noncompliance, MA DESE verified appropriate corrections had been made and the LEAs are appropriately implementing the regulatory requirements related to the development and implementation of IEPs, the use of positive behavioral interventions and support, and procedural safeguards.

**FFY 2017 Part B State Performance Plan (SPP)/Annual Performance Report (APR)  
Indicator 4B: Suspension/Expulsion**

Monitoring Priority: FAPE in the LRE

Compliance indicator: Rates of suspension and expulsion:

- A. Percent of districts that have a significant discrepancy in the rate of suspensions and expulsions of greater than 10 days in a school year for children with IEPs; and
- B. Percent of districts that have: (a) a significant discrepancy, 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 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))

**Historical Data**

Baseline Data: 2016

FFY	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Target			0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Data						0%	0%	0.30%	0.30%	0%	0.25%

FFY	2015	2016
Target	0%	0%
Data	0%	0.50%

Key:  Gray – Data Prior to Baseline  Yellow – Baseline

**FFY 2017 - FFY 2018 Targets**

FFY	2017	2018
Target	0%	0%

**FFY 2017 SPP/APR Data**

Has the State Established a minimum n-size requirement?  Yes  No

The State may only include, in both the numerator and the denominator, districts that met the State-established n size. Report the number of districts excluded from the calculation as a result of the requirement. 10

Number of districts that have a significant discrepancy, by race or ethnicity	Number of those districts that have policies, procedures, or practices that contribute to the significant discrepancy and do not comply with requirements	Number of districts that met the State's minimum n-size	FFY 2016 Data	FFY 2017 Target	FFY 2017 Data
9	2	394	0.50%	0%	0.51%

All races and ethnicities were included in the review

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

Massachusetts' definition of "significant discrepancy" in the rate of suspensions and expulsions for greater than 10 days in a school year of students with IEPs in a particular racial/ethnic group is a suspension/expulsion rate of five times the state rate for all students with IEPs for three consecutive years. Because of the data lag required for Indicator 4 reporting, data reported here are from school years 2014-2015, 2015-2016, 2016-2017. In the 2016-2017 school year, 0.614% (state rate) of all students with IEPs statewide were suspended or expelled for greater than 10 days. In the 2015-2016 school year, 0.650% (state rate) of students with IEPs statewide were suspended or expelled for greater than 10 days. In the 2014-2015 school year, 0.686% (state rate) of students with IEPs statewide were suspended or expelled for greater than 10 days. Therefore, all LEAs that 1) met the minimum n-size of having at least 10 students with IEPs in a particular racial/ethnic group and 2) in which more than 3.1% (5x the state rate) of students with IEPs in that particular racial/ethnic group were suspended/expelled for greater than 10 days over the course of the 2016-2017 school year, 3) in which more than 3.2% (5x the state rate) of students with IEPs in that particular racial/ethnic group were suspended/expelled for greater than 10 days over the course of the 2015-2016 school year, and 4) in which more than 3.4% (5x the state rate) of students with IEPs in that particular racial/ethnic group were suspended/expelled for greater than 10 days over the course of the 2014-2015 school year met the state definition of significant discrepancy.

Discipline data are reported by 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 which removes the student from their regular educational environment, including both in-school and out-of-school suspensions.

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As the second part of the Indicator 4B analysis, for LEAs that have a significant discrepancy by race or ethnicity in the rate of suspensions/expulsions of greater than 10 days in a school year of students with IEPs for three consecutive years, MA DESE reviews the LEAs' policies, procedures, and practices (PPPs) to determine whether these contributed to the identified discrepancy and did not comply with requirements relating to the development and implementation of IEPs, the use of positive behavioral interventions and supports, and procedural safeguards. The review includes publicly accessible documentation, charter school site visit information, public school monitoring criteria completed through on-site visits, student record reviews, and interviews, and state required action plans, if applicable. For any district identified as significantly discrepant for three consecutive years that has noncompliant policies, practices, and procedures, MA DESE makes a finding of noncompliance.

Although 404 LEAs were in operation during 2016-2017, the reporting period, MA DESE has overwritten the data for Indicator 4B. Three hundred ninety-four LEAs met the state's minimum n-size and were included in the FFY17 Indicator 4B analysis. Ten LEAs did not meet the state's established n-size requirements of 10 students with IEPs in a particular racial/ethnic group, and therefore were excluded from the calculation. As a result, data is reported on the 394 LEAs that met the state's n-size requirement for Indicator 4B.

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

MA DESE has significantly changed its approach to addressing significant discrepancy identified under Indicator 4 from past reporting cycles. All LEAs identified under Indicator 4, regardless of the outcome of the review of PPPs, are required to be participants in the MA DESE Rethinking Discipline initiative.

In FFY17, nine LEAs were identified as significantly discrepant and MA DESE reviewed each LEA's policies, practices, and procedures to determine if they were contributing to the discrepancy and not complying with requirements relating to the development and implementation of IEPs, the use of positive behavioral interventions and supports, and procedural safeguards. Of these, three LEAs were charter schools, one identified for Hispanic students with IEPs and African American students with IEPs, and two identified for Hispanic students with IEPs. The remaining six LEAs were traditional public school district LEAs, two identified for multiracial students with IEPs, two identified for African American students with IEPs, and two identified for African American students with IEPs and multiracial students with IEPs. Of these nine LEAs identified as having significant discrepancy by race/ethnicity, MA DESE examined PPPs to determine whether they contributed to the significant discrepancy through its public school monitoring processes, publicly accessible documentation, and action plans, and determined that two had policies, practices, and procedures that contributed to the discrepancy and did not comply with requirements relating to the development and implementation of IEPs, the use of positive behavioral interventions and supports, and procedural safeguards. Deficiencies identified in PPPs as part of this process were ordered to be corrected within one year with evidence of correction, including the review of revised policies, practices, and procedures and subsequent data. Through these subsequent reviews and examinations of actions, PPPs, and data, MA DESE determined that the two LEAs had corrected the identified noncompliance within one year of identification.

The Rethinking Discipline initiative commenced during the 2016-2017 school year as part of a comprehensive statewide plan. The goal of the initiative is to make systemic change to local practices and procedures in order to reduce disciplinary exclusions, address disciplinary disparities, and improve school climate. MA DESE developed this initiative in response to a new state law, known as Chapter 222, that requires MA DESE to annually identify LEAs that suspend/expel a significant percentage of students for more than 10 cumulative days in a school year, as well as LEAs with significant disparities in rates among different racial and ethnic groups or among students with and without disabilities. The state law also requires MA DESE to provide best practices that can help LEAs reduce the use of suspension/expulsion when appropriate and help improve school climate. To align Indicator 4 response with state requirements, LEAs identified as having significant discrepancy under Indicator 4A and 4B participate in the initiative.

In June 2016, MA DESE initiated the Rethinking Discipline Professional Learning Network (PLN) for LEAs that MA DESE identified as having some of the highest rates of suspension and expulsion and/or the most disproportionate rates of suspension/expulsion based on the data used to calculate significant discrepancy under Indicator 4.

The Rethinking Discipline PLN commenced with a series of focused targeted assistance conversations with LEA staff and staff from the MA DESE Offices of Student and Family Support, Special Education Planning and Policy, and Charter School and School Redesign. This engagement included discussion of LEA-specific data and successful strategies that LEAs have implemented and challenges they are facing related to student discipline practices. At later PLN meetings, LEA participants heard from local experts on best practice, participated in breakout sessions during which they discussed challenges and options with other LEA teams using a case consultancy model of engagement, explored MA DESE and federal resources for identifying student needs, and learned about creation and implementation of tiered systems of support for students, among other things. Participating LEAs were required to create and submit to MA DESE a series of Action Plans documenting identified courses of action to address the identified root causes of discrepancy in disciplinary removal of students.

The new state and federal reporting and data analysis requirements have resulted in a heightened level of awareness and a critical examination of the use of suspensions that is not unique to Massachusetts. National and Massachusetts data shows that black students, Hispanic students, and students with disabilities are suspended at greater rates than students overall, and research has found that suspended students are more likely to drop out. School leaders in Massachusetts and across the country have found that supports and strategies that reinforce positive behavior, include conflict resolution, and improve classroom management not only reduce suspensions but also promote school safety, decrease the need for out-of-class discipline referrals, and improve academic success.

### Actions required in FFY 2016 response

The State did not provide valid and reliable data for FFY 2016. The State must provide valid and reliable data for FFY 2017 in the FFY 2017 SPP/APR.

Note: Any actions required in last year's response table that are related to correction of findings should be responded to on the "Correction of Previous Findings of Noncompliance" page of this indicator. If your State's only actions required in last year's response are related to findings of noncompliance, a text field will not be displayed on this page.

### Responses to actions required in FFY 2016 response, **not including correction of findings**

OSEP found that MA DESE did not provide valid and reliable data under indicator 4B in FFY16 because of an inconsistency in the number of districts meeting the n-size requirement and the number of districts used in the calculation, and the exclusion from the calculation of districts that reported only one student with an IEP in a racial/ethnic group was suspended or expelled for greater than 10 days. To ensure our data is valid and reliable, in this year's analysis, MA DESE has reviewed policies, practices, and procedures for all LEAs flagged for significant discrepancy under 4B. MA DESE also provided additional information about the number of districts that met the n-size requirement. MA DESE's 618 Data Manager reviewed all data reported here for consistency, validity, and reliability.

### FFY 2016 Identification of Noncompliance

#### Review of Policies, Procedures, and Practices (completed in FFY 2017 using 2016-2017 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.

As the second part of the Indicator 4B analysis, for LEAs that MA DESE has determined have a significant discrepancy by race or ethnicity in the rate of suspensions/expulsions of greater than 10 days in a school year for students with IEPs for three consecutive years, MA DESE reviews LEA's policies, procedures, and practices (PPPs) to assess whether these contributed to the identified discrepancy and did not comply with requirements relating to the

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development and implementation of IEPs, the use of positive behavioral interventions and supports, and procedural safeguards. The review includes publicly accessible documentation, charter school site visit information, public school monitoring criteria completed through on-site visits, student record reviews, and interviews, and state required action plans, if applicable. For any LEA identified as significantly discrepant for three consecutive years that has noncompliant policies, practices, and procedures, MA DESE makes a finding of noncompliance.

Assessing the appropriateness of the policies, practices, and procedures (PPPs) regarding the development and implementation of IEPs, the use of positive behavioral interventions and support, and procedural safeguards has been a collaborative process among several offices at MA DESE. MA DESE verifies compliance of LEA PPPs through its monitoring review processes, including the special education monitoring criteria that address these focus areas. MA DESE also assesses corrective action reports and progress reports completed by the LEA in all other areas of identified noncompliance to assess whether the noncompliance contributed to the discrepancy. Any deficiencies in PPPs must be corrected by the LEA within one year from data of notification, and the LEA must submit evidence of correction to MA DESE to verify correction.

In FFY17, nine LEAs were identified as significantly discrepant based on the analysis of data, and MA DESE reviewed each LEA's policies, practices, and procedures to determine if they were contributing to the discrepancy and not compliant with requirements relating to the development and implementation of IEPs, the use of positive behavioral interventions and supports, and procedural safeguards. MA DESE determined that two LEAs had noncompliant policies, practices, or procedures that contributed to the discrepancy.

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 identify noncompliance with Part B requirements as a result of the review required by 34 CFR §300.170(b). If YES, select one of the following:

The State DID ensure that such policies, procedures, and practices were revised to comply with applicable requirements consistent with OSEP Memorandum 09-02, dated October 17, 2008.

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.

MA DESE reviewed LEA PPPs regarding the development and implementation of IEPs, the use of positive behavioral interventions and support, and procedural safeguards through its public school monitoring process. Deficiencies identified in PPPs as part of the monitoring process were ordered to be corrected within one year with evidence of correction, including the review of revised policies, practices, and procedures and subsequent data. The two LEAs were ordered to take corrective action to address areas of identified noncompliance and submit a corrective action plan with corresponding progress reports. These activities occurred through the monitoring process and the Rethinking Discipline initiative in which the districts submitted an action plan for review and approval by MA DESE. To verify corrective action activities, MA DESE reviewed these reports, as well as other evidence of implementation of policies, practices, and procedures, to document correction of the identified noncompliance. MA DESE determined that within one year of identification of noncompliance, the two LEAs had taken appropriate corrective action to correct the identified noncompliance in its PPPs, and to demonstrate that the LEAs are appropriately implementing the regulatory requirements related to the development and implementation of IEPs, the use of positive behavioral interventions and support, and procedural safeguards. This process is consistent with OSEP Memorandum 09-02.

The State did NOT ensure that such policies, procedures, and practices were revised to comply with applicable requirements consistent with OSEP Memorandum 09-02, dated October 17, 2008.

**Correction of Findings of Noncompliance Identified in FFY 2016**

Findings of Noncompliance Identified	Findings of Noncompliance Verified as Corrected Within One Year	Findings of Noncompliance Subsequently Corrected	Findings Not Yet Verified as Corrected
2	2	0	0

**FFY 2016 Findings of Noncompliance Verified as Corrected**

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

MA DESE reviewed LEA PPPs regarding the development and implementation of IEPs, the use of positive behavioral interventions and support, and procedural safeguards through its public school monitoring process including the Coordinated Program Reviews (CPR) and Mid-Cycle Reviews (MCR). The two LEAs identified in FFY16 as noncompliance were ordered to take corrective action to address areas of identified noncompliance in their PPPs and submit a corrective action plan with corresponding progress reports to MA DESE through the public school monitoring CPR and MCR processes, and an action plan for review and approval as part of the Rethinking Discipline initiative. MA DESE reviewed this information and additional information about PPPs and their implementation as evidence of correction of the identified noncompliance. Within one year of identifying noncompliance, MA DESE verified that each LEA had corrected its PPPs and that the LEAs are appropriately implementing the regulatory requirements related to the development and implementation of IEPs, the use of positive behavioral interventions and support, and procedural safeguards. There is no outstanding noncompliance identified in the FFY16 SPP/APR. This process is consistent with OSEP Memorandum 09-02.

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

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MA DESE verified each individual case of noncompliance was corrected through review of corrective action plans, progress reports, Rethinking Discipline action plans, and related student-level incident data, consistent with OSEP Memorandum 09-02.

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Indicator 5: Education Environments (children 6-21)**

Monitoring Priority: FAPE in the LRE

Results indicator: Percent of children with IEPs 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))

**Historical Data**

	Baseline Year	FFY	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
A	2005	Target ≥			43.40%	54.30%	55.50%	56.80%	58.00%	58.80%	59.70%	60.50%	60.50%
		Data		49.10%	53.00%	55.70%	56.80%	57.00%	57.90%	58.10%	59.20%	61.07%	61.86%
B	2005	Target ≤			16.20%	15.10%	14.90%	14.70%	14.50%	14.50%	14.50%	14.50%	14.50%
		Data		15.70%	15.30%	15.10%	15.40%	15.40%	15.10%	15.00%	15.00%	14.67%	14.43%
C	2005	Target ≤			6.80%	6.20%	6.20%	5.90%	5.50%	5.50%	5.50%	5.50%	5.50%
		Data		6.70%	6.70%	6.70%	6.80%	6.70%	6.70%	6.80%	6.90%	6.82%	6.86%

	FFY	2015	2016
A	Target ≥	61.00%	61.00%
	Data	62.34%	62.82%
B	Target ≤	14.50%	14.40%
	Data	14.05%	13.82%
C	Target ≤	5.50%	5.50%
	Data	6.81%	6.93%

Key:  Gray – Data Prior to Baseline  Yellow – Baseline  Blue – Data Update

**FFY 2017 - FFY 2018 Targets**

FFY	2017	2018
Target A ≥	61.50%	61.50%
Target B ≤	14.40%	14.30%
Target C ≤	5.40%	5.40%

Key:

**Targets: Description of Stakeholder Input**

At the December 2014 meeting of the Statewide Special Education Steering Committee in which multi-year targets were set, the Committee affirmed its support for high rates of inclusion statewide. Targets set by MA DESE that are reported here reflect this commitment. The targets were again endorsed by the Steering Committee at its December 2015, and January and December 2017 meetings, and shared at the December 2018 meeting of the Special Education Advisory Panel (SEAP).

**Prepopulated Data**

Source	Date	Description	Data	Overwrite Data
SY 2017-18 Child Count/Educational Environment Data Groups (EDFacts file spec C002; Data group 74)	7/12/2018	<a href="#">Total number of children with IEPs aged 6 through 21</a>	155,740	null
SY 2017-18 Child Count/Educational Environment Data Groups (EDFacts file spec C002; Data group 74)	7/12/2018	<a href="#">A. Number of children with IEPs aged 6 through 21 inside the regular class 80% or more of the day</a>	99,410	null
SY 2017-18 Child Count/Educational Environment Data Groups (EDFacts file spec C002; Data group 74)	7/12/2018	<a href="#">B. Number of children with IEPs aged 6 through 21 inside the regular class less than 40% of the day</a>	20,862	null
SY 2017-18 Child Count/Educational Environment Data Groups (EDFacts file spec C002; Data group 74)	7/12/2018	<a href="#">c1. Number of children with IEPs aged 6 through 21 in separate schools</a>	9,361	null

**FFY 2017 Part B State Performance Plan (SPP)/Annual Performance Report (APR)**

Source	Date	Description	Data	Overwrite Data
SY 2017-18 Child Count/Educational Environment Data Groups (EDFacts file spec C002; Data group 74)	7/12/2018	<a href="#">c2. Number of children with IEPs aged 6 through 21 in residential facilities</a>	1,014	null
SY 2017-18 Child Count/Educational Environment Data Groups (EDFacts file spec C002; Data group 74)	7/12/2018	<a href="#">c3. Number of children with IEPs aged 6 through 21 in homebound/hospital placements</a>	304	null

**FFY 2017 SPP/APR Data**

	Number of children with IEPs aged 6 through 21 served	Total number of children with IEPs aged 6 through 21	FFY 2016 Data	FFY 2017 Target	FFY 2017 Data
A. Number of children with IEPs aged 6 through 21 inside the regular class 80% or more of the day	99,410	155,740	62.82%	61.50%	63.83%
B. Number of children with IEPs aged 6 through 21 inside the regular class less than 40% of the day	20,862	155,740	13.82%	14.40%	13.40%
C. Number of children with IEPs aged 6 through 21 inside separate schools, residential facilities, or homebound/hospital placements [c1+c2+c3]	10,679	155,740	6.93%	5.40%	6.86%

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

MA DESE will be further analyzing these data longitudinally to assess the impact of its recent efforts to increase rates of inclusion. MA DESE's initiatives and professional development opportunities to increase inclusive opportunities for students statewide include the following:

The Leading Educational Access Project (LEAP), formerly the Low-income Educational Access Project initiated in 2014, is based on a commitment to promote educational access and equity for all students. MA DESE has identified multiple LEAs that have unusually high or low rates of use of substantially separate settings. We are working with these LEAs to analyze evaluation and placement data, review local practices and procedures, and assess the appropriateness of placement decisions for the student population. MA DESE, the participating LEAs, and partner educational collaboratives are identifying successful practices and augmenting school and district systems to better support inclusive activity. Work has also focused on implementing tiered supports and other means of bolstering students' access to the general curriculum and to the life of the school. In response to this work, in FFY16 and FFY17 MA DESE developed a statewide cadre of trainers from sixteen educational collaboratives which is available to support all LEAs in the content area of inclusive educational environments.

The MA State Equity Plan (2015-2019) is focused on identifying equity gaps in our students' learning experiences, including educational environments, and determining strategies to eliminate those gaps. The goal is to ensure that all students have the requisite knowledge, skills, and experience to successfully navigate an economically viable career pathway in a 21<sup>st</sup> century economy. Additional information regarding this work can be found at <http://www.doe.mass.edu/educators/equitableaccess/plan.pdf#search=%22state equity plan%22>.

The Inclusive Schools Project (initiated in 2016) works with the lowest performing schools based on performance outcomes of student subgroups. Research shows that outcomes for students are improved when they are in inclusive environments. The focus of this ongoing project is to provide tools for LEAs and educators that promote evidence-based best practices for inclusion through a comprehensive suite of resources to systematically move toward fully inclusive practices and to provide equity for all students.

Professional development continues to be a key lever through which DESE articulates its policy priorities for inclusive practice and supports educators in the field. In FFY16 and FFY17, MA DESE's Office of Special Education Planning and Policy developed and implemented a series of professional development institutes for educators specifically focused on inclusive practice, including: 1) Designing PD for Inclusive Practice: a Blended Learning Approach Institute, 2) Supporting Positive Behavior in an Inclusive Classroom Institute, 3) Working with Students with Autism for General and Special Educators Institute, and 4) Addressing Educational Equity Institute.

**Actions required in FFY 2016 response**

none

**FFY 2017 Part B State Performance Plan (SPP)/Annual Performance Report (APR)  
Indicator 6: Preschool Environments**

Monitoring Priority: FAPE in the LRE

Results indicator: Percent of children with IEPs aged 3 through 5 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.

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

**Historical Data**

	Baseline Year	FFY	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
A	2011	Target ≥									24.00%	39.00%	41.00%
		Data								23.90%	38.90%	47.29%	48.94%
B	2011	Target ≤									13.90%	13.80%	13.50%
		Data								14.00%	15.10%	15.54%	15.34%

	FFY	2015	2016
A	Target ≥	43.00%	45.00%
	Data	53.05%	53.68%
B	Target ≤	13.20%	12.80%
	Data	15.44%	16.74%

Key:  Gray – Data Prior to Baseline  Yellow – Baseline  Blue – Data Update

**FFY 2017 - FFY 2018 Targets**

FFY	2017	2018
Target A ≥	47.00%	50.00%
Target B ≤	12.40%	12.00%

Key:

**Targets: Description of Stakeholder Input**

The MA Special Education Steering Committee recommended incremental increases of 2 to 3 percentage points per year for Indicator 6A and smaller incremental decreases per year for Indicator 6B, which is reflected in the targets set by MA ESE. Established targets are ambitious, illustrating the state's priority for ensuring young children with disabilities are served in the least restrictive environment.

At its December 2018 meeting, the Steering Committee reviewed and again endorsed the targets.

**Prepopulated Data**

Source	Date	Description	Data	Overwrite Data
SY 2017-18 Child Count/Educational Environment Data Groups (EDFacts file spec C089; Data group 613)	7/12/2018	<a href="#">Total number of children with IEPs aged 3 through 5</a>	18,022	null
SY 2017-18 Child Count/Educational Environment Data Groups (EDFacts file spec C089; Data group 613)	7/12/2018	<a href="#">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</a>	9,805	null
SY 2017-18 Child Count/Educational Environment Data Groups (EDFacts file spec C089; Data group 613)	7/12/2018	<a href="#">b1. Number of children attending separate special education class</a>	2,800	null
SY 2017-18 Child Count/Educational Environment Data Groups (EDFacts file spec C089; Data group 613)	7/12/2018	<a href="#">b2. Number of children attending separate school</a>	228	null
SY 2017-18 Child Count/Educational Environment Data Groups (EDFacts file spec C089; Data group 613)	7/12/2018	<a href="#">b3. Number of children attending residential facility</a>	n	null

**FFY 2017 Part B State Performance Plan (SPP)/Annual Performance Report (APR)**  
**FFY 2017 SPP/APR Data**

	Number of children with IEPs aged 3 through 5 attending	Total number of children with IEPs aged 3 through 5	FFY 2016 Data	FFY 2017 Target	FFY 2017 Data
A. A regular early childhood program and receiving the majority of special education and related services in the regular early childhood program	9,805	18,022	53.68%	47.00%	54.41%
B. Separate special education class, separate school or residential facility	3,028	18,022	16.74%	12.40%	16.80%

Use a different calculation methodology

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

MA DESE and its partners and stakeholders have a long-standing commitment to promoting community-based inclusive opportunities for young children with disabilities. This commitment continues with an expansion of the "Building Inclusive Communities" initiative for preschool children. In FFY16, MA DESE and the Department of Early Education and Care (EEC) established a steering committee to develop action plans and design strategies for building relationships with families and community partners.

**Building Inclusive Communities in Early Childhood Initiative (BIC)**

EEC contracted with the Collaborative for Educational Services (CES) to organize logistics for the Building Inclusive Community (BIC) Series in collaboration with MA DESE. Two nationally renowned experts, Rich Villa and Dr. Jacque Thousand, are supporting the school and LEA leaders in engaged in the BIC initiative by providing a professional development and coaching series for participating educators. The focus of the series is to improve educational supports for preschool-age children with disabilities by increasing educators' use of effective inclusion practices in early learning settings. Ten (10) preschool teams were chosen to participate in intensive instruction and coaching with Mr. Villa and Dr. Thousand. The professional learning community will participate via webinar for local inclusive preschool teams to:

- gather information about federal policies and national research on inclusion and inclusive practices in early childhood, which will be used to inform the teams' Inclusive Preschool Action Plan; and
- work together to identify strategies for building relationships with families to engage them in discussion related to early childhood inclusion.

The first BIC conference convened on October 29, 2018. The participants represented the mixed delivery system (public schools, early care and education programs, early intervention, head start and Preschool Expansion Grantees). The keynote address "Inclusive Early Childhood Education: Equity and Excellence for All" reflected MA DESE and EEC's commitment to promoting equitable, high quality services for young children with disabilities.

**Actions required in FFY 2016 response**

none

**FFY 2017 Part B State Performance Plan (SPP)/Annual Performance Report (APR)  
Indicator 7: Preschool Outcomes**

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))

**Historical Data**

	Baseline Year	FFY	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
A1	2008	Target ≥						67.00%	82.00%	87.00%		100%	100%
		Data					66.00%	81.60%	76.90%	83.10%	84.30%	85.44%	87.20%
A2	2008	Target ≥						51.50%	75.00%	80.00%		90.00%	90.00%
		Data					51.00%	52.20%	53.30%	54.40%	47.50%	44.49%	47.81%
B1	2008	Target ≥						65.50%	83.00%	88.00%		100%	100%
		Data					65.00%	82.40%	76.60%	83.30%	84.60%	81.37%	83.89%
B2	2008	Target ≥						53.50%	75.00%	80.00%		90.00%	90.00%
		Data					53.00%	55.30%	56.80%	54.90%	49.50%	44.28%	45.93%
C1	2008	Target ≥						68.25%	84.50%	90.00%		100%	100%
		Data					68.00%	82.80%	78.90%	85.30%	87.70%	84.78%	85.90%
C2	2008	Target ≥						62.25%	75.00%	80.00%		90.00%	90.00%
		Data					62.00%	64.80%	65.20%	66.50%	59.90%	58.90%	60.33%

	FFY	2015	2016
A1	Target ≥	100%	85.00%
	Data	79.14%	88.70%
A2	Target ≥	90.00%	49.00%
	Data	53.57%	47.74%
B1	Target ≥	100%	83.00%
	Data	78.19%	85.47%
B2	Target ≥	90.00%	48.00%
	Data	52.62%	46.48%
C1	Target ≥	100%	85.00%
	Data	80.84%	89.31%
C2	Target ≥	90.00%	62.00%
	Data	61.58%	63.73%

Key:  Gray – Data Prior to Baseline  Yellow – Baseline  Blue – Data Update

**FFY 2017 - FFY 2018 Targets**

FFY	2017	2018
Target A1 ≥	85.00%	86.00%
Target A2 ≥	49.00%	50.00%
Target B1 ≥	83.00%	84.00%
Target B2 ≥	48.00%	49.00%
Target C1 ≥	85.00%	86.00%
Target C2 ≥	62.00%	63.00%

Key:

**Explanation of Changes**

While the state has observed positive trends over time across outcomes measures, in particular for Summary Statement 1, the rigorous targets established for FFY 2013 and beyond have yet to be achieved. During the fall of 2018, MA DESE along with MA SEAP and other stakeholders have worked to reframe and reset the targets, striving to make them more realistic on a year-to-year basis while still being rigorous. The objective is to shift to establishing targets that could be used to monitor annual progress, rather than to view the targets as the overall goal. The belief is that having more achievable targets will allow MA DESE to continue to support educators in their work with preschool children with disabilities. By setting targets that they can be met or exceeded, it also allows the state and its LEAs to demonstrate progress as we continue to maintain high expectations and help all preschool children with disabilities reach their full potential.

# FFY 2017 Part B State Performance Plan (SPP)/Annual Performance Report (APR)

this process, MA DESE received guidance from the IDEA Data Center (IDC) regarding how to approach this process most effectively. In consultation with MA SEAP at its December 11, 2018 meeting MA revised its targets.

## Targets: Description of Stakeholder Input - Please see the Stakeholder Involvement section of the [introduction](#).

Enter additional information about stakeholder involvement

In consultation with the Massachusetts Special Education Advisory Panel (SEAP), MA DESE set targets for indicator 7 that reflect the high expectations that the state has for all students with disabilities, including preschool children. As discussed in the introduction of this report, the SEAP is made up of stakeholders from multiple state agencies, individuals with disabilities, LEA level staff and administrators, members of community organizations and parents of students with disabilities. After a process of internal analysis and review at MA DESE, as explained below, new targets were discussed, reviewed, and approved by the SEAP.

Beginning with FFY13, MA DESE set targets based on the state's expectation that most, if not all, students with disabilities who enter the preschool program below age expectations should substantially increase their rate of growth by the time they exit the program or turn six (i.e., FFY13 through FFY16 Summary Statement 1 target = 100%). Additionally, these targets reflect the belief that educators will be able to guide the majority of preschool children with disabilities to reach their full potential by the time they exit the program or turn six (i.e., FFY13 through FFY16 Summary Statement 2 target = 90%).

While the state has observed positive trends over time across outcomes measures, in particular for Summary Statement 1, the rigorous targets established for FFY13 and beyond have not yet been achieved. During the fall of 2018, the MA DESE and the Massachusetts Special Education Advisory Panel (SEAP) worked to reframe and reset the targets, striving to make them more realistic on a year-to-year basis while still being rigorous. The objective is to shift to establishing targets that could be used to monitor annual progress, rather than to view the targets as the overall goal. The belief of both MA DESE and SEAP is that having more achievable targets will allow MA DESE to continue to support educators in their work with preschool children with disabilities. By setting targets that can be met or exceeded, it also allows the state and its LEAs to demonstrate progress as we continue to maintain high expectations and help all preschool children with disabilities reach their full potential.

Massachusetts, based on the recommendation of the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP), looked to reset future targets, beginning with FFY17 targets. MA DESE reviewed and analyzed available data for Indicator 7 (FFYs 2008 through 2017). As part of this process, MA DESE received guidance from the IDEA Data Center (IDC) regarding how to approach this process most effectively.

In consultation with SEAP, at its December 11, 2018 meeting, MA DESE revised Indicator 7 targets. After a detailed review of the Indicator 7 data, MA DESE brought three target setting proposals to SEAP for its consideration. The members of the panel wanted to maintain high standards for the students of Massachusetts while also allowing the targets to be able to be used to help support the work of educators across the state. As a result, they endorsed the model that began with the average over the prior four years (FFY14-FFY17). The revised targets are reported above.

The rigorous targets that have been in place through FFY16 reflect the state's overall goals for this indicator, and the new targets continue to maintain high expectations for all preschool students with disabilities.

## FFY 2017 SPP/APR Data

Number of preschool children aged 3 through 5 with IEPs assessed	651.00
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### Outcome A: Positive social-emotional skills (including social relationships)

	Number of Children	Percentage of Children
a. Preschool children who did not improve functioning	4.00	0.61%
b. Preschool children who improved functioning but not sufficient to move nearer to functioning comparable to same-aged peers	78.00	11.98%
c. Preschool children who improved functioning to a level nearer to same-aged peers but did not reach it	263.00	40.40%
d. Preschool children who improved functioning to reach a level comparable to same-aged peers	225.00	34.56%
e. Preschool children who maintained functioning at a level comparable to same-aged peers	81.00	12.44%

	Numerator	Denominator	FFY 2016 Data	FFY 2017 Target	FFY 2017 Data
A1. Of those preschool children who entered or exited the preschool 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. $(c+d)/(a+b+c+d)$	488.00	570.00	88.70%	85.00%	85.61%
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 program. $(d+e)/(a+b+c+d+e)$	306.00	651.00	47.74%	49.00%	47.00%

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

	Number of Children	Percentage of Children
a. Preschool children who did not improve functioning	5.00	0.77%
b. Preschool children who improved functioning but not sufficient to move nearer to functioning comparable to same-aged peers	77.00	11.83%
c. Preschool children who improved functioning to a level nearer to same-aged peers but did not reach it	254.00	39.02%
d. Preschool children who improved functioning to reach a level comparable to same-aged peers	207.00	31.80%
e. Preschool children who maintained functioning at a level comparable to same-aged peers	108.00	16.59%

	Numerator	Denominator	FFY 2016 Data	FFY 2017 Target	FFY 2017 Data
B1. Of those preschool children who entered or exited the preschool program below age expectations in Outcome B, the percent who substantially increased their rate of growth by the time they turned 6	461.00	543.00	85.47%	83.00%	84.90%

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	Numerator	Denominator	FFY 2016 Data	FFY 2017 Target	FFY 2017 Data
years of age or exited the program. (c+d)/(a+b+c+d)					
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. (d+e)/(a+b+c+d+e)	315.00	651.00	46.48%	48.00%	48.39%

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

	Number of Children	Percentage of Children
a. Preschool children who did not improve functioning	2.00	0.31%
b. Preschool children who improved functioning but not sufficient to move nearer to functioning comparable to same-aged peers	69.00	10.62%
c. Preschool children who improved functioning to a level nearer to same-aged peers but did not reach it	186.00	28.62%
d. Preschool children who improved functioning to reach a level comparable to same-aged peers	233.00	35.85%
e. Preschool children who maintained functioning at a level comparable to same-aged peers	160.00	24.62%

	Numerator	Denominator	FFY 2016 Data	FFY 2017 Target	FFY 2017 Data
C1. Of those preschool children who entered or exited the preschool 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. (c+d)/(a+b+c+d)	419.00	490.00	89.31%	85.00%	85.51%
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. (d+e)/(a+b+c+d+e)	393.00	650.00	63.73%	62.00%	60.46%

**Reasons for C2 Slippage**

MA DESE continues to provide professional development and technical assistance to LEAs for this Indicator in two ways: 1) assistance with the Child Outcomes Summary (COS) process, including training to improve general knowledge about child development and functional assessments; and 2) training, including coaching, to implement evidenced based practices to improve child level outcomes in the use of appropriate behaviors.

MA DESE posits that as educators become better able to recognize and code child functioning accurately, that the results may in fact initially decrease as data quality improves, and the validity of the ratings increases.

**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

**Was sampling used?** 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 and EEC collaboratively selected a cohort model for the purpose of this indicator's data collection and reporting activities. Massachusetts divides districts into four cohorts, with each cohort being representative of the state as a whole. Further information about this OSEP-approved cohort model is available here: <http://www.doe.mass.edu/sped/sp/datacollection.html>

According to the cohort schedule, LEAs collect entry data for students once every four years as part of their assigned cohort. Data collection and reporting activities for those participating LEAs continue for approximately three years following entry data, until all originally assessed students have exited from or terminated early childhood special education services. Once all the children from the cohort have exited from early childhood special education, the LEA participates in the next cycle of data collection efforts with a new cohort of entering eligible children.

In addition to the cohort model described above, MA DESE collects additional early childhood outcomes data as part of the Massachusetts State Systemic Improvement Plan (SSIP). Through SSIP, MA DESE is currently working with 25 districts to implement the Pyramid Model for Promoting the Social and Emotional Development of Infants and Young Children (the Pyramid Model) to support improved social-emotional outcomes. Participating SSIP districts began collecting and reporting Indicator 7 data every year starting in FFY15 (the number of participating districts was 19 at that time, and has since expanded to 25 districts), in addition to the cohort data collection requirements. The group of 25 districts includes several of the largest districts in Massachusetts; preschool enrollment of young children with disabilities in these districts represents more than 24% of the total population of students with disabilities aged three to five in the state. Progress on Indicator 7 as it relates to the State Identified Measurable Result (SIMR) for Indicator 17 for SSIP districts specifically is reported in the appropriate section of this report.

In August 2016, MA DESE changed its data collection parameters for districts collecting only entry data beginning with Cohort 4. Districts collected entry data on students who began receiving special education services between August 1, 2016 and May 31, 2017. This change continued for FFY17, with districts collecting data between August 1, 2017 and May 31, 2018. This expanded data collection window, combined with the SSIP district data mentioned above, and improved and more frequent outreach by DESE to districts this past year, all likely contributed to a 64% increase in the number of usable records for Indicator 7 this year. MA DESE continues to work toward increasing districts' capacity for reporting high quality data to ensure valid and reliable results.

**Did you use the Early Childhood Outcomes Center (ECO) Child Outcomes Summary (COS) process?** Yes

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

MA DESE uses the Child Outcomes Summary (COS) process and collects data using a cohort model described above.

none

**FFY 2017 Part B State Performance Plan (SPP)/Annual Performance Report (APR)  
Indicator 8: Parent involvement**

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))

Do you use a separate data collection methodology for preschool children? No

**Historical Data**

Baseline Data: 2005

FFY	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Target ≥			76.00%	76.00%	76.00%		80.00%	83.00%	85.00%	85.00%	85.00%
Data		76.00%	77.00%	77.50%	77.30%		83.00%	82.50%	79.70%	79.85%	84.98%

FFY	2015	2016
Target ≥	85.00%	85.50%
Data	81.01%	82.94%

Key:  Gray – Data Prior to Baseline  Yellow – Baseline  Blue – Data Update

**FFY 2017 - FFY 2018 Targets**

FFY	2017	2018
Target ≥	86.00%	86.50%

Key:

**Targets: Description of Stakeholder Input** - Please see the Stakeholder Involvement section of the [introduction](#).

Enter additional information about stakeholder involvement

MA DESE meets annually with the Statewide Special Education Advisory Panel (SEAP) to review Indicator 8 data including survey questions, response rate, and agreement rate. SEAP makes recommendations based on the data presented. MA DESE met with the SEAP to review data and targets most recently at its December 2018 meeting.

To set Indicator 8 current targets through FFY18, MA DESE worked with the SEAP and stakeholder groups focused on family engagement to review longitudinal data for Indicator 8, improvement activities, and state policy regarding the facilitation of parent involvement as a means of improving services and results for children with disabilities. The groups also assessed the application of the Family, School, and Community Partnership Fundamentals (June 2012) (see <http://www.doe.mass.edu/sfs/fscp-fundamentals.docx>) in evaluating appropriate targets for Indicator 8. The current targets were developed in December 2015 and have been endorsed annually by the SEAP.

At the December 2018 SEAP meeting, stakeholders participated in discussions regarding data representativeness and the collection of demographic information from families completing the Parent Survey. Stakeholder feedback indicated an understanding of the value of collecting demographic information. Members also expressed caution about the collection of unnecessary information, the reluctance of families to provide information, and the reality that many families may face challenges in completing a parent survey.

Stakeholders were also asked to review and discuss setting targets in preparation for FFY18. Members agreed to maintain the FFY18 target of 86.5% for two additional years, allowing MA DESE to focus on increasing representativeness and responses. SEAP intends to re-examine targets in school year 2020-2021.

**FFY 2017 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 2016 Data	FFY 2017 Target	FFY 2017 Data
2158.00	2670.00	82.94%	86.00%	80.82%

The number of parents to whom the surveys were distributed.	7.04%	37904.00
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The percentage shown is the number of respondent parents divided by the number of parents to whom the survey was distributed.

**Reasons for Slippage**

As noted in the Introduction to this SPP/APR, FFY17 marked the first year in which MA DESE collected all LEA data for Indicators 11, 12 and 13 through the Tiered Focused Monitoring (TFM) process. Beginning in FFY17, MA DESE also took steps to integrate Indicator 8 data collection into the TFM process by piloting an Indicator 8 Survey for 14 LEAs that were scheduled to participate in both Indicator 8 cohort activities and TFM's onsite monitoring activities. The use of the pilot survey for the 14 LEAs did not change MA DESE's representative sampling method, as explained below. MA DESE also collected Indicator 8 data from the other LEAs scheduled for Indicator 8 cohort activities through the established Indicator 8 data collection process.

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MA DESE worked closely with internal research and evaluation experts to develop questions for the pilot Indicator 8 survey that were calibrated to elicit answers commensurate with the existing Indicator 8 survey, thus ensuring equivalency between the two sets of Indicator 8 survey questions. The pilot survey administered through the TFM process also included demographic questions related to race/ethnicity and grade spans. By integrating Indicator 8 survey questions into the larger TFM parent survey, the 14 pilot LEAs were relieved of the burden of conducting two family engagement surveys simultaneously. The other 60 LEAs participating in the Indicator 8 cohort survey process did so through the established MA DESE cohort model.

Beginning in FFY18, MA DESE will administer all Indicator 8 data collection through the TFM parent survey process, with approximately 60 LEAs participating annually. MA DESE will notify and seek approval from OSEP of this new sampling method for purposes of the FFY18 SPP/APR. FFY18 will also establish a new baseline year for Indicator 8.

MA DESE reviewed and analyzed the data from both the TFM Indicator 8 questions (14 LEAs) and the Indicator 8 cohort survey (60 LEAs) for statewide analysis and reporting.

MA DESE posits that the slippage in the survey's satisfaction agreement rate may be a result of families' increasing awareness as to what constitutes effective family engagement and their resulting higher expectations that their school and/or LEA utilize family engagement as a means of improving student outcomes.

### 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 FFY17, MA DESE collected Indicator 8 data in two ways: 1) from 60 LEAs using the existing Indicator 8 cohort survey; and 2) from 14 LEAs using a pilot survey that integrated Indicator 8 questions into the TFM parent survey. MA DESE determined the equivalency between the two sets of surveys to integrate the results for statewide analysis and reporting. To facilitate access and response, MA DESE made the surveys available online, through mobile device, via email, or in hard copy.

LEAs sent notices to and distributed surveys to families of all students with IEPs, ages 3-21, in the LEAs. Separate preschool surveys were not used. The questions used in both surveys were developed to include families with children in Early Childhood Special Education and are appropriate for all populations. FFY17 data indicates that 14% of all respondents represent children in Preschool-Kindergarten.

Was sampling used? 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 did not change its sampling methodology in FFY17. All LEAs participating in Indicator 8 data collection during this period were part of the identified data collection cohort under a plan previously approved by OSEP. In this sampling plan, approximately one-fourth of LEAs in the Commonwealth report data annually such that all LEAs report data for each Indicator at least once every four years. Cohort composition is representative of the state as a whole.

The FFY17 cohort reported Indicator 8 data in one of two ways: 1) using the parent survey administered through the Tiered Focused Monitoring (TFM) process, or 2) using the existing Indicator 8 Parent Survey. Data collection in FFY18 will be completed only through the TFM process. Each year a representative group of LEAs participates in the TFM process, including urban, suburban, rural, large, medium and small LEAs, as well as the full range of LEA program and structure types (charter, virtual, CVTE and comprehensive). These LEAs serve a full range of student disability types and need for services, such that the TFM process is representative of the state as a whole. MA DESE will report on the change in the sampling methodology in the FFY18 SPP/APR when it reports the results of those data collection activities.

The 14 LEAs that were scheduled to participate in both Indicator 8 cohort activities and TFM's onsite monitoring in FFY17 made a survey available to parents of students with IEPs in the LEAs. The survey included questions that were calibrated to elicit answers commensurate with the existing Indicator 8 Survey, and to reflect MA DESE's family engagement priorities. The TFM survey also included demographic questions related to race/ethnicity and grade span.

Fully integrating Indicator 8 data collection into the TFM process beginning in FFY18 will provide benefits to LEAs and to MA DESE. LEAs will no longer need to facilitate collection of two parent surveys. Also, integrated procedures at MA DESE will promote improved internal coordination of activities that support parent engagement. Redundancies in paperwork, data collection, and compliance activities will be eliminated, enhancing LEA capacity for self-assessment and service delivery, and MA DESE's capacity for providing technical and targeted assistance. Data from the TFM Parent Survey also will better inform MA DESE's other monitoring activities with LEAs, allowing for MA DESE to better connect survey results with other identified areas of concern. MA DESE will describe this more fully in the FFY18 SPP/APR.

To ensure the broadest representation of respondents, surveys were made available for all families of children with an IEP in LEAs participating in the identified cohort (60) and in the TFM onsite monitoring process (14). MA DESE does not have concerns about the validity and reliability of its sampling method for Indicator 8, as parent responses to both parent surveys are submitted directly by families to MA DESE. However, MA DESE recognizes that its FFY17 response rate of 7.04% is low. Because of the low response rate, MA DESE has low confidence in the data for basing conclusions about family engagement or parental satisfaction for the LEAs involved. MA DESE continues to analyze existing resources and outreach in order to design additional efforts to increase its response rate.

Was a survey used? Yes

Is it a new or revised survey? Yes

Submitted survey: [Parent Survey](#)

### The demographics of the parents responding are representative of the demographics of children receiving special education services. No

Describe the strategies 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 FFY17 using two surveys. Although the survey made available to families in LEAs also participating in the TFM process (attached above) had more questions than the survey administered to families in other reporting LEAs (attached to this indicator report below), the questions were calibrated such that MA DESE was able to calculate a statewide rate of agreement.

To encourage the broadest representation of respondents, LEAs participating in data collection activities in FFY17 made surveys available to all families of students with IEPs in the LEA. MA DESE does not have concerns about the validity and reliability of the data reported because parent responses to the surveys were submitted directly to MA DESE by families. MA DESE cannot confirm that the FFY17 results are representative of the demographics of children receiving special education services, however.

MA DESE collected demographic information regarding race/ethnicity in the pilot survey used by 14 districts in the TFM process, and MA DESE determined through analysis that the data collected were not representative, as described in the section below. MA DESE did not collect demographic information as part of the Indicator 8 Parent Survey, however, used by other LEAs in the data collection cohort. Beginning in FFY18, MA DESE will have access to more demographic information through the new Parent Survey administered to all LEAs participating in the TFM process.

MA DESE recognizes that its FFY17 response rate of 7.04% is low. Because of the low response rate, MA DESE has low confidence in the data for basing conclusions about family engagement or parental satisfaction for the LEAs involved in the data collection and reporting activities. MA DESE continues to analyze existing resources and outreach in order to design additional efforts to increase its response rate and representatives of the survey results.

Some of the actions MA DESE is taking to support greater representatives of data are as follows. MA DESE's data collection methodology for Indicator 8 is designed to support broad representation of survey respondents to promote validity and reliability in reporting. Additionally, MA DESE works with the identified LEAs to make the survey available in several formats to all families of students with IEPs, aged 3 through 21, who are enrolled in the LEA. Multiple input modalities allow for responses online, through mobile devices, and as a printed survey. For FFY18, MA DESE's planned activities to increase response rate include reviewing representativeness to determine which families are not responding, and developing targeted technical assistance for the LEAs to develop plans to better support families in accessing the survey.

The MA DESE Indicator 8 survey and outreach materials provided to the 60 LEAs participating as part of the 4-year cohort model were available in English, Spanish, Haitian-Creole, Portuguese, and Vietnamese. The TFM process ensures that the Parent Survey is translated into the three highest incidence languages in each LEA. This year, those languages included Spanish, Portuguese and English. In FFY18, the TFM Parent Survey will also be translated based on district demographics for lower occurring translation needs, including Vietnamese and Haitian-Creole, and others as needed. These additional translations will be available upon request. LEAs

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participating in the TFM process use emails and other forms of notification to facilitate parental response. The breadth of the outreach and access initiatives will help to support representative sampling through the data collection process.

MA DESE used the recently released IDC *Parent Involvement Data Toolkit* to aid in discussions with the Special Education Advisory Panel (SEAP) related to the collection and analysis of additional demographic information, strategies for targeted outreach for specific populations, and target setting. The SEAP requested, and MA DESE agreed, to revisit the discussion in FFY2018 so that additional conversations could occur consistent with the *Toolkit's* recommendations.

**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.**

The annual response rate is calculated by comparing the number of survey responses received compared to the number of families of students with IEPs served by the participating LEAs. This year's response rate is 7.04%. MA DESE recognizes that historically the response rate has been low. For FFY18, MA DESE's planned activities to increase responses include reviewing representativeness and determining which families are not responding, and developing technical assistance (TA) for the LEAs to develop plans to better include these families. MA DESE posits that increasing the response rate will support the representativeness of the results.

Both surveys administered in FFY17 were intended to complement the family engagement activities and surveys that occur locally, and are comprised of statements/questions that parents rate on a scale of 1 (strongly disagree) through 4 (strongly agree). The standard adopted to demonstrate "that 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 50% or more of the survey items. The MA DESE Office of Planning and Research has approved the methodology for calculating results. In FFY17, 2,158 of the 2,670 respondent parents agreed or strongly agreed with at least 50% of the items, yielding an agreement rate of 80.82%

MA DESE recognizes that data should be representative to provide meaningful information about family involvement. The pilot Parent Survey administered through the TFM process was developed to include optional questions for which families could identify grade span and race. The data collected regarding race and ethnicity indicates that the FFY17 pilot survey responses are not representative of the statewide enrollment data of students with disabilities by race or ethnicity as shown in the charts below.

**Statewide Enrollment of Students with Disabilities by Race or Ethnicity**

	Hispanic	Black	Native American	Native Hawaiian			
Multiracial	Latino	White	African American	Asian	Native Alaskan	Pacific Islander	Not identified
3.6%	23%	59.2%	10.4%	3.4%	0.3%	.1%	0

**Percentage of Respondents by Race or Ethnicity**

	Hispanic	Black	Native American	Native Hawaiian			
Multiracial	Latino	White	African American	Asian	Native Alaskan	Pacific Islander	Not identified
0	5.54%	75.3%	3.44%	2.99%	0.15%	0	12.6%

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

MA DESE continues to support family engagement central to successful student outcomes. The priority continues to be incorporated into the MA DESE's State Systemic Improvement Plan (SIPP) focused on implementation of the Pyramid Model and Positive Solutions for Families.

During FFY17, MA DESE's internal Family Engagement Work Group developed an agency-wide definition of Family Engagement and was awarded grant funding for two LEAs to participate in the research-based, nationally practiced Parent Institute for Quality Education (PIQE) program.

Additionally, MA DESE facilitates a cross-agency stakeholder group to develop a Prenatal-Grade 12 (or completion) Family Engagement Framework. To augment the implementation of this framework, MA DESE applied for and received a 5-year Federal Grant for the Statewide Family Engagement Center to build state and local infrastructures to implement effective family engagement practice.

MA DESE works closely with the Federation for Children with Special Needs to provide trainings for families and LEAs regarding special education and family engagement.

**Actions required in FFY 2016 response**

In the FFY 2017 SPP/APR, the State must report whether its FFY 2017 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.

**Responses to actions required in FFY 2016 OSEP response**

The surveys used for Indicator 8 data collection activities in FFY17 were made available to all families of students with IEPs, ages 3-21, in the participating LEAs. LEAs participating in the survey were representative of the demographics of the state. The existing cohort model data collection activities for Indicator 8 are being phased out and a new process for administering parent surveys as part of the TFM activities is being phased in for full implementation in FFY18. Both activities are designed such that reporting LEAs are representative of the entire range of LEAs in the state, and include urban, suburban, rural, large, medium, small, charters, CVTE districts, and comprehensive school districts, and are also representative of the full range of students served, across disability types and services.

In FFY17, the survey used for the LEAs that collected data through TFM included the collection of demographic information including grade span and ethnicity or race. MA DESE will continue to collect demographic information regarding grade span and ethnicity or race for the FFY18 data collection period. The SEAP will meet to continue the discussion about collecting additional demographic information started at its December 2018 meeting.

MA DESE continues to talk with stakeholders to determine if the benefits of accessing additional demographic information in the parent survey outweigh the potential consequences with regard to access to personally identifiable information and confidentiality. Additional demographics MA DESE and stakeholders may consider including in data collection could include student disability, program type, placement and gender. MA DESE will continue to use the IDC Parent Involvement Tool Kit to aid in its planning for the collection and analysis of demographic information. Additionally, MA DESE plans to work with IDC to develop tools and strategies for increasing representativeness and increasing response rates.

**FFY 2017 Part B State Performance Plan (SPP)/Annual Performance Report (APR)  
Indicator 9: Disproportionate Representation**

Monitoring Priority: Disproportionate Representation

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))

**Historical Data**

Baseline Data: 2016

FFY	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Target			0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Data		0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%

FFY	2015	2016
Target	0%	0%
Data	0%	0%

Key:  Gray – Data Prior to Baseline  Yellow – Baseline

**FFY 2017 - FFY 2018 Targets**

FFY	2017	2018
Target	0%	0%

**FFY 2017 SPP/APR Data**

Has the State established a minimum n and/or cell size requirement?  Yes  No

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 totally excluded from the calculation as a result of the requirement because the district did not meet the minimum n and/or cell size. 10

Number of districts with disproportionate representation of racial and ethnic groups in special education and related services	Number of districts with disproportionate representation of racial and 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-size	FFY 2016 Data	FFY 2017 Target	FFY 2017 Data
2	0	396	0%	0%	0%

Were all races and ethnicities included in the review?  Yes  No

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 less than 10 students in the comparison group, MA DESE employs the alternate risk ratio. A cell of less 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 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.

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Student Information Management System (SIMS). Four hundred and six LEAs were in operation in Massachusetts in October 2017, and 396 met the state's n size requirement for at least one racial/ethnic group. MA DESE found that two of these LEAs—both charter schools flagged by the weighted risk ratio—were flagged because their weighted risk ratio for both Hispanic and African American students exceeded 3.0 for three consecutive years. MA DESE determined that these LEAs were flagged due to the weighting involved in calculating the weighted risk ratio, rather than due to the existence of meaningfully disproportionate representation. In reviewing the LEAs' PPPs, MA DESE determined that in these LEAs the disproportionate representation was not the result of inappropriate identification. This case highlights the challenge in making a meaningful, common metric for measuring disproportionate representation. As a result of this analysis, MA DESE is reviewing its definition of disproportionate representation as it considers implementation of the new significant disproportionality regulations.

**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. MA DESE requires the LEA to submit its policies, practices, and procedures regarding eligibility determination, along with any other 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.
- Any additional data or information that may shed light on the pattern of disproportionate representation of this particular population of students.

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.

**Actions required in FFY 2016 response**

none

Note: Any actions required in last year's response table that are related to correction of findings should be responded to on the "Correction of Previous Findings of Noncompliance" page of this indicator. If your State's only actions required in last year's response are related to findings of noncompliance, a text field will not be displayed on this page.

**Correction of Findings of Noncompliance Identified in FFY 2016**

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

**FFY 2017 Part B State Performance Plan (SPP)/Annual Performance Report (APR)  
Indicator 10: Disproportionate Representation in Specific Disability Categories**

Monitoring Priority: Disproportionate Representation

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))

**Historical Data**

Baseline Data: 2016

FFY	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Target			0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Data		0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%

FFY	2015	2016
Target	0%	0%
Data	0%	0%

Key:  Gray – Data Prior to Baseline  Yellow – Baseline

**FFY 2017 - FFY 2018 Targets**

FFY	2017	2018
Target	0%	0%

**FFY 2017 SPP/APR Data**

Has the State established a minimum n and/or cell size requirement?  Yes  No

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 totally excluded from the calculation as a result of the requirement because the district did not meet the minimum n and/or cell size. 53

Number of districts with disproportionate representation of racial and ethnic groups in specific disability categories	Number of districts with disproportionate representation of racial and ethnic groups in specific disability categories that is the result of inappropriate identification	Number of districts that met the State's minimum n-size	FFY 2016 Data	FFY 2017 Target	FFY 2017 Data
8	0	353	0%	0%	0%

Were all races and ethnicities included in the review?  Yes  No

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 less than 10 students in the comparison group, MA DESE employs the alternate risk ratio. Cells of less 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 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 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. If MA DESE identifies through review 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

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LEA is identified as having disproportionate representation due to inappropriate identification and is required to take corrective action.

For the FFY17 analysis, Massachusetts used the October 1, 2017 enrollment and child count data that it collects from LEAs through its Student Information Management System (SIMS). 406 LEAs were in operation in Massachusetts in October 2017, and 53 LEAs did not have at least 10 students with disabilities in any racial/ethnic disability group, leaving 353 LEAs that met the state's n size requirement for at least one racial/ethnic disability group. MA DESE found that eight of these 353 LEAs displayed a weighted or alternate risk ratio that exceeded 4.0 for three consecutive years.

Of the eight LEAs flagged, three were local school districts (two of which were flagged for African American students with intellectual impairments and the other of which was flagged for Hispanic students with communication disabilities), three were charter schools (one of which was flagged for African American students with intellectual disabilities, one of which was flagged for Hispanic students with communication disabilities, and one of which was flagged for Hispanic students with specific learning disabilities), and two were regional vocational technical school districts flagged using the alternate risk ratio for white students with other health impairments. MA DESE reviewed the policies, practices, and procedures of each of these LEAs and determined that the disproportionate representation was not the result of inappropriate identification.

**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 disability group, 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 disability determination and eligibility determination, along with any other 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.
- Specific LEA policies, practices, and procedures related to special education eligibility for students where the identified disability is the suspected disability or the disability identified by the team following 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 LEAs 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.
- Any additional data or information that may shed light on the pattern of disproportionate representation of this particular population of students in the identified disability category.

MA DESE then reviews this information to determine whether or not the disproportionate representation is the result of inappropriate identification.

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

**Actions required in FFY 2016 response**

none

Note: Any actions required in last year's response table that are related to correction of findings should be responded to on the "Correction of Previous Findings of Noncompliance" page of this indicator. If your State's only actions required in last year's response are related to findings of noncompliance, a text field will not be displayed on this page.

**Correction of Findings of Noncompliance Identified in FFY 2016**

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

**FFY 2017 Part B State Performance Plan (SPP)/Annual Performance Report (APR)  
Indicator 11: Child Find**

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))

**Historical Data**

Baseline Data: 2017

FFY	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Target			100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Data		88.50%	93.80%	94.80%	98.00%	96.80%	94.80%	93.70%	97.30%	98.89%	99.29%

FFY	2015	2016
Target	100%	100%
Data	95.26%	95.83%

Key:  Gray – Data Prior to Baseline  Yellow – Baseline

**FFY 2017 - FFY 2018 Targets**

FFY	2017	2018
Target	100%	100%

**FFY 2017 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 2016 Data	FFY 2017 Target	FFY 2017 Data
2,711	2,616	95.83%	100%	96.50%

Number of children included in (a), but not included in (b) [a-b]	95
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**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 FFY17, there were 95 students from 32 LEAs in the data collection cohort for whom initial evaluations were not completed within the State-established timeline of 45 school days. On average, those delays exceeded the State-established timeline by 12.99 school working days. Delays ranged from 1 day to 69 days beyond the 45 school day requirement. The FFY17 average for delays is an increase of 1.47 days as compared to FFY16's average. The majority of delays reported were attributable to the school/LEA having a scheduling conflict, insufficient staff availability, or lack of qualified staff.

Noncompliance is not identified for delays that resulted from circumstances over which the LEA did not have control, such as school closures for weather or unanticipated emergencies, parent-identified needs such as parent scheduling challenges or missing scheduled meetings, extended student absences or student illness, and extensions to evaluation timelines with agreement of the parents. However, for LEAs reporting these bases for delay, MA DESE provides technical assistance that supports the design and implementation of local systems to anticipate contingencies and limit the recurrence of such delays.

LEA-related issues with scheduling and timing of evaluations are not acceptable reasons for delay and are determined to be noncompliance. In FFY17, delays that MA DESE deemed noncompliance were primarily the result of insufficient staff availability, the school/LEA having scheduling conflicts, and 45 school day timeline calculation errors.

**Indicate the evaluation timeline used**

- The State used the 60 day timeframe within which the evaluation must be conducted.
- The State established a timeline within which the evaluation must be conducted.

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

- State monitoring
- State database that includes data for the entire reporting year

**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.**

FFY17 marked the first year in which all Indicator 11 data collection and reporting is implemented through MA DESE's Tiered Focused Monitoring (TFM) system on a six-year cycle rather than on the previously used four-year cohort cycle. The only exception is Boston Public Schools for which MA DESE continues to oversee data collection on an annual basis for all Indicators. Please see the Introduction section for a more detailed

## FFY 2017 Part B State Performance Plan (SPP)/Annual Performance Report (APR)

explanation of the TFM process and the basis of its implementation for Indicators 8, 11, 12 and 13 data collection.

Based on this new sampling method, MA DESE has identified FFY17 as a new baseline year for Indicator 11 data.

For Indicator 11 reporting, LEAs use a SmartForm reporting document created by MA DESE that requires LEAs to report information, including dates of referral, evaluation, IEP Team meeting, and written consent for services received, as well as information about reasons for delay, if any. MA DESE analyzes this information and calculates rates of compliance for each LEA and the state.

Under TFM, the process for identification of noncompliance differs somewhat from that previously used for Indicator 11. In the past, MA DESE implemented a pre-finding process to verify data submitted by LEAs. MA DESE communicated with each LEA with data suggesting noncompliance prior to making a finding. If MA DESE was able to confirm that the LEA had taken action to address the root cause of the noncompliance identified in the data, MA DESE determined that no finding was necessary.

In FFY17, under TFM, MA DESE did not use a pre-finding process in identifying noncompliance. Rather, MA DESE issued a formal letter of finding with required correction activities immediately following its review of data that indicated noncompliance.

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

During the FFY17 data collection period, participating cohort LEAs received parental consent for initial evaluation for 2711 students. Of those evaluations, 2616, or 96.5%, were completed within the state established timeline of 45 school working days. This is an improvement of 0.67% percentage points from the compliance rate reported last year.

Of the 2711 state evaluations conducted, 1689 students, or 62.30%, were deemed to be eligible for special education services. This is a decrease of 0.88 percentage points from last year's reported rate, and is a reasonable variation between different cohorts.

MA DESE verifies correction of noncompliance consistently using the two-pronged approach described in OSEP Memorandum 09-02. First, MA DESE ensures that corrections are made and verified as soon as possible following the identification of noncompliance, and within one year after the findings were made. Second, MA DESE requires each LEA to engage in a root cause analysis and develop a comprehensive corrective action report. LEAs assessed data and systems in consultation with MA DESE to identify the reasons for noncompliance and identified corrective actions to amend policy or practice, and/or develop and implement appropriate systems related to the identified causes of noncompliance.

As part of its multi-step process of verification of correction of the data reported here, MA DESE first verified that each of the 32 LEAs for which MA DESE identified noncompliance have corrected noncompliance for each student affected by it, unless the student is no longer within the jurisdiction of the LEA. MA DESE did so by analyzing LEA data and other relevant documentation demonstrating that evaluations were complete and LEAs determined students' eligibility, although not timely. Through this process MA DESE verified that each of the 32 districts with noncompliance had corrected it for individual students.

MA DESE is reviewing documentation and subsequent data sets to verify that the LEAs' have implemented all corrective action activities and are able to demonstrate compliance with state-established timeline for evaluation and eligibility determination. As of the date of this report, MA DESE has fully verified correction of identified noncompliance for 13 LEAs. MA DESE is continuing to support the other 19 LEAs for which it identified noncompliance in the development and implementation of their comprehensive corrective action plans, and the submission of subsequent data to the MA DESE to demonstrate compliance with regulatory requirements. Corrective action activities and verification of correction of noncompliance by MA DESE is on track to be completed within one year of the state's finding of noncompliance.

### Actions required in FFY 2016 response

none

Note: Any actions required in last year's response table that are related to correction of findings should be responded to on the "Correction of Previous Findings of Noncompliance" page of this indicator. If your State's only actions required in last year's response are related to findings of noncompliance, a text field will not be displayed on this page.

### Correction of Findings of Noncompliance Identified in FFY 2016

Findings of Noncompliance Identified	Findings of Noncompliance Verified as Corrected Within One Year	Findings of Noncompliance Subsequently Corrected	Findings Not Yet Verified as Corrected
5	5	0	0

### FFY 2016 Findings of Noncompliance Verified as Corrected

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

In its FFY16 APR, MA DESE reported five findings of noncompliance under 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

**FFY 2017 Part B State Performance Plan (SPP)/Annual Performance Report (APR)**

systems, to ensure that timelines are met and eligible students receive services timely. MA DESE verified that these activities occurred by reviewing supplemental documentation provided by the LEAs. Additionally, MA DESE examined a supplemental data set submitted by each LEA and confirmed that the LEA was reporting 100% compliance with the requirements following the implementation of corrective action activities. This process, consistent with OSEP Memorandum 09-02, ensured that corrections were made as soon as possible following the identification of noncompliance, and within one year of the noncompliance finding.

LEAs corrected each finding within one year of identification, and MA DESE documented verification of correction. There is no outstanding noncompliance that was first reported in FFY16.

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

The state verified that each individual case of noncompliance was corrected by examining documentary evidence from each LEA that the LEA had completed the evaluation and determined eligibility for each student affected by the noncompliance, albeit later than the state's 45-day evaluation timeline.

**FFY 2017 Part B State Performance Plan (SPP)/Annual Performance Report (APR)  
Indicator 12: Early Childhood Transition**

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))

**Historical Data**

Baseline Data: 2017

FFY	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Target			100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Data		77.00%	80.30%	82.90%	88.50%	94.00%	86.10%	93.70%	100%	100%	100%

FFY	2015	2016
Target	100%	100%
Data	100%	99.17%

Key:  Gray – Data Prior to Baseline  Yellow – Baseline

**FFY 2017 - FFY 2018 Targets**

FFY	2017	2018
Target	100%	100%

**FFY 2017 SPP/APR Data**

a. Number of children who have been served in Part C and referred to Part B for Part B eligibility determination.	518
b. Number of those referred determined to be NOT eligible and whose eligibility was determined prior to their third birthdays.	91
c. Number of those found eligible who have an IEP developed and implemented by their third birthdays.	152
d. Number of children 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.	251
e. Number of children determined to be eligible for early intervention services under Part C less than 90 days before their third birthdays.	11
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

	Numerator (c)	Denominator (a-b-d-e-f)	FFY 2016 Data	FFY 2017 Target	FFY 2017 Data
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. $[c/(a-b-d-e-f)] \times 100$	152	165	99.17%	100%	92.12%

Number of children who have been served in Part C and referred to Part B for eligibility determination that are not included in b, c, d, e, or f	13
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**Reasons for Slippage**

FFY17 was the first year in which all Indicator 12 data collection and reporting was implemented through MA DESE's Tiered Focused Monitoring (TFM) system. Please see the Introduction section of this SPP/APR for a more detailed explanation of the new collection and reporting process. As noted therein, the only exception to this applies to Boston Public Schools for which MA DESE continues to oversee data collection on an annual basis for all Indicators.

Under TFM, the process for identification of noncompliance differs somewhat from that previously used for Indicators. In the past, MA DESE implemented a pre-finding process to verify data submitted by LEAs. MA DESE communicated with each LEA with data suggesting noncompliance prior to making a finding. If MA DESE was able to confirm that the LEA had taken action to address the root cause of the noncompliance identified in the data, MA DESE determined that no finding was necessary.

In FFY17, under TFM, MA DESE did not use a pre-finding process in identifying noncompliance. Rather, MA DESE issued letters of finding requiring the LEA to engage in corrective action following its review of data. MA DESE believes this change in process may have contributed to the slippage of 7.05 percentage points over last year's compliance rate.

MA DESE issued letters of finding to five LEAs on the basis of 13 student records where either eligibility was not determined until after the child's third birthday and/or an IEP was not developed and implemented by the child's third birthday. In seven of these cases, while the IEP was developed by the third birthday, implementation of services was delayed. For four of these children, the LEAs implemented the IEP within one day after receipting the signed IEP.

Of the remaining six children affected by the identified noncompliance, five were referred to the LEA from Early Intervention (EI) less than 90 days before the third birthday. One child, though evaluated, was not served because the child's parents did not consent to services. Under the pre-finding process for identifying noncompliance that MA DESE used in the past, MA DESE may not have deemed these cases to be noncompliant.

MA DESE further posits that slippage has occurred because it did not implement statewide training for participating LEAs in the reporting year as it has done in the past. Previously, MA DESE, the MA Department of Public Health (DPH) and the MA Department of Early Education and Care (EEC) offered statewide training for Early Intervention (EI) providers and Early Childhood Special Education (ECSE) providers across the state on Indicator 12 data collection and reporting, and underlying transition activities. Over the course of four years, the agencies trained to all LEAs and EI programs in the Commonwealth. This training was not offered in FFY16 or FFY17. This, as well as known staff turnover at EI and ECSE programs, may account for some slippage in the reported compliance rate this year. The agencies will examine ways to support additional training and technical assistance

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.

Thirteen student records reflected delays in eligibility determination, IEP development, and/or IEP implementation beyond the child's third birthday.

The table below lists, for each record for which MA DESE identified noncompliance, the number of days following the child's third birthday that the LEA implemented the IEP, and the reason(s) for delay in implementation reported by the LEA.

Child experiencing a delay in services	Number of days the IEP was implemented after turning 3	Reported Reason(s) for delay
#1	1	-Referral from EI received less than 90 days before the third birthday -District Scheduling Conflict -Parent Scheduling Need
#2	1	-Classroom Not Open
#3	1	-Classroom Not Open
#4	1	-No Classroom Spot
#5	1	-No Classroom Spot
#6	13	-Referral from EI received less than 90 days before the third birthday -Delay in Receipt of Evaluator Reports
#7	22	-District Scheduling Conflict
#8	23	-District Scheduling Conflict
#9	29	-Referral from EI received less than 90 days before the third birthday -District Scheduling Conflict
#10	37	-Referral from EI received less than 90 days before the third birthday -No Classroom Spot
#11	48	-Parent Delay in Completing Registration
#12	Evaluation completed after third birthday	-Referral from EI received less than 90 days before the third birthday -Child found not eligible for Special Education -District Scheduling Conflict
#13	IEP Not Implemented	-Parent did not consent to services

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

- State monitoring
- State database that includes data for the entire reporting year

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.

As noted above, FFY17 is the first year in which all Indicator 12 data activities were managed by the DESE Public School Monitoring office as part of the Tiered Focused Monitoring (TFM) review process. Accordingly, FFY17 is a new baseline year for Indicator 12 data.

For Indicator 12 reporting, LEAs use a SmartForm created by MA DESE that contains the following data points: dates of referral, evaluation, IEP Team meeting, and written consent for services received, as well as information about reasons for delay, if any. For the FFY17 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 2018.

**FFY 2017 Part B State Performance Plan (SPP)/Annual Performance Report (APR)**

Provide additional information about this indicator (optional)

Using a cycle of continuous improvement, MA DESE continues to work closely with DPH - the lead agency for IDEA Part C – and EEC to monitor data and design appropriate improvement activities based on the needs in the state. The agencies collaborated to create an Early Childhood Transition Stakeholder group with members from LEAs and EI programs around the state. The stakeholder group identified strategies and best practices for successful early childhood transitions. In the fall of 2018, MA DESE and DPH published a joint advisory, *Technical Assistance Advisory SPED 2019-1: Transition from Early Intervention Programs to Early Childhood Special Education* (<http://www.doe.mass.edu/sped/advisories/2019-1ta.html>). The agencies also consulted with the Special Education Advisory Panel in developing the advisory. MA DESE and DPH presented the advisory to LEAs and EI providers in a series of regional meetings for LEA special education administrators and a webinar for EI providers.

MA DESE continues to evaluate its own policies and procedures related to Indicator 12 to consider what additional actions are needed to decrease the number of allowable delays included in “d” of the data calculation. MA DESE will continue to offer targeted technical assistance in cooperation with DPH, EEC. Members of the Early Childhood Transition Stakeholder group, will present the Technical Assistance Advisory at Early Childhood Learning Networking meetings in the spring of 2019.

Through this process to date, MA DESE fully verified correction of identified noncompliance in 3 LEAs. The other 2 LEAs for which MA DESE 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 is on track to be completed within one year of the state's finding of noncompliance.

**Actions required in FFY 2016 response**

none

Note: Any actions required in last year's response table that are related to correction of findings should be responded to on the "Correction of Previous Findings of Noncompliance" page of this indicator. If your State's only actions required in last year's response are related to findings of noncompliance, a text field will not be displayed on this page.

**Correction of Findings of Noncompliance Identified in FFY 2016**

Findings of Noncompliance Identified	Findings of Noncompliance Verified as Corrected Within One Year	Findings of Noncompliance Subsequently Corrected	Findings Not Yet Verified as Corrected
1	1	0	0

**FFY 2016 Findings of Noncompliance Verified as Corrected**

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

In FFY16, MA DESE determined that one LEA did not meet compliance for one child for Indicator 12. The LEA was notified and was required to create a Corrective Action Plan to include:

1. Assessment of the LEA early childhood special education referral and evaluation data and procedures to identify the root causes of noncompliance. This included a review of local policies, practices, and procedures for transition from Part C to Part B, and consideration of what additional steps must be taken to demonstrate that, for children referred from EI, evaluations are completed and IEPs for eligible children are developed and services are implemented by the child's third birthday.
2. A summary of the LEA's early childhood transition scheduling policy.
3. A plan for their review of the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) developed with the EI programs serving children in the LEA, including any plans for revisions or updates. The MOU was required to be jointly developed and agreed upon by each program and to outline the policies and procedures used to support smooth transition from EI (Part C) to ECSE (Part B- Section 619 under IDEA).

Additionally, to demonstrate that the LEA practice has improved and that the LEA is able to report 100% compliance, the LEA was required to submit additional data for at least two children referred from EI. The additional data (two children) was to include referrals where there may have been scheduling challenges. The LEA submitted the required documentation to demonstrate that they reviewed their early childhood transition policies and practices, including a review of the MOU between their LEA and the EI program. The LEA also demonstrated that they addressed and corrected issues leading to a delay in evaluation and implementation of services for children referred from EI. Subsequent data for two additional students met the 100% compliance requirement.

The LEA corrected each finding within one year of identification, and MA DESE documented verification of correction consistent with OSEP memorandum 09-02. There is no outstanding noncompliance that was first reported in FFY16.

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

The state verified that the individual case of noncompliance was corrected by examining the LEA's corrective action report and documentary evidence of correction, including subsequent data as appropriate. The LEA was able to provide evidence that the child's evaluation had been completed and the IEP was implemented one day after the receipt of the signed IEP for the child affected by the noncompliance.



**FFY 2017 Part B State Performance Plan (SPP)/Annual Performance Report (APR)  
Indicator 13: Secondary Transition**

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 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))

**Historical Data**

Baseline Data: 2017

FFY	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Target			100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Data						97.00%	99.10%	99.20%	100%	99.46%	100%

FFY	2015	2016
Target	100%	100%
Data	100%	99.80%

Key:  Gray – Data Prior to Baseline  Yellow – Baseline

**FFY 2017 - FFY 2018 Targets**

FFY	2017	2018
Target	100%	100%

**FFY 2017 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 2016 Data	FFY 2017 Target	FFY 2017 Data
3,171	3,266	99.80%	100%	97.09%

**Reasons for Slippage**

In FFY2017, Indicator 13 data collection activities were fully integrated into the Tiered Focused Monitoring (TFM) review process conducted by DESE's Public School Monitoring Office (PSM). Please see the Introduction section for an in-depth explanation of the new process and the basis for implementing it. As noted therein, 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. As a result of this change, FFY17 is a new baseline year for Indicator 13.

Under TFM, the process for identification of noncompliance differs somewhat from that previously used for Indicator 13. In the past, MA DESE implemented a pre-finding process to verify data submitted by LEAs. MA DESE communicated with each LEA with data suggesting noncompliance prior to making a finding. If MA DESE was able to confirm that the LEA had taken action to address the root cause of the noncompliance identified in the data, MA DESE determined that no finding was necessary.

In FFY17, under TFM, MA DESE did not use a pre-finding process in identifying noncompliance. Rather, MA DESE issued a formal letter of finding with required correction activities immediately following its review of data that indicated noncompliance. MA DESE believes this new process may have contributed to the slippage by 2.71 percentage points in FFY17 Indicator 13 data.

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

- State monitoring
- State database that includes data for the entire reporting year

**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.**

As noted above and in the Introduction section of the State Performance Plan, FFY17 is the first year in which in which Indicator 13 data collection was implemented fully through MA DESE's Tiered Focused Monitoring (TFM) system on a six-year cycle, rather than on the previously used four-year cohort cycle. In addition, MA DESE is for the first time submitting data for ages 14 and above (the Massachusetts standard), rather than for ages 16 and above (the federal standard). Accordingly, FFY17 sets a new baseline for Indicator 13 data.

As part of the transition to the new TFM system, MA DESE decided to engage as many LEAs as possible in the self-assessment stage of the new process during which Indicator 13 data was submitted. Therefore the number of student records reviewed in FFY17 (3,266) was approximately twice as large as in a typical year. 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. Of 3,266 student records reviewed statewide, 95 records were not in compliance.

MA DESE shared data and targets for Indicator 13 with the Special Education Advisory Panel most recently at its December 2018 meeting.

Do the State's policies and procedures provide that public agencies must meet these requirements at an age younger than 16?

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Yes No

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  No

At what age are youth included in the data for this indicator? 14

### Actions required in FFY 2016 response

none

Note: Any actions required in last year's response table that are related to correction of findings should be responded to on the "Correction of Previous Findings of Noncompliance" page of this indicator. If your State's only actions required in last year's response are related to findings of noncompliance, a text field will not be displayed on this page.

### Correction of Findings of Noncompliance Identified in FFY 2016

Findings of Noncompliance Identified	Findings of Noncompliance Verified as Corrected Within One Year	Findings of Noncompliance Subsequently Corrected	Findings Not Yet Verified as Corrected
1	1	0	0

### FFY 2016 Findings of Noncompliance Verified as Corrected

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

For FFY16, MA DESE identified one LEA which did not meet the standard of 100 percent compliance with the requirements of Indicator 13. As a result:

1. MA DESE provided professional development for LEA administrators and educators in that LEA focused on all identified areas of noncompliance.
2. After professional development was delivered, the LEA convened expedited IEP meetings for each individual student in the data sample whose record did not meet requirements. MA DESE confirmed that during these new IEP meetings, students received fully compliant transition planning and services.
3. Finally, the LEA submitted to MA DESE a subsequent data set that included records of additional students not included in the original data sample, demonstrating full compliance with Indicator 13 requirements.

Using this multi-step process of verifying correction of noncompliance, MA DESE determined that the LEA corrected noncompliance for all students affected by it, and that the LEA is correctly implemented all applicable regulatory requirements. This process is consistent with OSEP Memorandum 09-02.

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

The LEA confirmed that it convened expedited IEP meetings for each individual student in the data sample whose record did not meet Indicator 13 requirements. During these new IEP meetings, students received fully compliant transition planning and services.

**FFY 2017 Part B State Performance Plan (SPP)/Annual Performance Report (APR)  
Indicator 14: Post-School Outcomes**

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))

**Historical Data**

	Baseline Year	FFY	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
A	2017	Target ≥							43.00%	44.00%	45.00%	45.00%	47.00%
		Data						42.30%	50.70%	41.00%	46.60%	42.05%	48.94%
B	2017	Target ≥							74.00%	77.00%	80.00%	80.00%	82.00%
		Data						72.00%	79.80%	70.00%	81.30%	77.00%	82.00%
C	2017	Target ≥							82.00%	84.00%	87.00%	87.00%	89.00%
		Data						81.30%	88.90%	86.90%	93.00%	88.73%	90.16%

	FFY	2015	2016
A	Target ≥	49.00%	51.00%
	Data	53.83%	49.64%
B	Target ≥	84.00%	86.00%
	Data	81.31%	83.13%
C	Target ≥	91.00%	93.00%
	Data	93.74%	94.43%

Key:  Gray – Data Prior to Baseline  Yellow – Baseline  Blue – Data Update

**FFY 2017 - FFY 2018 Targets**

FFY	2017	2018
Target A ≥	53.00%	55.00%
Target B ≥	88.00%	90.00%
Target C ≥	95.00%	97.00%

Key:

**Targets: Description of Stakeholder Input** - Please see the Stakeholder Involvement section of the [introduction](#).

Enter additional information about stakeholder involvement

**FFY 2017 SPP/APR Data**

Number of respondent youth who are no longer in secondary school and had IEPs in effect at the time they left school	790.00
1. Number of respondent youth who enrolled in higher education within one year of leaving high school	395.00
2. Number of respondent youth who competitively employed within one year of leaving high school	232.00
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)	22.00
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).	39.00

	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 2016 Data	FFY 2017 Target	FFY 2017 Data
A. Enrolled in higher education (1)	395.00	790.00	49.64%	53.00%	50.00%

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	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 2016 Data	FFY 2017 Target	FFY 2017 Data
B. Enrolled in higher education or competitively employed within one year of leaving high school (1 +2)	627.00	790.00	83.13%	88.00%	79.37%
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)	688.00	790.00	94.43%	95.00%	87.09%

### 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.

Option 2: Report in alignment with the term "competitive integrated employment" and its definition, in section 7(5) of the Rehabilitation Act, as amended by Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), and 34 CFR §361.5(c)(9). 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.

### Reasons for B Slippage

Measurement B, which is determined by adding together data from Indicator 14 Definitions 1 and 2, is designed to be mathematically linked to Measurement A. Shortly before the FFY17 reporting deadline, MA DESE discovered it had made a small but recurring error calculating Measurement A in previous years, whereby some exiters who were enrolled in higher education within one year of leaving high school were counted under Measurement A, even though they did not report they had completed a full term. MA DESE has corrected this calculation error for purposes of its FFY17 reporting on Indicator 14. Had MA DESE not corrected the error this year, it would have affected approximately 6 percent of FFY17 Indicator 14 survey respondents.

Since, as noted above, Measurement A affects Measurements B (and, cumulatively, Measurement C), the error in previous years' calculation of Measurement A and its correction this year results in a lack of equivalency between FFY16 and FFY17 data such that MA DESE cannot draw valid conclusions regarding slippage or growth for Measurement B this year. Specifically, the data points for this year and last (83.13 percent for FFY16 and 79.37 percent for FFY17) do not provide a basis on which to accurately calculate slippage for Measurement B. Moreover, the correction of the calculation error is an adjustment to the calculation methodology, which makes FFY17 a new baseline year for Indicator 14.

MA DESE plans to discuss the new baseline and Indicator 14 targets in the context of the new baseline with its Special Education Advisory Panel (SEAP) in an upcoming meeting this spring. The discussion will include the fact that the FFY17 data for Measurement B (79.37 percent) is significantly less than the current target of 88 percent.

We recognize the urgency of our state's work to improve competitive integrated employment for all of our students. Two examples of that work are our [High Quality College and Career Pathways](#) initiatives, built on five guiding principles that include equitable access and enhanced student support, and our agency's participation in the five-year federally funded systems change project, [Massachusetts Partnership for Transition to Employment](#).

### Reasons for C Slippage

Measurement C, which is determined by adding together Indicator 14 Definitions 1, 2, 3, and 4, is designed to be mathematically linked to Measurements A and B. Because so many more exiters are engaged under Definitions 1 and 2 than under 3 and 4, Measurement C is largely responsive to trends in Measurement B. However, the lack of equivalency between FFY17 and FFY16 data due to the corrected calculation error discussed above means that the data points for this year and last (94.43 percent for FFY16 and 87.09 percent for FFY17) do not provide a valid basis on which to calculate slippage for Measurement C. Accordingly, as with Measurement B, MA DESE is not able to draw conclusions regarding slippage or lack of progress towards the target for Measurement C this year. Also as explained above, the correction of the calculation error is an adjustment to the calculation methodology, which for purposes of this year's reporting makes FFY17 a new baseline year for Indicator 14. This new baseline and the possibility of consequent new targets will be discussed with the SEAP this spring.

Was sampling used?  Yes

Has your previously-approved sampling plan changed?  No

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

For Indicator 14 data collection, MA DESE has divided its more than 400 LEAs into four cohorts that are representative of the state as a whole, each of which collects and reports data on this indicator based on a four-year cycle. Over a four-year period, every LEA in the state participates in the data collection activities for Indicator 14. Because it has an average daily membership of over 50,000 students, Boston Public Schools participates in all cohort collection activities every year, including one-fourth of its students in each year's indicator report.

MA DESE uses a two-step data collection protocol to assess post-school outcomes for students with disabilities. In the first year, LEAs 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. Each year MA DESE notifies participating LEAs of their responsibilities to collect student contact information and data, and provides them with necessary technical assistance about data collection activities and responsibilities. LEAs are asked to make a minimum of three attempts to contact exiters to complete the survey. 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 upload respondents' answers directly to MA DESE. Data are submitted on a spreadsheet that is accessible to LEAs through the MA DESE Security Portal. MA DESE then completes an aggregate data collection and analysis.

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.

Was a survey used?  Yes

Is it a new or revised survey?  No

### 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.

According to the National Post-School Outcomes Response Calculator, MA DESE's data is representative of the state as a whole with regard to disability category, gender, minority status, English Language Learner status, and dropout status. The Response Calculator is a tool designed by the National Center so that states can input key demographic data on the Respondent and Target Leaver Groups. The Response Calculator compares proportions between the two groups on demographic variables and identifies where important differences exist between the two groups on those variables. The demographic variable categories are:

Specific Learning Disability (LD)  
Emotional Disability (ED)  
Intellectual Disability (ID)  
All Other disability groups (AO)  
Gender  
Minority  
English Language Learners (ELL)  
Dropout

If there is a difference of less than plus or minus 3 percent in any demographic variable category, that category is considered representative. For FFY2017, the differences between Target Leaver and Respondent Groups in Massachusetts were as follows:

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NPSO Response Calculator

Representativeness

	Overall	Learning Disability	Emotional Disability	Intellectual Disability (MR)	Other Disabilities	Female	Minority	English Learner	Dropout
Target Leaver Totals	1812	636	271	153	752	676	699	42	34
Response Totals	789	269	112	61	347	303	281	22	10
Target Leaver Representation		35.10%	14.96%	8.44%	41.50%	37.31%	38.58%	2.32%	1.88%
Respondent Representation		34.09%	14.20%	7.73%	43.98%	38.40%	35.61%	2.79%	1.27%
Difference		-1.01%	-0.76%	-0.71%	2.48%	1.10%	-2.96%	0.47%	-0.61%

Note: positive difference indicates over-representation, negative difference indicates under-representation. A difference of greater than +/-3% is highlighted in red.

Therefore MA DESE's FFY2017 Indicator 14 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.

Are the response data representative of the demographics of youth who are no longer in school and had IEPs in effect at the time they left school? Yes

### Actions required in FFY 2016 response

none

**FFY 2017 Part B State Performance Plan (SPP)/Annual Performance Report (APR)  
Indicator 15: Resolution Sessions**

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)))

**Historical Data**

Baseline Data: 2005

FFY	2004			2005			2006			2007			2008		
Target				-			48.00%	-		48.00%	-		49.00%	-	
Data				48.00%			6.25%			3.60%			42.50%		

FFY	2009			2010			2011			2012		
Target	50.00%	-		48.00%	-	58.00%	48.00%	-	58.00%	48.00%	-	58.00%
Data	55.30%			61.54%			45.83%			47.83%		

FFY	2013			2014			2015			2016		
Target	48.00%	-	58.00%	48.00%	-	58.00%	48.00%	-	58.00%	48.00%	-	58.00%
Data	25.00%			42.11%			41.67%			57.14%		

Key:  Gray – Data Prior to Baseline  Yellow – Baseline  Blue – Data Update

**FFY 2017 - FFY 2018 Targets**

FFY	2017			2018		
Target	48.00%	-	58.00%	48.00%	-	58.00%

Key:

**Targets: Description of Stakeholder Input** - Please see the Stakeholder Involvement section of the [introduction](#).

Enter additional information about stakeholder involvement

**Prepopulated Data**

Source	Date	Description	Data	Overwrite Data
SY 2017-18 EMAPS IDEA Part B Dispute Resolution Survey; Section C: Due Process Complaints	11/8/2018	<a href="#">3.1(a) Number resolution sessions resolved through settlement agreements</a>	14	null
SY 2017-18 EMAPS IDEA Part B Dispute Resolution Survey; Section C: Due Process Complaints	11/8/2018	<a href="#">3.1 Number of resolution sessions</a>	26	null

**FFY 2017 SPP/APR Data**

3.1(a) Number resolution sessions resolved through settlement agreements	3.1 Number of resolution sessions	FFY 2016 Data	FFY 2017 Target	FFY 2017 Data
14	26	57.14%	48.00% - 58.00%	53.85%

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

MA DESE continues to meet targets with regarding the number of resolution sessions resolved through settlement agreements, although the number of reported resolution sessions is small as compared with the number of due process requests filed (481).

**Actions required in FFY 2016 response**

none

**FFY 2017 Part B State Performance Plan (SPP)/Annual Performance Report (APR)  
Indicator 16: Mediation**

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))

**Historical Data**

Baseline Data: 2005

FFY	2004			2005			2006			2007			2008		
Target				-			85.90%	-		86.00%	-		75.00%	-	86.00%
Data				83.40%			83.70%			83.90%			84.50%		

FFY	2009			2010			2011			2012		
Target	75.00%	-	86.00%	75.00%	-	86.00%	77.00%	-	87.00%	77.00%	-	87.00%
Data	86.77%			86.20%			85.46%			86.27%		

FFY	2013			2014			2015			2016		
Target	77.00%	-	87.00%	77.00%	-	87.00%	77.00%	-	87.00%	77.00%	-	87.00%
Data	83.72%			84.35%			86.49%			82.85%		

Key:  Gray – Data Prior to Baseline  Yellow – Baseline  Blue – Data Update

**FFY 2017 - FFY 2018 Targets**

FFY	2017			2018		
Target	77.00%	-	87.00%	77.00%	-	87.00%

Key:

**Targets: Description of Stakeholder Input** - Please see the Stakeholder Involvement section of the [introduction](#).

Enter additional information about stakeholder involvement

**Prepopulated Data**

Source	Date	Description	Data	Overwrite Data
SY 2017-18 EMAPS IDEA Part B Dispute Resolution Survey; Section B: Mediation Requests	11/8/2018	<a href="#">2.1.a.i Mediations agreements related to due process complaints</a>	5	null
SY 2017-18 EMAPS IDEA Part B Dispute Resolution Survey; Section B: Mediation Requests	11/8/2018	<a href="#">2.1.b.i Mediations agreements not related to due process complaints</a>	511	null
SY 2017-18 EMAPS IDEA Part B Dispute Resolution Survey; Section B: Mediation Requests	11/8/2018	<a href="#">2.1 Mediations held</a>	605	null

**FFY 2017 SPP/APR Data**

2.1.a.i Mediations agreements related to due process complaints	2.1.b.i Mediations agreements not related to due process complaints	2.1 Mediations held	FFY 2016 Data	FFY 2017 Target	FFY 2017 Data
5	511	605	82.85%	77.00% - 87.00%	85.29%

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

Massachusetts continues to report high rates of mediation agreements reached, and to meet targets set by the Special Education Advisory Panel.

**Actions required in FFY 2016 response**

none

**FFY 2017 Part B State Performance Plan (SPP)/Annual Performance Report (APR)  
Indicator 17: State Systemic Improvement Plan**

Monitoring Priority: General Supervision

Results indicator: The State's SPP/APR includes a State Systemic Improvement Plan (SSIP) that meets the requirements set forth for this indicator.

**Reported Data**

Baseline Data: 2013

FFY	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Target ≥		100%	100%	100%	100%
Data	85.44%	87.20%	79.14%	88.70%	85.61%

Key:  Gray – Data Prior to Baseline  Yellow – Baseline  
Blue – Data Update

**FFY 2018 Target**

FFY	2018
Target ≥	100%

Key:

**Description of Measure**

Indicator 7: Preschool Outcomes measures the percent of preschool children aged 3 through 5 with IEPs who demonstrate improved:

- a. Positive social-emotional skills (including social relationship);
- 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.

As previously described in this report, MA ESE, in collaboration with stakeholders, will focus on improving social-emotional outcomes, or Indicator 7a for the SSIP. Child level data is collected via the Child Outcomes Summary (COS) and aggregated. These aggregated data are measured by Summary Statements.

**Summary Statement 1:** Of those preschool children who entered or exited 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.

Further detailed information about data collection samples, methods and tools can be found in subsequent sections of this report. While MA ESE saw an improvement in Indicator 7a data outcomes in FFY 14 over the FFY 13 results, the improvement is likely due to previous professional development and technical assistance activities. Factors that have contributed to growth are increased statewide attention to the SSIP, coupled with the initial implementation of the coherent improvement activities and the evidenced-based practice (EBP) in 18 districts having nearly 1/3 of the state's public preschool population. MA ESE anticipates reporting on additional improvement next year.

**Targets: Description of Stakeholder Input** - Please see the Stakeholder Involvement section of the [introduction](#).

Enter additional information about stakeholder involvement

**Overview**

**Data Analysis**

A description of how the State identified and analyzed key data, including data from SPP/APR indicators, 618 data collections, and other available data as applicable, to: (1) select the State-identified Measurable Result(s) for Children with Disabilities, and (2) identify root causes contributing to low performance. The description must include information about how the data were disaggregated by multiple variables (e.g., LEA, region, race/ethnicity, gender, disability category, placement, etc.). As part of its data analysis, the State should also consider compliance data and whether those data present potential barriers to improvement. In addition, if the State identifies any 9/21/2020

## How Key Data Were Identified and Analyzed

The Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (MA ESE) began work on the State Systemic Improvement Plan (SSIP) in October 2013. MA ESE created an internal leadership team to work on the SSIP that eventually became, with additional members representing early childhood special education, the Early Childhood Special Education (ECSE) Leadership team, after the focus of the SSIP on early childhood was identified through the process described within this report. The internal leadership team is composed of staff from the following ESE offices: the Special Education Policy and Planning Office, Education Data Services, the Office of District and School Turnaround, and the Center for Student Assessment; and further included the MA Department of Early Education and Care (MA EEC). The Leadership team met to identify and conduct initial data analyses to inform the SSIP. This team identified key quantitative and qualitative data to review for the SSIP as part of a preliminary broad data analysis. Further, this team consulted with the ESE Center for Accountability, Partnerships, and Targeted Assistance to leverage the work of the ESEA waiver and state general accountability systems. The purpose of these analyses was to identify key areas of concern or underperformance in Massachusetts that could be brought to stakeholders for discussion and feedback, and addressed through the work of the SSIP. To complete this broad, foundational analysis of state data related to the performance of children and youth with disabilities, MA ESE engaged in a systematic process to identify, select, and analyze data from a variety of sources, which included longitudinal SPP/APR compliance and performance data, 618 data, assessment data from the Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System, accountability data, disciplinary removal data from the MA School Safety and Discipline Report (SSDR), demographic data from the MA Student Information Management System (SIMS), and additional compliance data from the MA Program Quality Assurance unit, and the Massachusetts Data Display. These analyses paralleled ongoing activities by MA ESE to monitor the performance of students and programs in the state, including students with disabilities. The result of these analyses was the identification of social emotional outcomes for children with disabilities aged 3-5 as the focus for the State Identified Measurable Result (SIMR).

Massachusetts has several systems in place to ensure the quality of the data on which these analyses were based. In addition to a strong data-governance structure, there are a number of internal systems in place to ensure that all of MA DESE's data is collected in a timely manner and that it is reliable and valid. MA DESE Special Education Planning and Policy staff work closely with staff from the MA ESE Education Data Services Unit throughout Phase I of the SSIP to ensure that any data used were accurate and interpreted appropriately. In addition, MA ESE has been working closely with the Early Childhood Technical Assistance Center (ECTA) to develop capacity in Massachusetts to offer trainings in the COS Process and to improve the quality of data reported for Indicator 7.

### *Qualitative Preliminary Data Analysis & Stakeholder Engagement*

MA ESE conceptualized the development of the SSIP as a shared process with both internal and external stakeholders. MA ESE staff solicited a great deal of qualitative data and feedback for analysis. MA DESE staff worked with diverse statewide stakeholder groups. The stakeholder groups and their membership are listed below:

Special Education Advisory Panel is composed of members appointed by the Commissioner on behalf of the MA Board of Education. Over half of the voting members are individuals with a disability or a parent of a child with a disability. Membership is presently comprised of local education officials, teachers, and representatives from higher education, charter schools, special education schools, and organizations that provide transition services to children with disabilities. A reasonable balance of business, civic, labor, and professional groups, and geographic areas, is currently maintained.

Special Education Steering Committee is composed of the members of the SAC plus advocacy organizations, ESE representatives from the Office of District and School Turnaround, Data Services, State System of Accountability, District and School Turnaround, and Tiered System of Support.

Early Childhood Special Education (ECSE) Stakeholders convened to garner additional authentic stakeholder input from Early Childhood Special Education professionals. The expansion of membership of this group was designed to obtain authentic cross-stakeholder engagement from persons with expertise and experience in early learning, early mental health, and ECSE. MA DESE convened representatives from MA DESE, including the offices of Special Education office, Data Services, State System of Accountability, District and School Turnaround, Tiered System of Support, and Early Learning. MA ESE also collaborated with experts in early childhood from the following state Departments: Early Education and Care (MA EEC), Mental Health (MA DPH), which included Part C and Infant Mental Health Consultants, Children and Families (MA DCF), and Mental Health (MA DMH). MA ESE also convened local practitioners and parents. The Federation for Children with Special Needs (FCSN), the Parent Training and Information Center in MA committed to the process by sending their Director of Training and Executive Director. Further, parent representatives from the Special Education Advisory Council (SAC) were invited to participate. Representatives from higher education, practitioners and local leaders, including Special Education Directors, Early Childhood Coordinators, and Teachers rounded out the membership.

Early Childhood Special Education (ECSE) Leadership Team led by the MA 619 Coordinator, included representatives from MA DSE offices in Special Education, Early Learning, Data Services, District and School Turnaround, State System of Accountability, and Tiered System of Support. This working group was charged with leading the management of authentic cross-stakeholder engagement and development of the SSIP.

The stakeholder groups and MA ESE offices listed above were involved in the process to select, identify, and analyze existing data in the 2013-2014 school year, and each group had the opportunity to recommend areas of inquiry and to provide feedback on what they felt could be improved to support students with disabilities in Massachusetts.

Stakeholders consulted at this stage of the Phase I process expressed a strong belief in the importance of intervening early and identified the need for significant increased capacity at the early childhood level to support improved outcomes, and in particular, social emotional outcomes. This information was very helpful in shaping the preliminary quantitative data analyses. Stakeholders were able to engage in a critical exchange with MA ESE to identify the focus of the data and infrastructure analyses presented below. The Infrastructure Analysis portion of this document further details the involvement of stakeholders in data analysis.

### Quantitative Preliminary Data Analysis

After receiving feedback from stakeholders, the broad data analysis began with the SSIP team looking at trends in statewide performance data including SPP/APR data; results on the Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System or MCAS; state accountability data; graduation and dropout rates; and monitoring, compliance, and complaint data from the MA ESE Program Quality Assurance Office. These analyses also included Section 616 and 618 data. Because MA ESE has a number of systems in place to ensure high data quality, the state therefore has confidence in the validity of the data analyzed.

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MA ESE used these multiple data sources in its data analyses, and longitudinal and demographic trends, to identify root causes contributing to low performance for students with disabilities. For example, we asked: Are certain populations performing better or worse than other populations? Are there regional trends in the data? MA ESE also explored data that related to individual student-level characteristics such as demographic data, graduation and dropout rates, and [School Safety Discipline Report](#) data, including removal data. These data were disaggregated by a number of factors to identify areas of high and low performance, including by gender, race/ethnicity, Supplemental Educational Services (SES), English Language Learner (ELL) status, disability, level of need, placement, school accountability level, by region, and by district. MA ESE had a critical exchange of ideas regarding these analyses with stakeholders. While the disaggregation of student level outcomes by different factors was helpful to get a better picture of the current status of special education in Massachusetts, a result of the exchange was identifying the value of leveraging the existing statewide infrastructure to support improved social emotional outcomes for all young children with disabilities in a way that is scalable, implemented with fidelity, and sustainable.

### Review of Performance Indicator Data

MA ESE also examined several SPP/APR indicators of performance as part of the initial data analysis. An examination of statewide assessment data reported as part of Indicator 3 indicated that performance of students with disabilities is consistent with performance of their non-disabled peers. Districts in which students without disabilities demonstrate relatively high levels of performance also report relatively high levels of performance of students with disabilities. The trends for graduation and dropout rates were also similar when disaggregated by district and other factors. A more notable difference was found in the age breakdown of suspension and expulsion statewide data. MA ESE and stakeholders noted that a substantial number of students ages 3-5 are being removed from their classrooms for disciplinary reasons. Stakeholders identified this as an area of concern, and one that contributed to the narrowing of the inquiry toward early childhood education as the focus for the SSIP.

The analysis of the performance indicators included a review of Indicator 7 data assessment early childhood outcomes. Indicator 7 utilizes the the Child Outcomes Summary (COS) Process, which was designed by the Early Childhood Outcomes (ECO) Center, as a way for states to summarize data on children's movement toward age expectations in specific outcome areas. States use the COS Form to document children's functioning in three outcome areas. MA ESE conducted a statewide web-based survey of all Special Education Directors, Early Childhood Coordinators, and Preschool Coordinators on the use of the COS process in their program in the fall of 2013. ESE received feedback on the implementation of the COS Process in districts and how the process was working for district personnel. In addition, respondents provided information on their comfort with using the COS Process to assess outcomes and any local level needs for additional training and technical assistance. Approximately 250 administrators from across the state participated in this survey and provided valuable insight about child outcomes in their district. This feedback indicated a need for additional support in early childhood special education, including developing social emotional skills, and the results of this inquiry were closely reviewed by the SSIP team.

### Review of Compliance Data

No compliance issues were identified during the broad data analysis. As one part of its accountability system, the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education oversees local compliance with education requirements through the Coordinated Program Review (CPR). All reviews cover selected requirements in the following areas: Special Education (SE); Civil Rights and Other General Education Requirements (CR); English Learner Education (ELE) in Public Schools; and some reviews also cover selected requirements in Career/Vocational Technical Education (CVTE). Each school district and charter school in the Commonwealth is scheduled to receive a Coordinated Program Review every six years and a mid-cycle special education follow-up visit three years after the Coordinated Program Review. Any compliance issues identified through this process are promptly addressed. Therefore, MA ESE has concluded that compliance data need not be a focus of the SSIP.

### Review of Massachusetts Research Reports

The final analyses conducted as part of the initial broad data analysis included a review of [three reports](#) developed for MA ESE by Dr. Thomas Hehir and his associates from Harvard University using Massachusetts' data, at the request of the Massachusetts State Director and the Commissioner of Elementary and Secondary Education. Massachusetts has a long-standing commitment of ensuring that all students, including those with disabilities, receive an education that prepares them for success after high school. While Massachusetts is home to many successful programs, services, and resources that public schools provide to students with disabilities, there remains a proficiency gap between students with disabilities and their peers without disabilities. The research was commissioned to understand better the variation in identification, placement, and performance of the Commonwealth's students with disabilities.

This work was informed by conversations between Dr. Hehir and his colleagues and key stakeholders, and focused on exploring policies and practices that will ensure effective and high quality services and instruction for students with disabilities while addressing cost containment and management of available resources. In addition to meeting with a stakeholder group, Dr. Hehir met with the Massachusetts Board of Elementary and Secondary Education and other individuals and organizations to establish the research protocols and as part of the research itself. He and his team performed extensive statistical analyses using the state student databases to examine district-level practices and policies. These analyses were disaggregated by district level characteristics including: percentage of white students; percentage of students eligible for free or reduced price lunch; the percentage of students with limited English proficiency; student-teacher ratios; district level of inclusion; enrollment; whether or not the district is in a rural area, town or city; the percentage of students performing proficient or advanced on MCAS; the percentage of students with high incidence disabilities; and median family income. Data were also analyzed by child level characteristics such as race, disability type, English proficiency, gender, and participation in the regular education classroom. Interaction effects between these variables were also explored. In addition to main level effects, the researchers examined the interaction effects between child-level factors, district-level factors, and cross-level interactions.

This review resulted in the publication of three related reports, and a summary synthesis report. The first report focused on students with disabilities enrolled in traditional public schools, the second report focused on students enrolled in Career and Technical Education programs, and the third report examined students with disabilities enrolled in out-of-district programs. The report included four overarching findings that were present across the three studies:

- 1) There were substantial differences in the identification, placement, and performance of low-income and non-low income students with disabilities.
- 2) Students with disabilities who had full inclusion placements appeared to outperform similar students who were not included to the same extent in general education classrooms with their non-disabled peers.

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3) The inclusive options for students with disabilities in secondary school were limited.

4) There were meaningful differences from district to district in special education identification, placement, and performance.

Summary recommendations based on these findings included the recommendation that Massachusetts districts implement Massachusetts Tiered System of Support to lead to (1) early interventions to students to support improved outcomes, (2) universally designed behavioral supports and improvement in general education approaches to discipline and behavior; and (3) an increase in the capacity of general education to meet the needs of all students, including students in need of interventions. While MA ESE is currently engaged in several improvement activities targeting the results of the previous work by Dr. Hehir, the SSIP stakeholders have been deeply engaged in recent discussions with MA ESE on the importance of targeting the work of the SSIP to early childhood special education given the significant opportunity for longitudinal improvement in child level outcomes that activities targeted towards this age group provides.

### Initial Data Analysis

The findings of the initial qualitative and quantitative data analyses described above honed the focus of the SSIP in several ways, including helping to identify areas where MA ESE and its stakeholders would like to see growth for students with disabilities. MA ESE identified key themes which, when combined with the discussions with stakeholders, led to the selection of social emotional outcomes for young children aged 3-5 as the Massachusetts SIMR. The following statements summarize the key findings which led to this decision. Graphs and figures accompanying these statements can be found in Attachment A.

1. Massachusetts receives the greatest number of referrals for special education services in preschool, and the largest percentage of children who are referred and then found eligible for special education occurs in preschool.
2. The percentage of young children, aged 3-5, served in Early Childhood Special Education (ECSE) who are low income, has grown 17 percentage points since the 2008-2009 school year.
3. Students ages 3-5 are being removed from their classroom for disciplinary reasons.
4. There are substantial differences in the identification, placement, and performance of low income students with disabilities. This is a concern because 45% of all children aged 3-5 with IEPs qualify as low income.
5. Students in early childhood special education programs are in substantially separate placements at a rate higher than students with disabilities aged 6-21 and the rate of substantially separate placement for 3-5 year olds has increased more than 10 percent since FFY 2011.
6. MA Stakeholders have a shared responsibility for the work of the SSIP and have emphasized that the focus of the SSIP should be on early childhood social emotional outcomes. This is in alignment with many current initiatives statewide across the grade span and there is a substantial body of research indicating the importance of intervening early and supporting social emotional outcomes of young children.
7. Massachusetts has historically reported lower results when compared to the national data on social emotional outcomes for children with disabilities aged 3-5, especially the percentage of children who demonstrate aged expected functioning in this outcome.

### Research Supporting the Selection of Early Childhood Social Emotional Outcomes as an Area for Improvement

In addition to the Massachusetts specific research that was assessed during Phase I of the SSIP development, MA ESE and stakeholders also examined the extensive body of research indicating the importance of early childhood education, and in particular early education for young children with disabilities. There are three principal theories in the literature as to why early childhood is an especially important time to support children. First, the capacity to have an impact on a child's development may be the greatest in the early years of education. Research has shown that child development, including the development of social emotional and behavioral skills, can be influenced by environmental factors in early childhood (National Scientific Council on the Developing Child, 2007). There is a great deal of evidence that one or more years of center-based high-quality early childhood education for three and four year olds will improve the early language, mathematics and literacy skills of these children by the end of their program (Camilli, Vargas, Ryan, & Barnett, 2010; Wong, Cook, Barnett, & Jung, 2008).

Second, early skill development may serve as a foundation or a multiplier for the development of later skills (Currie and Thomas, 2000). Much like building blocks, the skills that children develop in early childhood serve as the groundwork for the development of higher-order skills in later grades. Researchers have also found a relationship between preschool behavioral problems and literacy outcomes in kindergarten and first grade (Bulotsky-Shearer & Fantuzzo, 2011). Therefore, it is important for children to have access to high-quality education, including social emotional supports, in order to maximize the benefits of later education (Phillips, & Meloy, 2012). This is especially true for young children with disabilities who generally struggle with social emotional development more than their typically developing peers (Cheng, Palta, Kotelchuck, Poehlmann, & Witt, 2014; Crnic, Hoffman, Gaze, & Edelbrock, 2004). Third, there is evidence that investments made in early childhood will generate compounded returns over a child's lifetime. A recent study of the Perry Preschool program found that for every dollar spent on this program there were benefits of \$7-\$10 (Heckman et al., 2010). All of this evidence supports the need to ensure that all children with disabilities have access to high-quality programming that supports their individualized needs in early childhood. The importance of this developmental timeframe was echoed by the stakeholders MA ESE engaged with as part of the broad data analyses described above, and the additional stakeholder engagement activities outlined in the infrastructure analysis. The references cited here can be found in Appendix B.

### Focused Data Analysis Activities

Following the initial analyses and data identification, MA ESE began narrowed secondary data analyses. These factors include:

- (1) Stakeholders across settings and educational contexts prioritized the need for additional services and supports in the development of social emotional skills among students in early childhood special education;
- (2) Data showed a growing number of children aged 3-5 being referred to special education services and being found eligible;
- (3) An increased likelihood that those students will be placed in substantially separate settings in the future;
- (4) The disproportionality in the identification, placement, and outcomes of low income students in high-incidence disability categories;
- (5) Data that shows almost half of all children aged 3-5 in Massachusetts with a disability are also low income; and
- (6) The number of disciplinary removals of students aged 3-5.

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This information, and the state's priority for early childhood and supporting the social emotional well-being of students, helped MA ESE identify early childhood social emotional outcomes as an area for further exploration for the SSIP.

The more focused drill-down data analyses were designed to further define the identified areas of low performance. These additional activities involved a more thorough examination of data reviewed during the initial broad analysis, and additional data as necessary. The purpose of this in-depth data analysis was to confirm low performance for children and with disabilities aged 3-5 in social emotional outcomes and to identify the root cause of the low performance.

MA ESE began by focusing on data collected using the Child Outcomes Summary (COS) process under Indicator 7 which measures child-level outcomes including social emotional skills. The development of questions for this in-depth data analysis was, in part, informed by the Early Childhood Technical Assistance Center's guide entitled: "Analyzing Child Outcomes Data for Program Improvement: A Guidance Table." Questions that MA ESE investigated included:

- For which populations are we seeing the poorest outcomes? The strongest outcomes?
- Do our programs serve some children more effectively than others?
  - Are there certain disabilities that are more likely to have poor social emotional outcomes in ECSE?
  - Is their variation in growth for children with the same disabilities?
  - How do the results on Indicator 7A vary by child-level characteristics such as race/ethnicity, gender, English language proficiency status, etc.?
  - Do outcomes vary by the length of time a student participates in ECSE services?
- Do our programs serve some children in families with specific characteristics more effectively than others?
  - Children in low-income homes and children in higher income home environments?
  - Children in homes where the spoken language is not English?
- Do child outcomes differ across local programs?
- Do child outcomes based on the region of the state in which a program is located?
- Do child outcomes differ across programs with specific characteristics?
  - By the state accountability and assistance level assigned to the district?
  - By the proportion of students served in inclusive settings? In substantially separate settings?
- Are trends over time showing gradual increases in rates of child progress and levels of achievement?
  - Across the state have there been improvements in child outcomes?
  - For subgroups of children with different characteristics, have there been improvements in outcomes over time?
  - For subgroups of children with different in different family environments, have there been improvements in outcomes over time?
  - Do improvements in child outcomes over time at the state level look different before and after statewide professional development activities including those to increase data quality?
- Are statewide trends in early childhood outcomes data consistent with child outcomes data collected by the Department of Public Health (IDEA Part C)?
- Are there changes in the percentages of students in each progress category that may support a greater understanding of the outcomes data?
- What are potential drivers for poor social emotional outcomes for this population?

In April and May of 2014, the Statewide Early Childhood Special Education (ECSE) Stakeholder group participated in data analysis activities to identify root causes of underperformance for students with disabilities. At the April 2014 meeting, MA ESE staff engaged in a collaborative discussion with stakeholders on statewide special education data including demographic data, enrollment data, and longitudinal trends such as the percentage of students identified in each disability category. This meeting served as an opportunity to raise issues and broaden discussions that shaped the focused data analyses undertaken by MA ESE and reinforced the recommendation by early stakeholders and the decision by MA ESE to focus on improving early childhood social emotional outcomes as the State Identified Measureable Result (SIMR). In June 2014, stakeholders participated in an interactive webinar on the Indicator 7: Preschool Outcomes data that was informed by the analyses described above. In examining the longitudinal data, MA ESE and the stakeholders identified several key themes:

- Massachusetts' results on Summary Statements 1 and 2 have been consistent with national results for Outcomes B & C
- MA results for Outcome A (Social Emotional), Summary Statement 2 have consistently been lower than the national results
- MA saw a decline in Summary Statement 2 values in FFY 2012 due to increased data quality

In this webinar, MA stakeholders also examined several key disaggregations of the Indicator 7 data that supported MA ESE's identification of the SIMR and the comprehensive improvement strategy. The discussion focused on the following analyses:

- Differences in outcomes by district accountability and assistance level
  - Findings: Children in the lowest performing schools as identified by their state accountability and assistance level had lower ratings at entry and were reported to have made less progress in each outcome.
  - Findings: Children in the lowest performing schools were less likely to exit preschool with the social emotional behaviors and skills expected for their age.
- Differences in outcomes by race
  - Findings: Children who are identified as being Black/African American or Hispanic/Latino were less likely to exit preschool with social emotional behaviors expected for their age.
- Differences in outcomes by disability type
  - Findings: Children whose primary disability is autism have the lowest Summary Statement 2 values across all outcomes and the lowest results in Outcome A (Social Emotional Skills).
- Differences in outcomes by level of need

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- Findings: As expected, children with a higher level of need have lower Summary Statement 2 values. On a positive note, regardless of level of need children in these subgroups show comparable results on Summary Statement 1 across outcomes.
- Differences in outcomes by placement
  - Findings: Children in substantially separate placements were less likely to exit preschool with behaviors expected for their age across all three outcomes when compared to all other placement types.

The results presented and discussed on the call are consistent with the qualitative information MA ESE received from our stakeholders indicating a need for additional supports and services to support social emotional outcomes. In addition, these findings are consistent with the data analyses by MA ESE indicating that there are meaningful differences young children's in performance in these outcome areas across districts, and the research reports show that that students are frequently placed in substantially separate classrooms because of behavior challenges, and that students in those settings have poorer outcomes. The results of the root cause analyses, along with the comprehensive infrastructure analysis and the substantial literature identifying the importance of intervening early and developing strong social emotional competencies at an early age, supports MA ESE's decision to target social emotional outcomes for students with disabilities aged 3-5 as the state identified measurable result or SIMR for the SSIP.

### Consideration of Additional Data Needs

Based on the data analyses described above, MA ESE and its stakeholders determined that there is not a need for additional data for Phase I of the SSIP.

## Analysis of State Infrastructure to Support Improvement and Build Capacity

A description of how the State analyzed the capacity of its current infrastructure to support improvement and build capacity in LEAs to implement, scale up, and sustain the use of evidence-based practices to improve results for children with disabilities. State systems that make up its infrastructure include, at a minimum: governance, fiscal, quality standards, professional development, data, technical assistance, and accountability/monitoring. The description must include current strengths of the systems, the extent the systems are coordinated, and areas for improvement of functioning within and across the systems. The State must also identify current State-level improvement plans and initiatives, including special and general education improvement plans and initiatives, and describe the extent that these initiatives are aligned, and how they are, or could be, integrated with, the SSIP. Finally, the State should identify representatives (e.g., offices, agencies, positions, individuals, and other stakeholders) that were involved in developing Phase I of the SSIP and that will be involved in developing and implementing Phase II of the SSIP.

### Setting the Context for the Infrastructure Analysis

The SIMR for the MA ESE SSIP is the improvement of social emotional outcomes for young children with disabilities, aged 3-5. This decision was informed by the comprehensive data analysis described in the previous section, and an existing alignment with several key state initiatives to support the social emotional development of all students as a key factor in students' academic success. What follows is an overview of how statewide stakeholders from a variety of disciplines were selected for participation in the SSIP Phase I development process and how their recommendations informed the work of MA ESE in completing a comprehensive infrastructure analysis to identify available resources that can be leveraged to support the SSIP and gaps that may need to be addressed in order to see improvement in the SIMR. In addition, MA ESE describes below the key state and ESE strategic plans and priorities that demonstrate alignment of initiatives at all levels in support of the identification and selection the SIMR, and the anticipated implementation of our evidenced-based coherent improvement strategy to effect systemic change in this area to improve results for students with disabilities.

### Strategic Plans for Education and Alignment with the SSIP

The focus of the SSIP on improving social emotional outcomes for young children with disabilities is clearly aligned with a number of current statewide priorities and initiatives, including statewide strategic plans at several levels. The Massachusetts Executive Office of Education (MA EOE), the state's education secretariat, is responsible for overseeing all public education in Massachusetts, including the MA ESE, the State Education Agency for IDEA Part B. MA EOE identified two overarching themes that inform the goals outlined in the [Executive Office of Education Strategic Plan](#) 2013-2015:

- Ensuring that all students have access to high-quality educational opportunities from birth through postsecondary education; and
- Closing persistent and unacceptable achievement and attainment gaps among different groups of students.

In order to improve outcomes in these areas, the MA EOE and its member agencies (MA ESE, MA EEC, and MA Department of Higher Education) are implementing multiple strategies that will enable the Commonwealth to meet the learning needs of each student and provide the knowledge, encouragement, and skills that they need to meet our high expectations for student growth and achievement, and also provide comprehensive support services to address out-of-school factors. Several of these strategies, which are related directly to the state's SSIP focus area and will support its further development and implementation, are outlined in the sections below.

#### *MA Department of Early Education and Care*

Under the purview of MA EOE, the MA EEC supports high quality comprehensive and affordable early childhood and out of school time education and care programs and supports creation and use of resources, materials and activities designed to meet the diverse, individual needs of children and families. [MA EEC](#) has identified several strategic directions and goals as part of its own strategic plan through 2019 that are aligned with the work of the SSIP to improve social emotional outcomes for young children with disabilities. Included in these is a goal that all young children in the Commonwealth will be ready to enter the K-12 education system and be successful, and that their families will be provided with opportunities to support their children's cognitive, social emotional, language, and physical development. In addition, there is a goal that programs offered in early childhood will promote and support the high quality education and healthy development of children that enables all children to be successful as school members and citizens. MA EEC works closely with the MA ESE and most especially the Office of Special Education Planning and Policy Development (SEPP) to make sure that its work aligns with the priority policy, program, and technical assistance activities led by MA ESE to support young children and disabilities and their families.

#### *MA Department of Elementary and Secondary Education*

Similarly, MA ESE, as part of its [strategic plan](#), has identified a department goal of preparing students for success after high school. MA ESE has articulated three key objectives including:

- Preparing students academically;
- Preparing students for the workplace; and
- Supporting students' social and emotional needs.

It is noteworthy that these three objectives align closely with the three early childhood special education outcomes measured by Indicator 7: positive social emotional skills, acquisition of knowledge and skills, and use of appropriate behavior to meet needs.

The Special Education Policy and Planning Office (SEPP), under the oversight of MA ESE and MA EOE, has also developed a list of responsive strategic actions to improve outcomes for all students with disabilities in Massachusetts, including our youngest learners. This plan includes providing early interventions to improve student outcomes (particularly in prekindergarten); increasing the capacity of general education classrooms to meet the needs of diverse learners; and reducing inappropriate identification of low-income students as eligible for special education.

#### [Early Childhood Special Education](#)

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More specifically, MA ESE and its partners from MA EEC and the Massachusetts Department of Public Health (MA DPH), the lead agency for Part C, Early Intervention, have developed the following vision and mission for Early Childhood Special Education (ECSE) in the Commonwealth.

**Vision:** Massachusetts ECSE vision is to provide individualized services and resources for children with disabilities and their families, to promote positive outcomes and success in school.

**Mission:** The mission of ECSE is to provide a coordinated early childhood system and use data systematically for program improvement to maximize family engagement, coordinate transitions between Early Intervention and Preschool Special Education, and improve student level outcomes. The shared statewide values and beliefs which inform our work include:

- We believe all young children with disabilities and their families have a right to high expectations, dignity, respect, and opportunity in an educational program that is geared to their unique and individual needs.
- We believe agencies serving young children should work together to achieve a unified system of support and services.
- We believe every child communicates, and can learn and grow.
- We believe in self-determination and that education should be child/family-driven to the fullest extent. Research and our experiences show that the more children and their families are involved in their own future, the better that future is likely to be.
- We believe each child's experience of disability is unique.
- We believe our work is urgent, and early access to services and interventions is critical.
- We value the unique and necessary expertise that parents and families have about their children.
- We believe that a well trained and well prepared early childhood workforce is able to individualize instruction to meet the needs of all children, including those with special needs.
- We believe that technology and social networking can be a valuable way to connect families with other families, families with professionals and professionals with other professionals.

In addition to this mission and vision, the ECSE plan also identifies three priority strategic areas of focus:

- Improving systems to engage effectively with families of young children with disabilities
- Improving systems to assist transition from early intervention to prekindergarten and from prekindergarten to kindergarten
- Improving instruction to increase educational outcomes in:
  - a) Social Emotional Skills and Social Relationships;
  - b) Acquiring and Using Knowledge and Skills; and
  - c) Taking Appropriate Action to Meet Needs

The work of the SSIP will focus primarily on ECSE strategic area 3a, improving instruction to increase educational outcomes in social/emotional skills and social relationships. Additionally, the vertical alignment of all education strategic plans across all levels of state education governance in Massachusetts that are inclusive of prioritization of supporting social emotional development of all students in Massachusetts strongly supports the focus activities for the SSIP, undertaken as part of the broader ECSE work led by MA ESE.

### Identification of Stakeholders

The development the SSIP and the identification of the SIMR for Massachusetts required a substantial amount of involvement from internal and external stakeholders. One of the charges of the MA ESE Internal Early Childhood Special Education (ECSE) Leadership Team is to oversee the development and implementation of the SSIP. This team consists of members from the Special Education Planning and Policy Office, the Office of Planning and Research, Education Data Services including the Part B Data Manager, the Massachusetts Parent Training and Information Center (PTI), and MA EEC. The team worked closely with representatives from several other units within MA ESE to conduct the data analyses and infrastructure analysis, which were informed by stakeholder input at all stages.

Each of the MA ESE offices consulted supports the education of general and special education students and provided an important state-wide perspective on existing initiatives and priorities that can be leveraged to support the SSIP work. These activities also include work on the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) Waiver that supports Massachusetts' ongoing efforts to improve outcomes for all students. Representatives from the MA ESE Offices of Accountability, Partnerships, and Targeted Assistance; Tiered System of Support; Program Quality Assurance; Education Data Services; Curriculum Development; English Language Acquisition and Academic Achievement; Learning Supports and Early Learning; District and School Turnaround; and Educator Effectiveness, among others, contributed to the development of Phase I of the SSIP by reviewing data and/or identifying current initiatives that align with the identified SSIP priority, and brainstorming ways of continuing to align our work in this area.

In addition the ECSE Leadership Team consulted the Early Childhood Special Education Statewide Stakeholder Group to solicit feedback on Phase I data analyses, the selection of the SIMR, the infrastructure analysis, and identification of improvement activities. The Statewide ECSE Stakeholder Group consists of members in the following roles and organizations: Early Childhood Coordinators and Principals in LEAs; early childhood special education educators ; public school special education administrators; parents of children with disabilities; Early Intervention staff; faculty from institutions of higher education; MA Department of Children and Families (MA DCF); MA Department of Mental Health (MA DMH); Members of our Statewide Special Education Advisory Council; Representatives from our Parent Training and Information Center; MA EEC; MA DPH; and MA ESE. Members of the Special Education Advisory Council and the Statewide Special Education Steering Committee, the latter of which assists MA ESE with other SPP/APR planning activities, also participated.

MA ESE will continue to consult with this established group of committed stakeholders in Phase II and Phase III of the SSIP. MA ESE has developed a strong working relationship with these stakeholders, the foundation of which was the development of mutual trust and respect through our shared priorities that now allows for greater opportunity for critique and a shared process for identifying and developing ECSE goals and initiatives. These stakeholders will play a critical role in the next phases of the SSIP.

### The Infrastructure Analysis Process

The ECSE Leadership Team met to discuss the SSIP for the first time in September 2013 following the introduction by the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) webinar introducing the SSIP in August of that year. Throughout the fall of 2013, ECSE Leadership Team members participated in several national webinars on the SSIP including those hosted by OSEP, the former Northeast Regional Resource Center (NERRC), the Region 4 Parent Technical Assistance Center, and the Early Childhood Technical Assistance (ECTA) Center. Continuing through the following spring, of 2014 ECSE leadership team members met with internal MA ESE and MA EEC stakeholders to identify and conduct the key data analyses described in the Data

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Analysis section of this report and to identify any additional members for the ECSE Statewide Stakeholder Group necessary to support the work of Phase I of the SSIP. MA ESE also worked closely with MA DPH to review data analyses for both the Part B and Part C SSIPs, and to identify key stakeholders necessary for each agency's work on this plan.

In April 2014, the ECSE Leadership Team staff introduced the requirements regarding the SSIP to the ECSE Statewide Stakeholder Group, a group that has been an integral part of SSIP Phase I development in Massachusetts. At this meeting ESE staff presented an overview of the three phases of the SSIP and a summary of the data analyses that had been conducted to date. As described in the data analysis section of this report, stakeholders at this meeting provided additional input for identifying potential areas for focus for the SSIP, including early childhood social emotional outcomes for students with disabilities.

In June of 2014, MA ESE convened a meeting of the stakeholder group at which extensive analyses of special education data, including early childhood and Indicator 7 data, were reviewed and discussed. Stakeholders provided substantial feedback on the analyses conducted to date and recommended additional ways to disaggregate the data and identified additional data sources that may be relevant to the SSIP planning. Stakeholders also emphasized the importance of focusing on early childhood social emotional outcomes throughout this meeting.

ECSE Leadership Team members began developing the MA Theory of Action for the SSIP in the summer of 2014. This team consulted with the ECSE Stakeholders to ensure an alignment with key statewide and agency initiatives was reflected in the initial drafts of the MA Theory of Action, in addition to the overarching work of the SSIP to improve early childhood social emotional outcomes. At the same time, ECSE Leadership Team members worked with the Northeast Regional Resource Center (NERRC), Early Childhood Technical Assistance Center (ECTA), the Center for IDEA Early Childhood Data Systems (DaSy), IDEA Data Center (IDC), and the Center on Enhancing Early Learning Outcomes (CEELO) staff to develop a framework for the Infrastructure Analysis. This framework document included sections for each component of the Infrastructure Analysis and had space for contributors to identify relevant gaps and potential areas of improvement.

MA ESE took a systematic approach to the Phase I development of the SSIP and clearly outlined the planned steps to ensure adequate representation and feedback from all stakeholders who could contribute to a better understanding of existing systems that could be leveraged to support improved social/emotional outcomes for students with disabilities in Massachusetts. Initially, the ECSE Leadership Team met internally to complete a preliminary draft of the Infrastructure Analysis that was informed by the data analyses that had already taken place, stakeholders' feedback on those analyses, and an understanding of the identified priority for focusing on early childhood social emotional outcomes. The ECSE Leadership Team then solicited feedback on the document from all relevant units within MA ESE. MA ESE also reached out to other agencies whose missions are to support the same age group, such as MA EEC and MA DPH, to solicit their feedback on the draft Infrastructure Analysis. These activities helped MA ESE develop an even stronger working partnership and integrated approach with these other units and state agencies that will support the work of the SSIP. MA DPH and MA EEC have committed to ongoing collaborative planning and strategic activities to support Phases II and III of the SSIP. This collaboration will be further strengthened by the alignment of the Part B and Part C SIMRs, focusing on social emotional outcomes for young children and their families.

At the October 2014 meeting of the ECSE Statewide Stakeholder Group, the ECSE Leadership Team engaged in a lively discussion with stakeholders regarding drafts of MA Theory of Action and draft Infrastructure Analysis. Participants provided valuable feedback on both documents which helped shape the final versions included here.

The work continued with focused support from the MA Special Education Steering Committee that met in November 2014 to review data for the FFY 2013 SPP/APR and participate in target setting activities. The Steering Committee, comprised of members of the Statewide Special Education Advisory Council, state agency partners, special educators and related services providers, parents, and other interested parties, reviewed statewide longitudinal data used to inform the identification early childhood social emotional outcomes as the SIMR for Indicator 17, as well as information on Indicator 7 (preschool outcomes) and the activities already conducted as part of the SSIP. As described in the APR for Indicator 7, MA chose, with stakeholder input, ambitious targets for Indicator 7. MA ESE's policy for target setting is based on an expectation that all students make substantial progress in their early childhood special education program and that a majority of them should be able to achieve functioning comparable to their same age peers with supports and services designed to meet their individual needs.

The ECSE Leadership Team used feedback from the ECSE Statewide Stakeholder Group, internal MA ESE stakeholders, and other agencies to prepare a finalized draft of the Infrastructure Analysis framework to present at the January 2015 meeting of the ECSE Statewide Stakeholder group. Participants made note of any missing elements and made suggestions to MA ESE for potential areas of further exploration.

The continuous feedback loop created by this process provided an excellent opportunity for MA ESE to refine and expand upon the infrastructure and data analyses, in addition to the MA Theory of Action. As MA ESE received feedback from stakeholders, MA ESE staff were able to articulate the goals of the SSIP and the types of information necessary to best support the implementation of the selected evidenced-based practice to support improved social emotional outcomes for young children with disabilities. The infrastructure analysis and MA Theory of Action have been shared with our partner state agencies, MA EEC and MA DPH, for use in developing the Part C SSIP by MA DPH.

### Key Governance and Advisory Bodies Supporting Social Emotional Outcomes

In addition to the alignment of the strategic plans of several agencies in Massachusetts to support improved social emotional outcomes for students with disabilities, there are several advisory bodies and governance structures that can be leveraged for the implementation of the SSIP. The Massachusetts Legislature is very supportive of education, and both the Boards of Early Education and Care and Elementary and Secondary Education have identified improving social emotional outcomes as a priority.

Additionally, there are a number of advisory councils that inform the major agencies serving children in Massachusetts. Advisory councils with focus relevant to the SSIP include:

- Special Education Advisory Council
- Statewide Special Education Steering Committee
- Interagency Coordinating Council (ICC)
- The Children's Behavioral Health Advisory Council
- Department of Mental Health Professional Advisory Council & Mental Health Planning Council
- MA EEC Advisory Group
- MA DPH Public Health Council

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In addition to these statewide councils and governance bodies, there are strong advocacy organizations at the state and local level. School districts work closely with their school committees, special education advisory councils, Parent Teacher Organizations and Associations, teachers unions, and school site councils to ensure that all students' needs are met. Finally, the Child and Youth Readiness Cabinet is intended to foster coordination and collaboration across state departments and agencies that serve Massachusetts' children, youth, and families to improve services, and, ultimately, outcomes for the Commonwealth's most vulnerable populations.

### Key State and Interagency Initiatives Supporting Social Emotional Outcomes

#### *PBIS/Pyramid Alignment*

In addition to the vertical alignment of the statewide strategic plans described above, there are several key statewide initiatives that support the social/emotional development of children with disabilities in Massachusetts, including children aged 3-5.

This alignment is most notable in the PBIS/Pyramid alignment. Massachusetts' Departments of Early Education and Care, Elementary and Secondary Education, and Public Health have collaboratively partnered with the Center for Social Emotional Foundations for Early Learning (CSEFEL) since 2009. Training, model sites for public preschools, Family Childcare, and Early Childhood Mental Health have been ongoing in the state since 2010. To date, over 2500 Early Childhood Educators, primarily in what were refer to as the "mixed delivery system" of publicly funded and private child care centers, Early Intervention programs, and other early childhood programs, have been trained with Connected Beginnings at Wheelock College being the primary in-state training entity. MA ESE has been developing deeper connections with the Pyramid Consortium to bring the model into more public preschool settings.

In addition, two year ago, MA ESE entered into a multiyear contract with the University of Connecticut/PBIS Center to design and deliver a statewide initiative in Massachusetts to train and coach district and school personnel in the creation and implementation of School-Wide Positive Behavior Supports (SWPBS). This initiative includes full day trainings and on-site technical assistance and consultation over multiple years and has primarily focused on programs K-12.

These related initiatives are being blended through the SSIP. Beginning in 2014, MA ESE has been supporting collaboration between the national experts from the PBIS Center and the Pyramid Consortium to develop a training model for districts in Massachusetts that would allow for a seamless district-wide implementation of PBS. This initiative, which is the basis of the SSIP work in Phase 2, is fully described in the Coherent Improvement Strategies section of this report.

#### *Race to the Top*

MA ESE is in the final year of Race to the Top (RTTT) funding. This funding has allowed MA ESE to accelerate many facets of education reform and to initiate new projects that are broadly organized into four areas: curriculum and instruction, educator effectiveness, school and district turnaround, and using data and technology. Several of the RTTT initiatives support the development of social/emotional skills among young children with disabilities. These initiatives include:

##### 1) Curriculum and Instruction

- [Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks](#) incorporating the Common Core State Standards were written explicitly to define the knowledge and skills that students must master to be college and career ready by the end of high school. MA ESE and MA EEC worked together to ensure that the revised frameworks included preschool standards.
- [Model Curriculum Units](#). ESE is developing model curriculum units with embedded performance assessments and curriculum maps that districts can choose to adopt, adapt, or use templates to create their own.
- [Innovation Schools](#). The Innovation Schools initiative provides educators in all districts the powerful opportunity to create new "Innovation Schools," in-district and charter-like schools that will operate with greater autonomy and flexibility.
- [Massachusetts Model for Comprehensive School Counseling](#). This is a school counseling model to provide comprehensive support for student achievement and education reform.

##### 2) Educator Effectiveness

- [Educator Evaluation](#) Massachusetts has implemented new regulations for evaluating teachers and administrators.
- [NISL The National Institute](#) for School Leadership is a researched based executive leadership program designed to enhance educator effectiveness and leadership development.

##### 3) School and District Turnaround

- [District and School Turnaround](#) One of the key objectives of RTTT is to turn around underperforming schools and districts so that all students have access to high-quality learning opportunities that prepare them for successful futures.
- [District and School Turnaround Priority Partners](#) provides a list of pre-approved and vetted vendors that Level 3 and 4 districts may select to target turnaround efforts.

##### 4) Using Data and Technology

- [Edwin](#) The Edwin project, funded in part by Race to the Top and Longitudinal Data System (LDS) federal grants is a multiyear initiative that will increasingly provide educators data functionality that meets specific needs identified by state and district stakeholders.
- [SIF - Schools Interoperability Framework](#) This framework was created to improve already existing data collection systems and provide grant opportunities for local school districts to participate in the SIF initiative.

Additionally, MA ESE's sister agency, MA EEC, received a Race to the Top Early Learning Challenge (ELC) award in December 2011. As part of its application, a dozen state departments and agencies—including the EOE, the MA ESE, and the Department of Higher Education (MA DHE)—signed memoranda of understanding committing them to help implement the Early Learning Challenge (ELC) grant. The MA DPH, Department of Mental Health (MA DMH), Department of Housing and Community Development (MA DCHD), Office for Refugees and Immigrants, Department of Children and Families (MA DCF), Department of Transitional Assistance (MA DTA), Head Start State Collaborative Office, and Children's Trust Fund also signed MOUs in support of the ELC grant. The Massachusetts Early Learning Plan, developed under ELC, consists of 20 projects that build on the current system, including:

- [Quality Rating and Improvement System \(QRIS\)](#) participation will be expanded with the goal of universal participation. MA EEC

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will increase program supports, online training and technical assistance and provide funds to help programs advance and validate QRIS to ensure that program quality matches assigned tiers and leads to improved child outcomes.

- [Early learning standards](#) for social emotional outcomes are being created. MA EEC is analyzing the alignment of the state's early learning standards with school readiness and assessment, including a kindergarten entry assessment. The intention is to augment the standards to better accommodate high needs populations.
- Family and community engagement is being supported through the building of a state infrastructure to support interagency collaboration on programs and services for high needs children from birth to age 5 including supporting early literacy, family literacy and financial literacy and other programs that promote healthy living and child development.
- Workforce training and development. MA EEC is investing in the state's six regional Readiness Centers, charged with increasing the effectiveness of educators, from early childhood to higher education. In addition, it is creating and implementing an evidence-based mentoring and coaching program and studying best practices that support young children's social and emotional development.
- Kindergarten entry assessment (MKEA) is being implemented in pilot districts as a common metric for the assessment that will serve as the basis of a kindergarten entry assessment. The MKEA is a comprehensive formative assessment initiative that prepares kindergarten teachers to collect meaningful observational data across all developmental domains to inform instruction and individualize learning. MA ESE and MA EEC have collaborated to offer training and provide support throughout the state on this initiative.
- Early Childhood Information System (ECIS). MA EEC is creating the next phase of ECIS to enhance connections and the exchange of information with the Statewide Longitudinal Data System.
- Sustaining program effects in early elementary grades is a priority of MA EEC. The agency is working to support communities and public schools with early education and out-of-school-time partnerships and a birth to age 5 strategy.

MA ESE and MA EEC have partnered with the MA DHE on participation in a national policy academy to improve learning outcomes for children from birth through grade 3. With the generous support from the National Governor's Association, Massachusetts is developing a comprehensive birth through grade 3 policy agenda that reflects a growing body of research about the critical importance of the earliest years of a child's life and builds on successful initiatives that are being implemented across the state, such as the Race to the Top Early Learning Challenge and K12 Plans.

### *Birth to Three Agenda and Policy Framework*

The foundation of the Birth to Three Agenda and Policy Framework is the identification of the essential "competencies" or skills that all children should demonstrate in order to be well prepared for college and careers in the 21st century. For example, Massachusetts will build upon successful early literacy programs with the goal of preventing achievement and developmental gaps from forming before children reach school age. The competencies will also serve as building blocks for the knowledge and skills included in the new [Massachusetts Definition of College and Career Readiness](#) adopted by the Boards of Elementary and Secondary Education and Higher Education during the spring of 2013. MA ESE has added two new positions to support this initiative, and MA EEC has created a Development Grant to support this initiative. Additionally, the new agenda will include strategies to enhance early learning standards, develop a birth through grade 3 assessment system, improve educator effectiveness, and provide comprehensive support to children and families. This cross-agency focus on alignment from birth to grade three will support the work of the SSIP to improve social/emotional outcomes for young children with disabilities.

### *State Laws for School Discipline and Bullying Prevention and Intervention*

In August 2012, then Massachusetts Governor Deval Patrick signed An Act Relative to Student Access to Educational Services and Exclusion from School, [Chapter 222](#) of the Acts of 2012, a new school discipline law requiring schools provide educational services for students during their period of suspension or expulsion. In April 2014, the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education adopted regulations, [603 CMR 53.00](#), for the implementation of the school discipline reform law which took effect on July 1, 2014. This new law and accompanying regulations are designed to make disciplinary exclusion of all students from schools a last resort. Central to this law is a requirement that school districts must offer alternative education services for any student that is excluded for more than 10 consecutive school days. In addition, during the first 10 days of exclusion schools are required to assist the student in making academic progress despite their absence from class. MA ESE will be collecting and analyzing additional school discipline data from districts, posting this information publicly, and following up with districts when significant numbers of students are excluded or there appears to be disproportionality in school disciplinary practices. Discipline data were included in the analyses conducted to identify the SIMR and the high number of exclusions for young children aged 3-5 was also a factor in the decision to focus on early childhood.

The Massachusetts anti-bullying law, [M.G.L. chapter 71, section 370](#), was amended in April 2014. As a result of 2014 amendment of the state's anti-bullying statute ), MA ESE has required districts to update their Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plans to reflect the requirement that all schools "recognize" that certain enumerated categories of students, including students with disabilities, may be more vulnerable to being targets of bullying based on actual or perceived differentiating characteristics. The law applies to public school districts, charter school, approved private day or residential school, and collaborative schools. Districts and schools must also include in the plan the specific steps they will take to support these vulnerable students and provide all students the skills, knowledge and strategies they need to prevent or respond to bullying or harassment. Under the new law, districts and schools must notify parents and guardians of targets of bullying of the availability of the MA ESE Problem Resolution System and assist these parents and guardians in understanding the problem resolution process. Districts and schools must also collect and report the following data to MA ESE: 1) the number of reported allegations of bullying or retaliation; 2) the number and nature of substantiated incidents of bullying and retaliation; 3) the number of students disciplined for engaging in bullying or retaliation; and 4) other information required by the Department.

### *School Improvement and Support Frameworks*

The [Massachusetts Tiered System of Support \(MTSS\)](#) is a blueprint for school improvement that focuses on system structures and supports across the district, school, and classroom to meet the academic and non-academic needs of all students. It was developed to help guide the establishment of a system that provides high-quality core educational experiences in a safe and supportive learning environment for all students and targeted interventions/supports for students who experience academic and/or behavioral difficulties and students who have already demonstrated mastery of the concept and skills being taught. The work undertaken as part of the MTSS, including creation of a cadre of model schools that are implementing all aspects of MTSS, including positive behavioral supports, assists with laying the foundation of building integrated systems of support that can foster students' development of strong social emotional skills throughout their school experience.

### *Regional Support*

Massachusetts also has several initiatives to provide regional support to school districts. MA ESE has established six regional [District and School Assistance Centers \(DSACs\)](#) to help districts and their schools strategically access and use professional development and targeted assistance to improve instruction and raise achievement for all students. In collaboration with partner organizations, DSACs use a regional approach that leverages the knowledge, skills, and expertise of local educators to address shared needs through an emphasis on expanding district and school capacity for sustained improvement.

The [Gateway Cities Education Agenda](#) includes targeted strategies to improve early literacy, providing comprehensive support services to students and families, provide targeted instruction to English language learners, and increase the career readiness of

*Additional Interagency Initiatives*

MA ESE and MA EEC have partnered on a number of items to support the social emotional development of young children. These two agencies are jointly leading a workgroup in the revision of two important curriculum guides. The *Kindergarten Learning Experiences* and the *Guidelines for Preschool Learning Experiences* have guided districts, programs, and early childhood educators in the development and implementation of curriculum and instructional supports that are developmentally appropriate and aligned with our state's Curriculum Frameworks. This activity includes the development of new social emotional standards for preschool.

*MA Department of Public Health Initiatives*

Other work supporting the social emotional needs and learning of young children is occurring in Massachusetts with the MA DPH. The Massachusetts Home Visiting Initiative (MHVI) delivers home visiting services to 17 high need communities across the state. These services are located in the cities and towns with large numbers of very young families, families in poverty, and people who have not completed high school. Additionally, the Massachusetts Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems (MECCS) learning collaborative project brings together community leaders, including those in home visiting, Early Intervention (EI), public schools, pediatrics, child care, child abuse prevention, and family support to develop collaborative approaches to address toxic stress exposure in young children. This is a partnership with the Massachusetts Home Visiting Initiative (MHVI) to implement an Early Childhood Trauma-Informed Learning Collaborative. There is currently a pilot program in Springfield, and MA DPH is in the process of identifying one agency within eligible MHVI communities to serve as the backbone organization to host and support the learning collaborative.

In addition, MA DPH has developed the MassLAUNCH / MYCHILD Early Childhood Systems of Care that promotes social emotional wellness of children birth to 8 in Boston. It also increases access to screening and assessment; integrates behavioral health into primary care settings; and strengthens family support with a focus on social emotional well-being. Finally, MA DMH, using funds from RTTT-ELC, is supporting the Massachusetts Child Psychiatry Access Project (MCPAP) in offering a comprehensive training in the Triple P Positive Parenting Program. Triple P is a popular, evidence-based parenting and family support system. Studies have shown that Triple P can reduce problem behavior in children and improve parenting skills. Triple P training participants will include clinicians working on-site in pediatric practices and clinicians from most MCPAP regional hubs.

**Key Fiscal and Financial Resources Supporting the Priority to Improve Social Emotional Outcomes**

Massachusetts offers funding to support school district activities to ensure that eligible children with disabilities receive a free and appropriate public education that includes special education and related services designed to meet their individual needs, and that is provided in natural/least restrictive environments. MA ESE offers several allocation and competitive grant programs in addition to the federal IDEA Part B entitlement grant program, known as Fund Code 240, and the early childhood special education entitlement grant (262 Grant) disbursed to LEAs by MA EEC through an Interagency Services Agreement with MA ESE.

The Special Education Program Improvement Grants (Fund Codes 274 and 249) fund professional development activities focused on advancing the knowledge, skills, and capacity of educators to meet the diverse needs of students through High Quality Professional Development. The Early Childhood Special Education Program Improvement Grant (Fund Code 298) is available to all districts serving students with disabilities ages 3-5 for three consecutive years to support systemic program improvement in early childhood special education, including improving outcomes consistent with Indicator 7 outcome areas.

MA ESE also provides funding to the Federation for Children with Special Needs, the Massachusetts Parent Training and Information Center (PTI), to make available support and training to families of children with disabilities and educators. MA ESE also provides funding through inter-agency service agreements to support programs for students with disabilities including partnerships with MA EEC, MA DPH, and the Massachusetts Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (MCDHH). Finally, MA ESE received a State Personnel Development Grant to develop The Partnership Project (TPP). TPP is a five-year initiative to develop model sites in each of the six regions across the Commonwealth to demonstrate the implementation of evidence-based practices within a tiered system of supports. ESE has partnered with the National Center for the State Implementation and Scaling-up of Evidence-based Practices (SISEP) on this project.

MA EEC also offers several grant programs to support specifically early childhood special education, including social emotional development. The Inclusive Preschool Learning Environments (IPLE) Grant is designed to support inclusive preschool learning environments serving preschool-age children with and without disabilities in high quality, inclusive early education and care settings. The Mental Health Consultation Grant is awarded to programs that provide early childhood mental health consultation services through a statewide system of early childhood mental health consultation service that meets the needs of the programs, providers, educators, children, families, and communities throughout the Commonwealth. Other funding specifically focused on early childhood comes through the three-year Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems (MECCS) grant awarded to MA DPH from the federal Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) to develop a systems-level approach to mitigate trauma and toxic stress in infancy and early childhood.

The alignment of many key initiatives in the Commonwealth ensures that funds –distributed to LEAs in support of programming for students with disabilities in the form of entitlement, allocation, and competitive grant—are used strategically and consistent with our statewide goals and objectives.

**Professional Development, Technical Assistance, and Guidance Resources**

Improving educator effectiveness is one of the core strategies identified by MA ESE to improve outcomes for all students in Massachusetts, including young children with disabilities. MA ESE and its partner agencies offer high quality professional development (PD) to educators throughout the year. Staff development is a major tool used to ensure that qualified educators are available to implement legal requirements and sound practices related to educating children with disabilities.

The Special Education Administrators Leadership Academies provide consistent quality professional development to special education administrators – those who are new in their positions as well as those who have been in their positions for more than five years. This professional development series, focusing on best practices and legal requirements for educating children with disabilities, and supporting leadership development, is offered each summer. Administrators completing the academies become part of a professional network that reconnects several times each year through communities of practice and other forum.

For all professionals, MA ESE annually offers Summer Content Institutes. Different topic areas are identified annually to address current identified needs in the field. Coursework is designed to ensure that qualified educators, related-service providers, and school

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administrators are able to implement legal requirements and evidence-based practices related to educating children with disabilities in the least restrictive environment, especially the most inclusive settings. In addition, Mass FOCUS Academy (MFA) courses are offered each school year and include cost-free, online, three (3) credit graduate courses on a variety of topics. In the area of early childhood special education, MA ESE works closely with the national technical assistance centers such as the Early Childhood Technical Assistance Center (ECTA) to ensure that the most up-to-date resources and training materials are offered to districts and personnel.

Additionally, MA ESE offers comprehensive trainings to school and district personnel on the data collection and reporting of SPP/APR indicator data. Most recently, MA ESE has partnered with ECTA to provide a train-the-trainer model that will develop statewide capacity to support the collection and reporting of Indicator 7 (Preschool Outcomes) data. In addition to developing new trainer capacity, this past year local level personnel participated in high quality PD on the Child Outcomes Summary Process and how to align it to IEP development. MA ESE also offers training to districts through its compliance monitoring process including how to conduct coordinated program reviews, and develop and implement corrective action plans to address areas of noncompliance and improve performance. Many of the other training and technical assistance opportunities offered by MA ESE are captured in the section above entitled "Key State and Interagency Initiatives Supporting Social Emotional Outcomes."

Training is also developed and offered in collaboration with other agencies. MA ESE and MA EEC provide ongoing Communities of Practice Meetings throughout the state that address topics relevant for early childhood educators, including supporting the social emotional development of young children. In addition MA ESE, MA EEC, and MA DPH work together to offer statewide conferences and courses including online courses, for educators working with young children with disabilities. The three agencies have partnered to offer joint trainings to EI and public preschool staff on children's transition from Part C to Part B. At these trainings programs, EI and the LEAs with which they work develop memoranda of understanding documenting key responsibilities and policies to support the smooth transition of eligible young children to Part B services by their third birthdays. Finally, MA ESE works with the Federation for Children with Special Needs to provide training to parents, educator, and child care providers in all areas of special education, including social emotional supports.

Other training is offered through the Massachusetts Comprehensive System of Professional Development (CSPD), which is a cadre of experienced trainers that provide statewide training, consultation, and/or mentoring services to personnel from public schools, educational collaboratives, MA approved private special education schools, agencies and institutions of higher education, and other members of the education community. MA ESE has developed a subset of ECSE CSPD trainers to support the priorities outlined under the ECSE strategic plan described above, including improving social emotional outcomes for young children with disabilities. These trainers will be used to support the implementation and evaluation of identified focus activities under the SSIP.

### **Data Systems for Our Work to Support Social Emotional Outcomes**

A number of data systems support the ongoing work of MA ESE to improve social emotional outcomes for students with disabilities. MA ESE has a comprehensive Student Information Management System (SIMS), a student-level data collection system that allows the agency to collect and analyze more accurate and comprehensive information, to meet federal and state reporting requirements, and to inform policy and programmatic decisions for all children enrolled in public schools in Massachusetts. Student level data is also collected through the SDDR or School Safety Discipline Report. The SDDR tracks each time a drug, violent or criminal-related offense as well as any non-drug, non-violent or non-criminal-related offense occurs on school property. All public schools in Massachusetts are required to file a single Offense Report and Student Discipline Record for each student offender reported on the Offense Report. MA ESE also has comprehensive data on educators through the EPIMS or Education Personnel Information Management System. This application collects individual educator data from all districts and charter schools.

Student-level and teacher-level data are being integrated using the Schools Interoperability Framework or SIF. This initiative was funded in part by a \$6 million State Longitudinal Data Systems grant from the U.S. Department of Education. A portion of this grant will be used to introduce new technology to both MA ESE and districts to improve the data collection process. MA ESE is in the process of implementing the SIF to already existing data collection systems and providing grant opportunities for local school districts to participate in the SIF initiative.

MA ESE has also developed a powerful reporting and data analysis tool called Edwin Analytics. Edwin Analytics gives authorized districts and state level users access to new information, reports and perspectives on education and programs that specifically support improvements in teaching and learning. Edwin Analytics integrates longitudinal data from pre-kindergarten through public post-secondary education. The available tools and reports for this data will help educators make informed decisions about how and where they can improve upon their teaching practices to provide an exceptional learning experience for their students.

Priority for aligning data systems across agencies is also providing significant support for identifying student's needs, and implementing and evaluating programs. MA ESE has been working with MA EEC and MA DPH to align existing data systems and support a longitudinal data system. Through a partnership with MA ESE, State Assigned Student Identifiers (SASIDs) are now routinely assigned to children enrolled in EEC-licensed early education and care programs. The assignment of a unique identifier to each child, which is the identifier used when the child enrolls in public school. MA ESE is also working with MA DPH on a pilot initiative to assign SASIDs to children receiving early intervention services. This will increase Massachusetts' ability to conduct longitudinal data analyses. Finally, as part of Massachusetts' Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge Plan, MA ESE and MA EEC are developing an Early Childhood Information System (ECIS), the goal of which is to provide the data necessary to plan for, supply, and evaluate necessary supports and services for young children and their families across the Commonwealth. The ECIS will include subsidy-related child, program, quality and workforce data and will serve as a data feed for the State Longitudinal Data System. The ECIS was deployed in June of 2013 and MA EEC continues to expand its data and functional capabilities from an enterprise data warehouse to multiple data marts, each facilitating specialized reporting (demographics, program quality, and fiscal).

MA ESE has also worked closely with the Early Childhood Technical Assistance Center to improve the data collection and reporting activities undertaken for SPP/APR Indicator 7. MA ESE has developed new training materials, resources, and face-to-face training opportunities to support the use of the Child Outcomes Summary (COS) Process in Massachusetts.

Systems are currently in place or are being developed by MA ESE and its partner agencies to provide for continuity in collecting, analyzing, and reporting data assessing the impact of the MA ESE efforts to support improved social emotional supports for young children, and also their success in supporting long-term success of students.

### **Accountability and Monitoring Systems Underlying MA ESE's Work to Support Social Emotional Outcomes**

There are several accountability and monitoring systems in Massachusetts that assess and reflect the performance of our schools in supporting students with disabilities and providing them with a free and appropriate public education in the least restrictive

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environment. MA ESE participates in monitoring activities from the Federal Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP), including participating in the State Performance Plan/Annual Performance Report (SPP/APR) process and receiving an annual determination regarding the state's efforts to meet compliance requirements and demonstrate success in achieving positive statewide performance outcomes

The Massachusetts School and District Accountability system, established in 1999, and now the cornerstone of the state's ESEA Waiver, is designed to measure the progress schools and LEAs are making toward helping all students reach high levels of achievement. A district's or school's Accountability and Assistance Level is used to appropriately target interventions and supports, and recognize or reward excellence. All Massachusetts schools and districts with sufficient data are classified into one of five accountability and assistance levels, with those meeting their gap-narrowing goals in Level 1 and the lowest performing in Level 5. Since 2012, MA ESE has combined district accountability determinations with the district's Determination of Need for Special Education Technical Assistance or Intervention. While each district's accountability and assistance level is determined based on the performance of its schools, special education determinations also take into account special education compliance information. A district's accountability determination includes both accountability and assistance level and a special education determination. The special education determination categories correspond to the district's level, except in those cases where the district has not demonstrated compliance with special education regulations. For districts identified as performing in Levels 3, 4, or 5,

MA ESE's Office of Special Education Planning and Policy Development coordinates with other ESE offices to offer targeted assistance related to identified areas of need. The targeted assistance may include:

- Directing the district's use of special education grant funding;
- Requiring participation in specified technical assistance activities; and/or
- Requiring specific policies, procedures, or curriculum improvement activities.

Massachusetts' state system places schools and districts on a five-level scale, ranking the highest performing in Level 1 and lowest performing in [Level 5](#). The strength of this accountability system is undergirded by the state's 2010 Act Relative to the Achievement Gap, which provides tools, rules, and supports for the state to aggressively engage with schools and districts in [Levels 4](#) and 5. The state's framework for district accountability and assistance is a coherent structure for linking the state's accountability and assistance activities with districts based on their level of need, and provides school and district leaders with common indicators and tools for diagnosing problems and identifying appropriate interventions. The Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (ESE) is committed to supporting sustainable efforts to improve educational outcomes for all students, close achievement gaps, increase equity, and improve the quality of instruction. As part of this commitment, ESE identifies partners with a record of effectiveness to collaborate with local school districts to implement differentiated interventions and supports to improve student achievement and graduation rates and to close proficiency gaps for all student groups, including English Learners and students with disabilities.

As another part of its accountability and general supervision system, MA ESE oversees local compliance with requirements for special education and other regulated program areas through the Coordinated Program Review (CPR) process. All reviews cover selected requirements in the following areas: special education, civil rights methods of administration and other general education requirements, and English learner education in public schools. Each school district and charter school in Massachusetts is scheduled to receive a Coordinated Program Review every six years and a mid-cycle special education follow-up review three years after the CPR, known as the Mid-Cycle Review (MCR). The CPR and MCR criteria for each program area encompass both state and federal education laws and regulations, and areas that are most closely aligned with the goals of the Massachusetts Education Reform Act of 1993 to promote student achievement and high standards for all students. These reviews identify noncompliance in specific areas and require specific corrective actions that address noncompliance for individual students affected as well as promote systems change to ensure correct implementation of all legal and regulatory requirements reviewed.

MA ESE also has a strong educator evaluation system that was developed as part of the state's RTTT initiatives and is aligned with priorities described in the ESEA Waiver. On June 28, 2011, the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education adopted new [regulations](#) for the evaluation of all Massachusetts educators. The regulations, which apply to both administrators and teachers throughout the state, are designed to:

- Promote growth and development amongst leaders and teachers,
- Place student learning at the center, using multiple measures of student learning, growth, and achievement,
- Recognize excellence in teaching and leading,
- Set a high bar for professional teaching status, and
- Shorten timelines for improvement.

The new MA ESE educator evaluation system and corresponding standards for high quality professional development both serve to improve educator practice and student outcomes. The evaluation system highlights PD needs and should be leveraged to identify patterns in PD needs within a school and across the district, including how to support social emotional outcomes for students.

Other accountability systems overseen by MA EEC are aligned with the identified MA SSIP focus. The Quality Rating & Improvement System (QRIS), which was first developed during the spring of 2008, offers guidance to professionals in early education and care and out of school time settings on a path towards quality, recognizing that higher expectations of programs must be matched with increased supports that include a better-articulated career ladder, financial incentives, and professional development and technical assistance, which are grounded in the science of child development. MA ESE and MA ESE have been working together to develop QRIS criteria specifically for public preschools that reflect the unique elements of quality in these programs and how they are best able to serve students with disabilities.

Lastly, MA ESE has several additional accountability and monitoring systems to ensure both fiscal and programmatic quality. In addition to financial oversight through close management of grant systems and other fiscal reporting requirements, MA ESE's data quality audit teams that work with LEAs to ensure that the data submitted to the systems outlined above is valid and reliable. MA ESE also conducts internal analyses of data reporting to ensure quality. Where any concerns are identified through these systems, LEAs (and the state itself) are required to take immediate action to address the concerns.

### Quality Standards Supporting Social Emotional Outcomes

MA ESE has developed a number of quality standards that support high quality instruction for all students and the development of positive social emotional skills. [The Conditions for School Effectiveness](#) (CSEs) articulate what schools need to have in place in order to educate their students well. There is also a self-assessment for use by school-level personnel to measure implementation of the CSEs. MA ESE has also established the [District Standards and Indicators](#) which identify the characteristics of effective districts in

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supporting and sustaining school improvement, in addition to the [Massachusetts Standards for Professional Development](#) and also the [MA Standards and Indicators of Effective Teaching Practice](#) (teachers, specialists)/[MA Standards and Indicators of Effective Administrative Leadership Practice](#) (school-level administrators). Each of the standards supports high-quality, effective professional development and practice among and by educators. The priorities identified in the standards are aligned with the state's strategic priorities and plans for supporting education for all students in the Commonwealth.

Quality standards are also articulated in the requirements for licensure of educators, including educators serving children with disabilities in prekindergarten through second grade. MA ESE has convened a group of administrators, educators, representatives from institutions of higher education (IHEs) and others to review and make recommendations for revisions of our Subject Matter Knowledge requirements as part of Educator Licensure. In addition, the Massachusetts Educator Evaluation System is designed to promote growth and development of leaders and teachers; place student learning at the center, using multiple measures of student learning, growth, and achievement; recognize excellence in teaching and leading; set a high bar for professional teaching status; and shorten timelines for improvement. The MA ESE Educator Evaluation System also includes District Determined Measures (DDMs) of student performance as a component of educator evaluation. Districts have identified or will be developing measures for assessing student learning for educators in all grades and subject areas, the results of which will lead to opportunities for robust conversations about student achievement, and ultimately improved educator practice and student learning.

MA ESE has also developed high quality [Curriculum Frameworks](#) to help schools, districts, and organizational partners build capacity to engage all students in learning to meet rigorous expectations. Curriculum Frameworks are in the areas of the arts, English language arts, foreign languages, history and social science, Science, Technology Engineering and Mathematics, and there are also English language proficiency benchmarks and outcomes, instructional technology standards, and related resources. MA ESE and MA EEC have partnered to develop new social emotional standards for young children which will be available in connection with the implementation of activities under the SSIP.

### Systems Strengths and Areas for Improvement

As described above, Massachusetts has strong, integrated systems in place that do and will naturally support the identified priority of improving social emotional outcomes for young children with disabilities through SSIP activities. MA ESE has an ongoing collaborative relationship with MA EEC and MA DPH to ensure that services and supports are aligned across Part C and Part B and across the settings in which children receive their education and care. MA ESE is also part of a vertical alignment to support social emotional outcomes in Massachusetts, including alignment across agency and departmental strategic plans and initiatives. In addition, there are several advisory bodies and councils that have an ongoing role in the development of the SSIP and initiatives under the ECSE Strategic Plan. This relationship will facilitate coordination and collaboration between MA ESE, other state level agencies, and local level partners. The key initiatives outlined above and identified in the MA Theory of Action will support the implementation of the evidenced-based practice to improve social emotional outcomes for children with disabilities aged 3-5.

Through the comprehensive infrastructure analysis and process and data analyses MA ESE and its stakeholders also identified several gaps or areas for growth in the state's and agencies' infrastructure that will be addressed through the implementation of the identified improvement strategy. First, MA ESE Stakeholders noted that data quality for Indicator 7 is a concern in some districts. Anecdotally, a few educators with whom MA ESE closely works have reported that they are unfamiliar with how the seven point rating scale should be applied, the appropriate use of the Child Outcomes Summary Process, and how to use age-expected functioning resources to inform the rating decision. Efforts to improve data quality are already underway as Massachusetts works closely with the Early Childhood Technical Assistance Center (ECTA) and the previously named Early Childhood Outcomes Center (ECO) since 2012 to support improving Indicator 7 data quality in Massachusetts. Activities have included the development of new resources, a new training curriculum, and several train-the-trainer activities to build training capacity in the state.

This train-the-trainer model also addresses another potential gap—lack of enough qualified trainers in Massachusetts to address current needs. Through the ECSE Comprehensive System of Personnel Development (CSPD), MA ESE is building training capacity in the three areas identified under the ECSE Strategic Plan:

1. Improving systems to engage effectively with families of young children with disabilities
2. Improving systems to assist transition from early intervention to prekindergarten and from prekindergarten to kindergarten
3. Improving instruction to increase educational outcomes in:
  - a) Social/Emotional Skills and Social Relationships;
  - b) Acquiring and Using Knowledge and Skills; and
  - c) Taking Appropriate Action to Meet Needs

The ECSE CSPD trainers will also be able to support the implementation of the selected evidence-based practice for the SSIP.

Stakeholders also reported a concern that sometimes “early childhood education is forgotten.” In describing this, stakeholders explained that some preschool programs are held in a building separate from other grades, or that many initiatives target grades k-12 or older students. The strategic work of the SSIP, in alignment with several statewide initiatives to support early childhood and social emotional development, will help to address this concern and draw attention to the important work of early childhood special educators.

Additionally, the key evidence-based practice to be highlighted in the implementation stages of this plan is intended to align social emotional supports and programs between early childhood and the older grades. MA ESE's strategy is to explicitly link the work the agency is already doing with the national leaders of The Pyramid Model for early childhood programs with the current initiatives for Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) for k-12 programs, thereby creating a unified, seamless model of support at all grades. MA ESE, through its Office of Tiered System of Supports, has offered training in the implementation of PBIS in public schools through annual PBIS Academies for teams of district personnel and ongoing in-district coaching. Typically, early childhood programs have not participated in this training. Through this training model, MA ESE will work collaboratively with the Pyramid Model and PBIS teams to develop an integrated training for schools and districts that incorporates both social emotional support systems so that educators from prekindergarten through high school can learn how to tailor supports and interventions for all children in their schools, regardless of age. MA ESE is working to design a collaborative approach through this new integrated training that will provide a district-wide approach to ensure that students have a continuity of supports throughout their education. Whole school involvement will also help to support family engagement in early childhood special education, an area identified by stakeholders as needing additional support and attention through the SSIP initiative. MA ESE is aware that families may experience challenges transitioning from the family-centric services of EI programs to IDEA Part B in public schools, and that PBIS may not adequately address this unique need for additional family engagement for young children. The implementation of this robust improvement strategy will address both of these concerns. These activities are further detailed in the section of this report on the identification of a coherent improvement strategy.

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Finally, MA ESE stakeholders strongly expressed their interest in ensuring that any new initiative to support social emotional outcomes for students with disabilities in early childhood is implemented with fidelity, and that the implementation is sustainable. MA ESE will work closely with the experts at the Pyramid Model and PBIS, training participants, and stakeholders to ensure that the activities undertaken in Phases II and III are implemented with fidelity, support improved social emotional outcomes for young children with disabilities, and will be sustainable.

As a result of its comprehensive infrastructure analysis, MA ESE is confident that the state is poised to successfully implement improvement strategies designed to promote positive social emotional outcomes for young children. Not only is the need and desire for this work present, but there is a strong foundation for this work that is articulated from statewide strategic plans to stakeholder support. Each of the programs, initiatives and tools described above can be leveraged to support the success of these efforts and demonstrate real improvement in this area of crucial needs for our state's youngest students.

### State-identified Measurable Result(s) for Children with Disabilities

A statement of the result(s) the State intends to achieve through the implementation of the SSIP. The State-identified result(s) must be aligned to an SPP/APR indicator or a component of an SPP/APR indicator. The State-identified result(s) must be clearly based on the Data and State Infrastructure Analyses and must be a child-level outcome in contrast to a process outcome. The State may select a single result (e.g., increasing the graduation rate for children with disabilities) or a cluster of related results (e.g., increasing the graduation rate and decreasing the dropout rate for children with disabilities).

#### Statement

Through implementation of the SSIP, MA ESE will improve social emotional outcomes for preschool children aged 3-5, as reported in MA SPP/APR Indicator 7A. MA ESE expects that improvement activities will result in more children with disabilities aged 3-5 demonstrating improved positive social-emotional skills (including social relationships). Consistent with the Indicator 7 Summary Statements, more children who entered the preschool program below age expectations in this areas will substantially increase their rate of growth by the time they turn six years of age or exited the program, and more children will be identified as functioning within age expectations by the time they turn six or edit the program.

#### Description

The SIMR identified by MA ESE is aligned with SPP/APR Indicator 7A. Through the implementation of the SSIP, including the evidenced-based improvement strategy detailed below, MA ESE expects that more children with disabilities aged 3-5 demonstrating improved positive social-emotional skills (including social relationships). Consistent with the Indicator 7 Summary Statements, more children who entered the preschool program below age expectations in this areas will substantially increase their rate of growth by the time they turn six years of age or exited the program, and more children will be identified as functioning within age expectations by the time they turn six or edit the program. The SIMR is a child-level outcome and is clearly based on the data and infrastructure analyses described in above sections of this report.

### Selection of Coherent Improvement Strategies

An explanation of how the improvement strategies were selected, and why they are sound, logical and aligned, and will lead to a measurable improvement in the State-identified result(s). The improvement strategies should include the strategies, identified through the Data and State Infrastructure Analyses, that are needed to improve the State infrastructure and to support LEA implementation of evidence-based practices to improve the State-identified Measurable Result(s) for Children with Disabilities. The State must describe how implementation of the improvement strategies will address identified root causes for low performance and ultimately build LEA capacity to achieve the State-identified Measurable Result(s) for Children with Disabilities.

Massachusetts has identified social emotional outcomes for students with disabilities aged 3-5 as its State Identified Measurable Result (SIMR) for the State Systemic Improvement Plan or SSIP. This decision was based on a systematic look at the special education data for the state in addition to several months of ongoing discussions with internal and external stakeholders. In order to support improved social emotional outcomes for young children with disabilities, MA ESE has chosen to expand upon the implementation of the Pyramid Model for Supporting Social Emotional Competence in Infants and Young Children, hereafter referred to as the Pyramid Model. The Pyramid Model is an evidenced based approach developed by two federally-funded research and training centers: The Center for the Social and Emotional Foundations for Early Learning (CSEFEL) and the Technical Assistance Center on Social Emotional Intervention for Young Children (TACSEI).

The Pyramid Model is a conceptual framework that provides guidance for early childhood special education and early intervention personnel, early educators, families, and other professionals on evidence based practices for promoting young children's healthy social and emotional development. The Pyramid Model is a tiered intervention model inspired by the public health model of promotion, prevention, and intervention. At the universal level the Pyramid Model includes practices to support the social emotional development of all children. At the secondary level, the prevention includes targeted supports to children at risk of exhibiting challenging behavior. Lastly, at the tertiary level individualized and intensive interventions are provided for the very small percentage of children who have persistent challenges. There is a great deal of research regarding the use of the Pyramid Model for supporting social emotional competence in infants and young children. In addition, a number of training materials, videos, and print resources to help states, communities and programs implement the model have been developed.

Massachusetts has been working with the Pyramid Model and its experts since 2009. In that year, Massachusetts entered into a partnership with CSEFEL to accomplish four specific goals:

1. an enhanced capacity to adopt the Pyramid Model;
2. an increased number of high quality trainers and coaches;
3. a cadre of local demonstration sites; and
4. an evaluation of the three outcomes above.

The Massachusetts CSEFEL Pyramid Model State Planning Team helped develop, evaluate, and sustain a statewide, collaborative professional development infrastructure that utilizes CSEFEL's conceptual framework, joined with other related promotion,

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prevention, and intervention efforts. Massachusetts practitioners trained in the CSEFEL Pyramid model under this initiative have the capacity to promote social and emotional competence, prevent emotional disruption, address challenging behavior, and understand the impact of nurturing relationships on children's capacity to learn. To date, over 2500 early childhood educators have been trained through Connected Beginnings at Wheelock College, the primary in-state training entity.

The work of the MA ESE under the SSIP will support the further implementation and expansion of the work undertaken by the Massachusetts CSEFEL State Planning Team. Massachusetts has the opportunity to build upon an existing initiative and leverage a substantial capacity and interest within the state to implement this proven strategy. To date in Massachusetts, the Pyramid Model has been primarily implemented in private childcare centers and Head Start programs by social service and mental health personnel. The model is clearly aligned with state priorities and mirrors existing state initiatives to promote systems change and implement evidence-based practices with fidelity and scalability. In order to best support the social emotional development of young children with disabilities in Massachusetts, MA ESE has learned from its stakeholders that it is critical that children experience consistent supports across settings and natural environments. Therefore, it is imperative that MA ESE support the increased capacity of public preschool programs to implement the Pyramid Model program-wide in alignment with larger K-12 PBIS initiatives and across other early childhood settings at the state and local levels.

In FFY 2013, Massachusetts began the initial work that is now taking the form of a fully aligned training incorporating the Pyramid Model for early childhood programs and Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) for K-12 programs. MA ESE entered into a multiyear contract with the University of Connecticut/PBIS Center in 2012 to design and deliver a statewide initiative to train and coach district and school personnel in the creation and implementation of School-Wide Positive Behavior Supports (SWPBS). This initiative includes full day trainings and on-site technical assistance and consultation over multiple years and has primarily focused on programs K-12.

In 2014, initiated by MA ESE's work on the SSIP, national experts from the PBIS Center and the Pyramid Consortium, which administers the Pyramid Model trainings, began collaborating to develop a training model for MA ESE that would allow for a seamless district-wide implementation of PBS. MA ESE will begin sponsoring trainings in the Pyramid Model and PBIS in Spring 2015. MA ESE intends that the initial training will run in parallel with district K-12 teams participating in PBIS training while their early childhood counterparts participate in simultaneous Pyramid Model trainings at the same location, and will include steps to set the foundation for collaborative implementation in the participating LEAs and their preschool programs. MA ESE is now identifying districts for participation in the initial training and to serve as model sites for other districts seeking to implement this model. The plan is that the Pyramid Model and PBIS trainings will be blended more seamlessly for district team in the fall, at which time preschool to grade 12 teams will participate in combined training activities that promote the alignment of social emotional supports within a district from ages 3-21 for all students. For both trainings, MA ESE will encourage and support the participation of trainers from the Early Childhood Special Education (ECSE) Comprehensive System of Professional Development (CSPD), described in the infrastructure analysis, to ensure that Massachusetts continues to build its statewide capacity to support implementation of this evidenced-based practice.

The implementation of the Pyramid Model in Massachusetts will address the identified root causes for relatively low performance in Indicator 7A identified in MA ESE's data analyses and infrastructure analysis, including a lack of training capacity in the state. The tiered model of supports offered by the Pyramid Model will support young students' education in the least restrictive environment and their receipt of all of the services and instruction necessary to improve their social emotional outcomes as they enter school age. Through this training and implementation of the identified evidence-based practice, early childhood educators will have an increased capacity ability to provide systematic and focused instruction to teach children discrete social emotional skills. In addition, children who demonstrate persistent challenging behaviors that do not respond to universal early interventions will receive a plan for intensive, individualized intervention. The Pyramid Model provides an approach to training teachers to address the social emotional needs of young children. Strategies are used to address universal supports, provide instruction on social skills training, and address problem behavior that is individually designed, can be applied within all natural environments by the child's everyday caregivers. The Pyramid model focuses on supporting the child to develop new social emotional competencies thereby improving social emotional outcomes for children aged 3-5 with disabilities as measured by improvement in results for SPP/APR Indicator 7A. This work will ultimately be aligned with the social emotional initiatives and supports in the K-12 system, thereby providing students with a unified program of support in the school environment, thereby increasing school readiness, improving school attendance and promoting self-regulation.

The implementation of the Pyramid Model, in conjunction with systemic statewide training and a Comprehensive System for Personnel Development (CSPD), will address the gaps and areas of concern identified in the infrastructure analysis, especially high removal rates and low social emotional outcomes for children with disabilities, aged 3-5. First, the data analyses and stakeholder feedback helped to identify concerns about the quality of indicator 7 data collection and reporting. The work MA ESE is already doing with ECTA to improve the quality of this data will be augmented by related support provided by the Pyramid Consortium for those districts being trained in the model. Ongoing functional assessments are a cornerstone of both the Pyramid Model and the Child Outcome Summary (COS) process. The development of model preschool sites for the Pyramid Model will also serve to create centers of best practice for Indicator 7 data collection and help MA ESE identify any necessary additional resources to support the data collection process, as well as the use of that data by the states and LEAs to support continuous improvement.

Additionally, by aligning PBIS trainings for students in grades K-12 with the Pyramid Model, MA ESE will address the concern expressed by stakeholders that early childhood programs are often seen as wholly separate from K-12 personnel or the greater school environment. By supporting whole-school implementation, MA ESE will ensure that all learners have the opportunity to receive high-quality, evidenced based supports. Further, the alignment of these supports from early childhood programs through secondary school will help to create an environment that provides consistent supports for students throughout their school career.

The Pyramid Model emphasizes the importance of family engagement in supporting improved social emotional outcomes for young children with disabilities. MA ESE stakeholders stressed the importance of family involvement in any practice implemented to support student outcomes under the SSIP. A key aspect of the Pyramid Model trainings is teaching educators how to work with families to create a supportive home environment and how to provide families and other caregivers the information, support, and new skills necessary to work on improving social emotional outcomes at home. This is a critical area of focus that will also contribute to improved outcomes for these children.

Finally, MA ESE stakeholders expressed a desire to make sure that any new initiative implemented to support social emotional outcomes for students with disabilities in early childhood is done so with fidelity, and that the implementation is sustainable. The Pyramid Model is structured to provide training and technical assistance to establish the systems and policies needed to adopt and sustain its implementation. MA ESE will enter into multiple year agreements with districts who would like to participate in the joint Pyramid Model/ PBIS trainings to ensure that these programs have the necessary support to develop sustainable initiatives and so that they can serve as model sites for districts beginning implementation in subsequent years. Improved social emotional skills

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promote inclusion, improve peer interactions, and develop all students' academic, social, emotional, and physical competencies. As students acquire these competencies, barriers to learning are reduced and student potential is maximized thereby strengthening the Commonwealth's public education system so that every student is prepared to succeed in post secondary education, compete in the global economy, and understand the rights and responsibilities of American citizens, and in so doing, to close all proficiency gaps.

### Theory of Action

A graphic illustration that shows the rationale of how implementing the coherent set of improvement strategies selected will increase the State's capacity to lead meaningful change in LEAs, and achieve improvement in the State-identified Measurable Result(s) for Children with Disabilities.

**Submitted Theory of Action:** No Theory of Action Submitted

 Provide a description of the provided graphic illustration (optional)

### Infrastructure Development

- Specify improvements that will be made to the State infrastructure to better support EIS programs and providers to implement and scale up EBPs to improve results for infants and toddlers with disabilities and their families.
- Identify the steps the State will take to further align and leverage current improvement plans and other early learning initiatives and programs in the State, including Race to the Top-Early Learning Challenge, Home Visiting Program, Early Head Start and others which impact infants and toddlers with disabilities and their families.
- Identify who will be in charge of implementing the changes to infrastructure, resources needed, expected outcomes, and timelines for completing improvement efforts.
- Specify how the State will involve multiple offices within the State Lead Agency, as well as other State agencies and stakeholders in the improvement of its infrastructure.

#### Planned Improvements to the State Infrastructure

*(a) Specify improvements that will be made to the State infrastructure to better support LEAs to implement and scale up EBPs to improve the SIMR for children with disabilities.*

Massachusetts has identified improving social emotional outcomes for students with disabilities, aged 3-5, as its State Identified Measurable Result (SIMR) for the IDEA Part B State Systemic Improvement Plan or SSIP. In FFY 14, the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education hereafter referred to as MA ESE, conducted specific improvement activities to improve the State infrastructure to better support LEAs to implement and scale up evidenced-based practices in early childhood special education, including those to improve the SIMR for young children with disabilities. In addition, MA ESE outlined plans for additional activities to support the improvement of the State infrastructure.

The current initiatives and planned activities are outlined below in the following categories: (1) Intra- and Inter-Agency Initiatives; (2) Professional Development and Guidance; (3) Data Systems; (4) Grants and Fiscal Support; and (5) Accountability and Monitoring. Initiatives and activities are aligned with and build upon the infrastructure analysis reported on as part of Indicator 17 in last year's Annual Performance Report. Gaps identified in the FFY 13 Infrastructure Analysis are addressed below. They include: 1) the need for additional intra- and inter-agency initiatives to align Early Childhood Special Education (ECSE) with broader early childhood and statewide initiatives; 2) additional professional development and guidance to build statewide training capacity and promote sustainability; 3) improved data systems and data quality; 4) the provision of grants to ensure whole school implementation, initial training and scaling of the selected Evidence Based Practice (EBP); and 5) using statewide accountability and monitoring systems to help drive data based decision making.

#### Intra- and Inter-Agency Initiatives

Leveraging and augmenting existing initiatives in the state are the cornerstone for building state infrastructure and sustainable systems change for the SSIP. This priority was established by the stakeholders participating in SSIP planning activities. Using existing implementation drivers in early childhood and in K-12 education, and in partner agencies, will assist the state in supporting school districts' implementation and scaling up of the selected evidenced-based practice (EBP) across settings, leading to the identified outcome of improved early childhood social emotional outcomes for children with disabilities. Stakeholders assisted MA ESE in identifying these initiatives, and in guiding decision-making about how and where to focus state level resources. Below are key initiatives that MA ESE and partners have continued to develop in FFY 14 to support the SSIP development and implementation.

- Social/Emotional Curriculum Frameworks:** In 2015, the Massachusetts Department of Early Education and Care (MA EEC) and MA ESE released the new [Massachusetts Standards for Preschool and Kindergarten in the Domains of Social and Emotional Learning, and Approaches to Play and Learning](#). These Standards bring attention to these critical areas of development and learning, and further support a learning continuum from birth through school age through providing the early childhood field with a framework for best practices to support the development of these important competencies. The *Social and Emotional Learning, and Approaches to Play and Learning Standards* were developed as a collaborative initiative between the agencies with funding from the Race to the Top-Early Learning Challenge Grant. Both agencies have adopted these Standards to promote early educational practices underlying emotional well-being, pro-social behavior, and social competence, outcomes essential for students' later success in school and in relationships throughout life. "[Building Supportive Environments](#)" is a companion document to the *Standards* and provides guidance on creating the conditions for effective use. Moving forward, MA ESE will use the *Standards* and the companion document to support improved social emotional outcomes for young children with disabilities by integrating the *Standards* in early childhood education initiatives and statewide Train-the-Trainer activities designed to build the capacity of educators to support the implementation at the local level.
- Pyramid/PBIS Alignment and Crosswalk:** MA ESE entered into a multiyear contract with the University of Connecticut/PBIS Center in 2012 to design and deliver a statewide initiative to train and coach district and school personnel in how to create and implement School-Wide Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (SWPBIS). Building on this work in the early childhood

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domain, MA ESE began a multi-year initiative with the national Pyramid Model Consortium in 2014 as part of the work of the SSIP to support the implementation of PBS through Pyramid strategies in the state. (Hereafter, the MA ESE initiative is referred to as PBS through Pyramid strategies). To help make sure that children experience consistent social emotional supports in educational settings across the grade span, MA ESE has been working with the national leaders from PBIS and PBS through Pyramid strategies to present an aligned framework for school districts participating in each – or both – initiatives. The national leaders worked together to create a new crosswalk document, the [Program-Wide PBS and School-Wide PBIS Crosswalk](#). This document is used in the Pyramid Model and PBIS trainings in Massachusetts to identify for participants the many similarities across the two models in order to provide them with a common framework and understanding of each. In addition, it has been used as a tool for school district leadership teams to understand better how to align their early childhood PBS initiatives with school-aged PBIS activities. In 2015, the MA ESE offices of Special Education Planning and Policy Development (SEPP) and Tiered System of Supports (OTSS), with the national experts, collaboratively designed a new joint PBIS/Preschool PBS Leadership Team Academy. This hybrid training included joint presentations by the national leaders from both models and information about how the training models align for each age group. As MA ESE moves forward with the SSIP and the implementation of PBS through Pyramid strategies, it will continue to investigate and solicit stakeholder feedback on the best ways to support the alignment of these early childhood and school age strategies in districts.

- **Pyramid State Leadership Team:** Massachusetts has a Pyramid Model State Leadership Team (SLT) that includes representatives from several state agencies and other entities interested in the use of PBS through Pyramid strategies in Massachusetts including community based early childhood programs, mental health, and higher education representatives. This inter-agency collaborative effort has established a mission and vision for statewide implementation of this model. The SLT oversees an annual statewide Pyramid Summit, a state conference designed to implement PBS through Pyramid strategies in community-wide settings, including public preschools, community child care, and public and mental health agencies serving young children and their families, and build community systems at the state and local levels. Further, the SLT coordinates interagency efforts to support families across setting, including public schools, child care settings, healthcare, and mental health resources. In addition, the SLT is in the process of developing a registry and Memorandum of Understanding for external coaches and trainers in the state. The registry and Memorandum of Understanding will support continued sustainability by allowing districts to choose coaches from a registry, knowing the coaches understand the EBP, are well trained, and have knowledge of the statewide initiatives. Lastly, the SLT is creating a crosswalk between the new Social Emotional Curriculum Frameworks described above and Pyramid Model strategies. This document will support the alignment of Pyramid Model implementation and statewide standards for early childhood educators.
- **Promoting Inclusive Opportunities for Children with Disabilities -** MA ESE is committed to the inclusion of young children with disabilities in the least restrictive environment (LRE). PBS through Pyramid strategies, the primary EBP will continue to promote inclusive opportunities by providing teachers additional skills and tools for promoting positive behaviors while designing prevention strategies to address challenging behavior. In order to further support school districts and their community partners, MA ESE is working in collaboration with our inter- and intra-agency partners to develop and offer the following professional development and technical assistance activities:
  - **Integrating Social/Emotional Skills and Early Literacy into Everyday Routines and Activities -** MA ESE has procured the University of Massachusetts, Boston (UMASS) to develop curriculum guides, functional assessment checklists, classroom resources, and family engagement activities, including videos and web based modules. These materials will use the DEC Recommended Practices, the MA Curriculum Frameworks, and the tenets of PBS through Pyramid strategies as the guidelines for creation of these resources and tools. In the third year of the contract, UMASS staff will support the implementation of the curriculum guides by providing statewide professional development and coaching for teachers.
  - **Building Community-wide Inclusive Opportunities for Children with Disabilities: A Professional Learning Group -** MA ESE, in collaboration with the Preschool Expansion Grant staff, state Head Start staff, and MA EEC have designed a series for staff in the mixed service delivery system in local communities to come together as a team and develop local policies and procedures to promote inclusive programming. MA ESE has procured the book [The Preschool Inclusion Toolbox](#), by Erin Barton and Barbara Smith, Ph.D., for each local community. Using the book as a guide, teams will choose one topic per meeting to identify strengths and solutions to challenges to promoting inclusion for children with disabilities in their communities.
- **Low Income Education Access Project (LEAP):** The Low-income Education Access Project (LEAP) was created with a commitment to reduce the rate of disproportionality in the special education identification and substantially separate placement of students from low-income families in Massachusetts. Project elements include root cause and infrastructure analyses to identify, develop, and disseminate tools; technical assistance; sustainable professional development; and other resources to ultimately support all Massachusetts districts. MA ESE is creating internal, agency-wide collaborative systems and partnerships with a stakeholder group of districts (known as “LEAP districts”) to do this work. The focus of this project in its first year has been on improving understanding of the effects of poverty on students generally, and identifying teaching practices that overcome the impact of poverty on learning. This work has involved the LEAP districts and a number of other districts with high poverty concentrations in their student body. As noted above, because much of the focus is on social emotional supports for students from poverty, LEAP Districts were invited to participate in Pyramid Model trainings as part of the SSIP project. Five chose to do so. These districts will continue to work with MA ESE to support their implementation under both programs in FFYs 15 and 16.
- **School Improvement and Accountability Frameworks:** The [Massachusetts Tiered System of Support](#) (MTSS) is a blueprint for school improvement that focuses on system structures and supports across the district, school, and classroom to meet the academic and non-academic needs of all students. As described above, the MTSS has been an integral part of the aligned roll out of the joint PBIS/Preschool PBS Leadership Team Academies. Massachusetts also has several accountability and assistance initiatives to provide support to school districts regionally. MA ESE has established six regional [District and School Assistance Centers \(DSACs\)](#) to help districts and their schools strategically access and use professional development and targeted assistance to improve instruction and raise achievement for all students. In collaboration with partner organizations, DSACs use a regional approach that leverages the knowledge, skills, and expertise of local educators to address shared needs through an emphasis on expanding district and school capacity for sustained improvement. DSAC liaisons have been involved in the implementation of PBS through Pyramid strategies in participating districts. Liaisons have attended trainings with district teams and provide support as needed to teams implementing this model.
- **Interagency Communities of Practice:** MA ESE and MA EEC provide ongoing Communities of Practice Meetings throughout the state that address topics relevant for early childhood educators, including supporting the social emotional development of young children. In addition MA ESE, MA EEC, and MA DPH work together to offer statewide conferences and courses including online courses, for educators working with young children with disabilities. MA ESE is continuing to leverage these interagency initiatives in FFY 2015 to support the implementation of PBS through Pyramid strategies in the state. In the spring of 2016, MA ESE and MA EEC are hosting five statewide Communities of Practice on Positive Solutions, a series of trainings designed to support successful partnerships between educators and families to implement Pyramid practices across environments, including the home. Educators from public schools, private child care centers, Head Start, and home based programs are welcome to attend these trainings with the goal of supporting aligned practices across environments.

- **Early Childhood Personnel Center Action Plan:** Several agencies in Massachusetts are collaborating to develop an Early

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Childhood Personnel Center (ECPC) Action Plan. MA DPH, MA ESE, and MA EEC staff members are collaborating to develop this plan which has three primary areas of focus: leadership, coordination, and sustainability. The self assessment and subsequent action plan will provide a seamless system in Massachusetts for training, retention and recruitment for Part C and Part B, 619 staff at the local level. The ECPC model is a cornerstone for the SSIP implementation. A state leadership team, involving several state agencies and institutions of higher education, will foster sustainability and cohesion.

- Systems of Care (SOC) - Project Launch and Project My Child: MA ESE has leveraged existing community organizations, originally brought together by the Project Launch and SOC grants, to promote the community-wide implementation of PBS through Pyramid strategies. The SOC grantees began implementing PBS through Pyramid strategies in their Early Childhood Mental Health (ECMH) and public health systems. This inter-agency collaboration, at the local and state levels, has promoted system change and leadership to promote and sustain broader implementation of the Pyramid strategies.

### Professional Development and Guidance

Professional Development and guidance was identified as an important component for supporting the implementation and scaling of the EBP. MA ESE has taken steps to improve the existing professional development activities and develop new opportunities to address this work.

- Special Education Administrator Leadership Academies: The Special Education Administrator Leadership Academies provide consistent quality professional development to special education administrators – those who are new in their positions as well as those who have been in their positions for more than five years. This professional development series has been re-envisioned for FFY 2016 to include Early Childhood Coordinators, and IEP Team Leads, as well as experienced and new Special Education Directors. Each participant is required to complete a systems-level plan for implementation designed to improve outcomes for children and students with disabilities.
- Summer Content Institutes: For all public school administrators, educators, and related service providers, MA ESE annually offers Summer Content Institutes. Different topic areas are identified annually to address current identified needs in the field. Coursework is designed to ensure that qualified educators, related-service providers, and school administrators are able to implement legal requirements and evidence-based practices related to educating children with disabilities in the least restrictive environment, most especially in inclusive settings. For the summer of 2016, MA ESE has introduced several new courses that support the work of the SSIP, including:
  - Positive Behavioral Support
  - Co-occurring Disorders in the School Settings
  - Occupational Therapy and Physical Therapy Services in Educational Settings
  - Partnering with Families of Young Children
  - Positive Solutions for Families
  - Practical Teaching Strategies
  - Promoting Inclusive Practices Through the Use of the Educator Effectiveness Guidebook for Inclusive Practice
  - Promoting Social Emotional Development in Early Childhood through PBS through Pyramid strategies
  - School Culture and Climate
  - Supporting Students with Disabilities in High Needs Schools
  - Using Data to Improve Teaching and Learning in Special Education
  - Understanding and Teaching Students in Poverty
  - Working with Students with Autism for General and Special Educators
- Communities of Practice: As described in the inter-agency initiatives section above, MA ESE and MA EEC provide ongoing Communities of Practice Meetings throughout the state that address topics relevant for early childhood educators, including supporting the social emotional development of young children. In the spring of 2016, five communities of practice will be offered on Positive Solutions, the parent training component of PBS through Pyramid strategies. Additionally, MA ESE, MA EEC, and the MA DPH work together to offer statewide conferences and courses including online courses, for educators working with young children with disabilities.
- Mass Focus Academy (MFA): MFA courses are offered each school year and include cost-free, online, three (3) credit graduate courses on a variety of topics. In the area of early childhood special education, MA ESE works closely with the national technical assistance centers such as the Early Childhood Technical Assistance Center (ECTA) to ensure that the most up-to-date resources and training materials are offered to districts and personnel.
- Comprehensive System of Personnel Development (CSPD) Providers: MA ESE offers districts training opportunities through the Massachusetts Comprehensive System of Professional Development (CSPD), which is a cadre of experienced trainers that provide statewide training, consultation, and/or mentoring services to personnel from public schools, educational collaboratives, MA approved private special education schools, agencies and institutions of higher education, and other members of the education community. MA ESE has developed a subset of ECSE CSPD trainers to support the priorities outlined under the [ECSE strategic plan](#), including improving social emotional outcomes for young children with disabilities. These trainers are also supporting the elements implementation and evaluation of identified focus activities under the SSIP, including by serving as external coaches to the 18 districts implementing PBS through Pyramid strategies. Additional information about their work can be found in Component II of this report.
- Training on the new Massachusetts Standards for Preschool and Kindergarten in the Domains of Social and Emotional Learning: In the spring of 2016 MA ESE will offer several statewide trainings on the new [Massachusetts Standards for Preschool and Kindergarten in the Domains of Social and Emotional Learning, and Approaches to Play and Learning](#). Using a train the trainer model, the state will support the use of these new standards in both public preschool and private child care classrooms. The training on these standards will also support the expanded use of these standards in classrooms implementing PBS through Pyramid strategies.
- SPP/APR Indicator Data Training: MA ESE offers comprehensive trainings to school and district personnel on the data collection and reporting of SPP/APR indicator data. In FFY14 MA ESE partnered with ECTA to provide a train-the-trainer model that will develop statewide capacity to support the collection and reporting of Indicator 7 (Preschool Outcomes) data. In addition to developing new trainer capacity, MA ESE is also providing trainings to local level personnel participated in high quality PD on the Child Outcomes Summary Process and how to align it to IEP development. Given that Indicator 7A is the focus of the SSIP, trainings on how to collect and report indicator 7 data have been incorporated into Pyramid Model Practices trainings. Additional online resources have also been developed to support districts' use of the Child Outcomes Summary Process to assess child outcomes. Finally, MA ESE works with the Federation for Children with Special Needs to provide training to parents, educator, and

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child care providers in all areas of special education, including social emotional supports. The Federation is a member of the SSIP stakeholder group and is providing guidance on how to utilize the Positive Solutions modules for families in districts implementing PBS through Pyramid strategies.

- Pyramid Model Professional Development: MA ESE has offered a number of trainings in PBS through Pyramid strategies as part of the work of the SSIP which are detailed in the Component II section of this report.

### Data Systems

By improving the accuracy of data collection and school district accountability via technical assistance, MA ESE is better able to make timely and accurate decisions regarding the efficacy of implementation. This data based decision making process is the foundation for the cycle of inquiry happening at the state, district, school and child levels. Below are key data initiatives that MA ESE has supported in FFY 14, based on a gap identified in the Infrastructure Analysis completed in FFY 13.

- Edwin Analytics: MA ESE has developed a powerful reporting and data analysis tool called Edwin Analytics. Edwin Analytics gives authorized districts and state level users access to new information, reports and perspectives on education and programs that specifically support improvements in teaching and learning. Edwin Analytics integrates longitudinal data from pre-kindergarten through public post-secondary education. The available tools and reports for this data help educators make informed decisions about how and where they can improve upon their teaching practices to provide an exceptional learning experience for their students. In 2015, MA ESE developed a new "Students with Disabilities Report" to help educators disaggregate their performance data by subgroups of students based on criteria such as race/ethnicity, disability type, and low income status. MA ESE is exploring opportunities to support the use of this data by districts implementing PBS through Pyramid strategies.
- State Information Management System (SIMS): MA ESE has a comprehensive Student Information Management System (SIMS), a student-level data collection system that allows the agency to collect and analyze more accurate and comprehensive information, to meet federal and state reporting requirements, and to inform policy and programmatic decisions for all children enrolled in public schools in Massachusetts. SIMS data will be used to inform the ongoing work of the SSIP.

### Grants and Fiscal Support

Massachusetts offers funding to support school district activities to ensure that eligible children with disabilities receive a free and appropriate public education that includes special education and related services designed to meet their individual needs, and that is provided in natural/least restrictive environments. Detailed below are several grant programs that will support the work of the SSIP, with additional support for districts interested in supporting PBS through Pyramid strategies in their schools.

- Special Education Program Improvement – Fund Codes 274 & 249: The Special Education Program Improvement Grants fund professional development activities focused on advancing the knowledge, skills, and capacity of educators to meet the diverse needs of students through High Quality Professional Development. Beginning in FFY 14, one of the priorities of this grant is to support professional development activities targeted at improving social emotional instruction and positive disciplinary strategies and practices for students with disabilities grades PreK-12, including using PBS through Pyramid strategies.
- ECSE Program Improvement – Fund Code 298: The Early Childhood Special Education Program Improvement Grant (Fund Code 298) is available to all districts serving students with disabilities aged 3-5 to support systemic program improvement in early childhood special education, including improving outcomes consistent with the three Indicator 7 outcome areas. Districts implementing PBS through Pyramid strategies as part of the SSIP are eligible to apply for up to an additional \$2,000 each fiscal year to support activities related to their implementation of this model, including paying for training, materials, and other resources necessary to provide social emotional supports to children.
- FCSN/PTI Contract and Partnership: MA ESE also provides funding to the Federation for Children with Special Needs (FCSN), the Massachusetts Parent Training and Information Center (PTI), to make available support and training to families of children with disabilities and educators. As a key stakeholder on the SSIP, the partnership with the FCSN will support the inclusion of families in PBS through Pyramid strategies training, entitled Positive Solutions for Families, and activities throughout the state.

### Accountability and Monitoring

There are several accountability and monitoring systems in Massachusetts that assess and reflect the performance of our schools in supporting students with disabilities and providing them with a free and appropriate public education in the least restrictive environment. Listed below are key accountability and monitoring infrastructure components that will be or are currently being leveraged for the SSIP. These activities provide MA ESE with aggregate data to make data based decisions.

- District and School Accountability Levels: The Massachusetts School and District Accountability system, established in 1999, and now the cornerstone of the state's ESEA Waiver, is designed to measure the progress schools and LEAs are making toward helping all students reach high levels of achievement. A district's or school's accountability and assistance level is used to appropriately target interventions and supports, and recognize or reward excellence. All Massachusetts schools and districts with sufficient data are classified into one of five accountability and assistance levels, with those meeting their gap-narrowing goals in Level 1 and the lowest performing assigned to Level 5. Since 2012, MA ESE has combined district accountability determinations with the districts' Determinations of Need for Special Education Technical Assistance or Intervention. While each district's accountability and assistance level is determined based on the performance of its schools, special education determinations also take into account special education compliance information. A district's accountability determination includes both accountability and assistance level and a special education determination. The special education determination categories correspond to the district's level, except in those cases where the district has not demonstrated compliance with special education regulations. Districts identified as performing in Levels 3, 4, or 5 were first eligible to participate in the PBS through Pyramid strategies/PBIS academies described below.
- State Performance Plan/Annual Performance Report (SPP/APR): MA ESE participates in monitoring activities from the Federal Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP), including participating in the State Performance Plan/Annual Performance Report (SPP/APR) process and receiving an annual determination regarding the state's efforts to meet compliance requirements and demonstrate success in achieving positive statewide performance outcomes.
- The Quality Rating & Improvement System (QRIS): The Quality Rating & Improvement System (QRIS), which was first developed during the spring of 2008, offers guidance to professionals in early education and care and out of school time settings on a path towards quality, recognizing that higher expectations of programs must be matched with increased supports

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that include a better-articulated career ladder, financial incentives, and professional development and technical assistance, which are grounded in the science of child development. MA ESE and MA ESE have been working together to develop QRIS criteria specifically for public preschools that reflect the unique elements of quality in these programs and how they are best able to serve students with disabilities.

(b) Identify the steps the State will take to further align and leverage current improvement plans and initiatives in the State, including general and special education, which impact children with disabilities.

### Strategic Plans for Education and Alignment with the SSIP

The focus of the SSIP on improving social emotional outcomes for young children with disabilities is clearly aligned with a number of current statewide priorities and initiatives, including the statewide strategic plans that were developed at several levels. The Massachusetts Executive Office of Education (MA EOE), the state's education secretariat, is responsible for overseeing all public education in Massachusetts, including the MA ESE, the State Education Agency for IDEA Part B. MA EOE identified two overarching themes that inform the goals outlined in the [Executive Office of Education Strategic Plan](#) 2013-2015:

- Ensuring that all students have access to high-quality educational opportunities from birth through postsecondary education; and
- Closing persistent and unacceptable achievement and attainment gaps among different groups of students.

In order to improve outcomes in these areas, the MA EOE and its member agencies (MA ESE, MA EEC, and MA Department of Higher Education (MA DHE)) are implementing multiple strategies that will enable the Commonwealth to meet the learning needs of each student and provide the knowledge, encouragement, and skills that they need to meet our high expectations for student growth and achievement, and also provide comprehensive support services to address out-of-school factors. Several of these strategies, which are related directly to the state's SSIP focus area and will support its further development and implementation, are outlined in the sections below.

#### *MA Department of Early Education and Care*

Under the purview of MA EOE, the MA EEC supports high quality comprehensive and affordable early childhood and out of school time education and care programs and supports creation and use of resources, materials and activities designed to meet the diverse, individual needs of children and families. [MA EEC](#) has identified several strategic directions and goals as part of its own strategic plan through 2019 that are aligned with the work of the SSIP to improve social emotional outcomes for young children with disabilities. Included in these is a goal that all young children in the Commonwealth will be ready to enter the K-12 education system and be successful, and that their families will be provided with opportunities to support their children's cognitive, social emotional, language, and physical development. In addition, there is a goal that programs offered in early childhood will promote and support the high quality education and healthy development of children that enables all children to be successful as school members and citizens. MA EEC works closely with the MA ESE and most especially the Office of Special Education Planning and Policy Development (SEPP) to make sure that its work aligns with the priority policy, program, and technical assistance activities led by MA ESE to support young children and disabilities and their families.

#### *MA Department of Elementary and Secondary Education*

Similarly, MA ESE, as part of its [strategic plan](#), has identified a department goal of preparing students for success after high school. MA ESE has articulated three key objectives including:

- Preparing students academically;
- Preparing students for the workplace; and
- Supporting students' social and emotional needs.

It is noteworthy that these three objectives align closely with the three early childhood special education outcomes measured by Indicator 7: positive social emotional skills, acquisition of knowledge and skills, and use of appropriate behavior to meet needs.

The Special Education Policy and Planning Office (SEPP), under the oversight of MA ESE and MA EOE, has also developed a list of responsive strategic actions to improve outcomes for all students with disabilities in Massachusetts, including our youngest learners. This plan includes providing early interventions to improve student outcomes (particularly in prekindergarten); increasing the capacity of general education classrooms to meet the needs of diverse learners; and reducing inappropriate identification of low-income students as eligible for special education.

#### [Early Childhood Special Education](#)

More specifically, MA ESE and its partners from MA EEC and MA DPH, have developed the following vision and mission for Early Childhood Special Education (ECSE) in the Commonwealth:

**Vision:** Massachusetts ECSE vision is to provide individualized services and resources for children with disabilities and their families, to promote positive outcomes and success in school.

**Mission:** The mission of ECSE is to provide a coordinated early childhood system and use data systematically for program improvement to maximize family engagement, coordinate transitions between Early Intervention and Preschool Special Education, and improve student level outcomes.

In addition to this mission and vision, the ECSE plan also identifies three priority strategic areas of focus:

1. Improving systems to engage effectively with families of young children with disabilities
2. Improving systems to assist transition from early intervention to prekindergarten and from prekindergarten to kindergarten
3. Improving instruction to increase educational outcomes in:
  - i. Social Emotional Skills and Social Relationships;
  - ii. Acquiring and Using Knowledge and Skills; and
  - iii. Taking Appropriate Action to Meet Needs

The work of the SSIP focuses primarily on ECSE strategic area 3a, improving instruction to increase educational outcomes in

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social/emotional skills and social relationships. Additionally, the vertical alignment of all education strategic plans across all levels of state education governance in Massachusetts that are inclusive of prioritization of supporting social emotional development of all students in Massachusetts strongly supports the focus activities for the SSIP, undertaken as part of the broader ECSE work led by MA ESE.

### Key State and Interagency Initiatives Supporting Social Emotional Outcomes

#### *PBIS/PBS Through Pyramid Strategies Alignment*

In addition to the vertical alignment of the statewide strategic plans described above, there are several key statewide initiatives that support the social/emotional development of children with disabilities in Massachusetts, including children aged 3-5, that are being leveraged to support the work of the SSIP.

This alignment is most notable in the overlap of the work in PBS through Pyramid strategies for young children and the implementation of Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) for school age children in the state. MA EEC, MA EEC, and MA DPH have collaboratively partnered with the Center for Social Emotional Foundations for Early Learning (CSEFEL) since 2009. Training, model sites for public preschools, family child care, and early childhood mental health have been ongoing activities in the state since 2010. To date, more than 2,500 Early Childhood Educators, primarily in what is referred to as the "mixed delivery system" of publicly funded and private child care centers, early intervention programs, and other early childhood programs, have been trained in aspects of PBS through Pyramid strategies via Connected Beginnings at Wheelock College.

MA ESE has procured the national Pyramid Model Consortium to support the implementation of this model in public preschools. In addition, MA ESE entered into a multiyear contract with the University of Connecticut/PBIS Center to design and deliver a statewide initiative in Massachusetts to train and coach district and school personnel in the creation and implementation of School-Wide Positive Behavior Supports (SWPBS). This initiative includes full day trainings and on-site technical assistance and consultation over multiple years and has primarily focused on programs K-12.

These related initiatives are being integrated through the SSIP work. Beginning in 2014, MA ESE has supported collaboration between the national experts from the PBIS Center and the Pyramid Consortium to develop a training model for districts in Massachusetts that would support a seamless district-wide implementation of PBS across the grade span. This initiative, which is the basis of the SSIP work in Phase 2, is fully described in the Component II section of this report.

#### *Birth to Third Grade Agenda and Policy Framework*

The foundation of the Birth to Third Grade Agenda and Policy Framework is the identification of the essential "competencies" or skills that all children should demonstrate in order to be well prepared for college and careers in the 21st century. For example, Massachusetts will build upon successful early literacy programs with the goal of preventing achievement and developmental gaps from forming before children reach school age. The competencies will also serve as building blocks for the knowledge and skills included in the new [Massachusetts Definition of College and Career Readiness](#) adopted by the Boards of Elementary and Secondary Education and Higher Education during the spring of 2013. MA ESE has added two new positions to support this initiative, and MA EEC has created a Development Grant to support this initiative. Additionally, the new agenda will include strategies to enhance early learning standards, develop a birth through grade 3 assessment system, improve educator effectiveness, and provide comprehensive support to children and families. This cross-agency focus on alignment from birth to grade three will support the work of the SSIP to improve social/emotional outcomes for young children with disabilities.

*(c) Identify who will be in charge of implementing the changes to infrastructure, resources needed, expected outcomes, and timelines for completing improvement efforts.*

When MA ESE began working on the SSIP in the fall of 2013, the agency created an internal leadership team that eventually became, with additional membership representing early childhood special education, the Early Childhood Special Education (ECSE) Leadership Team. The internal leadership team is composed of staff from the following ESE offices: SEPP, Education Data Services, and the Office of District and School Turnaround. It also includes staff from MA EEC. The ECSE Leadership Team plays a critical role in identifying the infrastructure changes critical to the implementation of the SSIP. This team meets every other week to discuss and review data regarding early childhood special education in the state. These discussions and data analyses inform decisions regarding current initiatives, opportunities for collaboration, and areas for improvement. This team regularly consults with the state Special Education Director and other MA ESE offices as necessary to ensure that any required infrastructure changes critical to the implementation of PBS through Pyramid strategies can be made.

MA ESE financially supports the contract with the national Pyramid Model Consortium experts and the CSPD trainers that are serving as external coaches. Because the improvement of social emotional outcomes for all students is a focus area of the work for MA ESE, the alignment of existing initiatives is a priority of the agency and this work is currently underway across MA ESE offices. Significant personnel and monetary resources for the entire agency are being devoted to this work. The ECSE Leadership Team has a role in supporting this alignment and ensuring that the work for PBS through Pyramid strategies will be incorporated into agency-wide initiatives.

MA ESE sees the changes to state infrastructure and the states' capacity to better support school district's programs as an ongoing iterative process in which there is always an opportunity for improvement. Ongoing stakeholder engagement informs this work and helps MA ESE to identify appropriate areas of need and opportunities for development. Consistent with implementation science, MA ESE is encouraging districts to start small – in a few classrooms – and then to scale up implementation district-wide over time. Similarly, MA ESE is focusing on identifying the best ways to support program-wide implementation in the initial 18 districts participating in this initiative before scaling up to additional districts. In addition, MA ESE is currently focusing on building statewide training capacity through work with the national Pyramid Model experts and our CSPD trainers. An expansion of the capacity to offer training will enable MA ESE to better support LEAs implementation of this model.

*(d) Specify how the State will involve multiple offices within the SEA, as well as other State agencies and stakeholders in the improvement of its infrastructure.*

MA ESE's approach to the SSIP is a collaborative one. The ECSE Leadership Team is an intra- and inter-agency collaborative effort to

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align early childhood special education initiatives in the state. In addition, MA ESE has collaborated with a number of stakeholders from a variety of agencies and disciplines including: Early Childhood Coordinators and Principals in LEAs; early childhood special education educators; public school special education administrators; parents of children with disabilities; Early Intervention staff; faculty from institutions of higher education; MA Department of Children and Families (MA DCF); MA Department of Mental Health (MA DMH); members of our Statewide Special Education Advisory Council; representatives from our Parent Training and Information Center; MA EEC; and MA DPH. Members of the Special Education Advisory Council and the Statewide Special Education Steering Committee, the latter of which assists MA ESE with other SPP/APR planning activities, also participate in SSIP stakeholder activities. Recent stakeholder activities include a meeting in which MA ESE presented data on family engagement, evaluation, and state infrastructure to the SSIP stakeholder group. At this meeting the stakeholders participated in small group discussions about each aspect of the SSIP and provided critical feedback on the current status of various initiatives across the state and local education agencies. MA ESE also discussed additional mechanisms for soliciting feedback from stakeholders beyond the current face-to-face meeting format. Based on this conversation, as implementation continues, MA ESE plans to offer bi-monthly stakeholder virtual calls to support remote participation and regular engagement with critical stakeholders.

As described above, there is also an alignment between the SSIP priorities of Massachusetts' Part B and Part C programs. Each agency selected social emotional development as the focus of their projects, have selected the version of PBS through Pyramid strategies most appropriate evidence-based intervention to support improved outcomes for their population of children. This alignment across state agencies provides significant opportunities for collaboration. Each agencies SSIP stakeholder group includes representatives from the others program. In addition, MA ESE and MA DPH are exploring opportunities to align the work under each SSIP through regular collaboration meetings.

### Support for EIS programs and providers Implementation of Evidence-Based Practices

(a) Specify how the State will support EIS providers in implementing the evidence-based practices that will result in changes in Lead Agency, EIS program, and EIS provider practices to achieve the SIMR(s) for infants and toddlers with disabilities and their families.

(b) Identify steps and specific activities needed to implement the coherent improvement strategies, including communication strategies and stakeholder involvement; how identified barriers will be addressed; who will be in charge of implementing; how the activities will be implemented with fidelity; the resources that will be used to implement them; and timelines for completion.

(c) Specify how the State will involve multiple offices within the Lead Agency (and other State agencies such as the SEA) to support EIS providers in scaling up and sustaining the implementation of the evidence-based practices once they have been implemented with fidelity.

*(a) Specify how the State will support LEAs in implementing the EBPs that will result in changes in LEA, school, and provider practices to achieve the SIMR(s) for children with disabilities.*

### Support for LEA Implementation of EBPs - Identification of Participating Districts

MA ESE identified 18 districts to participate in the initial Pyramid Model training and implementation based on a number of factors. It was important that participating districts have the capacity for implementation and readiness to take on a substantial initiative. The criteria for inclusion in the initial cohort of districts were established through substantial engagement with stakeholders in order to ensure that these initial participants would be successful in their implementation.

Given the importance of aligning social emotional supports across the grade span, districts that have participated or were scheduled to participate in MA ESE's school-age PBIS trainings were given priority for participating in the PBS through Pyramid strategies training if they assured that they were committed to expanding implementation into early childhood classrooms through the selected early childhood model. In addition, MA ESE gave priority to districts that were participating in MA ESE's Low-income Education Access Project (LEAP) initiative. This project focuses on providing targeted technical assistance to selected districts to support appropriate identification of students from economic disadvantage in special education and to support their access to inclusive settings once eligible. Through this work, MA ESE had identified the importance of ensuring that students from all backgrounds have the social emotional supports necessary to be successful in their school. MA ESE also prioritized participation of districts receiving an Early Childhood Mental Health (ECMH) System of Care (SOC) grant because these districts are already committed to undertaking significant work to improve the social emotional development of their students. Lastly, MA ESE worked with other offices in the agency and colleagues in the Department of Early Education and Care (MA EEC) to assess districts' readiness for implementation based on existing knowledge of their current policies and practices, including their current accountability and assistance level.

Districts that were offered an opportunity to join the first training cohorts in 2015 were contacted individually for a discussion about the requirements for participation and the resources available from MA ESE to support their implementation. As part of this process districts were asked to complete a "Readiness Checklist" that articulated the requirements for successful implementation of PBS through Pyramid strategies and required signatures from multiple administrative and educational leaders in the district, including the special education director and the superintendent, to demonstrate buy-in from all levels of administration. MA ESE also asked districts to identify and establish a local leadership team that will be responsible for overseeing the roll out of PBS through Pyramid strategies in their district. Each district leadership team consists of a district-based administrator; a special education administrator; an early childhood administrator or principal; a teacher; someone with behavioral expertise; and someone who will act as a classroom coach in the district. In some cases, one person may fill multiple roles on the leadership team. The specific activities undertaken by the district leadership teams are detailed below in the Professional Development and Technical Assistance Support section of this report.

### Statewide Support for Scalable and Sustainable Implementation – Key Drivers

There are a number of organizational drivers at the state level that will be used to intentionally develop the supports and infrastructure necessary for implementation of PBS through Pyramid strategies. First is the use and development of data systems that can inform the decision making process as described in component 1 of this report. Through these systems, MA ESE will be able to make timely and informed decisions based on statewide data. MA ESE will engage in systemic, cyclical data analysis, as described in the evaluation plan, to determine the efficacy of the implementation plan leading to improved student outcomes. MA ESE has a strong existing data collection system including the Student Information Management System (SIMS), a student-level data collection system that allows the agency to collect and analyze more accurate and comprehensive information, to meet federal and state reporting requirements, and to inform policy and programmatic decisions for all children enrolled in public schools in Massachusetts. Student level data is also collected through the SSSR or School Safety Discipline Report. The SSSR tracks each time a drug, violent or criminal-related offense as well as any non-drug, non-violent or non-criminal-related offense occurs on school property. All public schools in Massachusetts are required to file a single Offense Report and Student Discipline Record for each student offender reported on the Offense Report. MA ESE also has comprehensive educator data system, known as EPIMS or Education Personnel Information Management System. This application collects individual educator data from all districts and charter schools.

Student-level and teacher-level data are being integrated using the Schools Interoperability Framework or SIF. This initiative was

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funded in part by a \$6 million State Longitudinal Data Systems grant from the U.S. Department of Education. A portion of this grant will be used to introduce new technology to MA ESE and districts to improve the data collection process. MA ESE is in the process of integrating the SIF with existing data collection systems and is providing grant opportunities for local school districts to participate in the SIF initiative.

MA ESE has also developed a reporting and data analysis tool called Edwin Analytics. Edwin Analytics gives authorized districts and state level users access to new information, reports and perspectives on education and programs that specifically support improvements in teaching and learning. Edwin Analytics integrates longitudinal data from pre-kindergarten through public post-secondary education. The available tools and reports for this data will help educators make informed decisions about how and where they can improve upon their teaching practices to provide an exceptional learning experience for their students. Integrating this information with data and information about social emotional outcomes will provide educators with more comprehensive information about the importance and effect of these strategies to support outcomes for young children and students as they move through the grade span.

A second driver is the strong administrative system that MA ESE has in place to coordinate the SSIP and related initiatives. The Early Childhood Special Education (ECSE) leadership team oversees the implementation of PBS through Pyramid strategies in public preschools in Massachusetts. The team uses of a wide range of data to inform decisions to support the implementation processes, as well as organizational tools to keep the team focused on achieving scalable and sustainable implementation in the state. The MA ESE team is committed to proactively identifying and addressing challenges and developing clear communication protocols and functional feedback loops with vendors (i.e., trainers and experts) and implementing districts. A key aspect of this work moving forward will be the development or refinement of policies, procedures, and guidelines to support the implementation and expansion of PBS through Pyramid strategies in participating districts. The ECSE leadership team is working to reduce barriers to implementation at the district level by working with other offices within the agency to make sure that districts are able to leverage other types of resources and support necessary. This includes guidance on ways to blend and braid funds to support the initiative and promote fidelity in implementation.

Lastly, MA ESE is organizing support for scalable implementation around the four competency drivers for effective implementation of an intervention: selection, training, coaching and fidelity assessment. Together these competency drivers can support professional development that will improve the implementation of this EBP at the district level. MA ESE has ensured effective staffing at the state level by entering into a multi-year contract with the national Pyramid Model Consortium to provide statewide training and support implementation of the EBP in districts. In addition, MA ESE has contracted with Comprehensive System of Personnel Development (CSPD) trainers to support this initiative. These CSPD trainers serve as external coaches to participating districts and receive additional training from the national Pyramid Model Consortium to build their expertise. The Pyramid Model Consortium, MA ESE, and the CSPD, or external trainers have partnered to offer statewide trainings in PBS through Pyramid strategies to district leadership teams, classroom coaches, district-based behavior specialists, and teachers in implementing districts. MA ESE has also partnered with MA EEC and other relevant stakeholders to refine the roll out of this EBP and to ensure that it is aligned with other intra- and interagency initiatives that are focusing on improving social emotional competencies of young children and students. This cross-collaboration sends a clear message about the importance of this systemic, statewide initiative, and supports district buy-in. Districts are able to see the relevance of this work to other work that they are doing with state and local partners to support students' social emotional development. MA ESE is assessing the fidelity of implementation of this EBP through the use of the Teaching Pyramid Observation Tool or TPOT. Additional information about this tool can be found below.

### Plans for Scaling Up the Use of PBS Through Pyramid Strategies in Implementing Districts

The training activities outlined below detail the initial steps MA ESE has taken to implement PBS through Pyramid strategies with fidelity in the 18 participating districts. Consistent with implementation science, MA ESE has asked districts to implement in a limited number of classrooms initially in order to support the development of effective systems and supports prior to scaling up. These initial implementing classrooms can serve as model classrooms in the district. In the second year, a primary focus of activities for participating districts is to use the systems, supports, and model classrooms developed in year one in order to expand implementation into additional classrooms. MA ESE will offer ongoing support through additional statewide trainings, communities of practice, and coaching for district leadership teams. Additional information about scale-up activities for districts is detailed in the Implementation of Coherent Improvement Strategies section below.

*(b) Identify steps and specific activities needed to implement the coherent improvement strategies. Include communication strategies, stakeholder involvement, how identified barriers will be addressed; and who will implement activities and strategies; how the activities will be implemented with fidelity; the resources that will be used to implement them; and timelines for completion.*

### Implementation of the Coherent Improvement Strategies

MA ESE began implementing the identified evidence-based practice (EBP) in the fall of 2014. Each of the sections below details specific activities undertaken to support implementation of PBS through Pyramid strategies to date, and plans for future activities. At the end of this section is a table that presents the activities, and the intended audience for each.

The scope and sequence of these activities were determined with significant initial stakeholder feedback through statewide stakeholder meetings and conversations with other state agencies and local education agencies. In addition, MA ESE has been communicating regularly with the SSIP stakeholder group about the status of the specific activities. MA ESE is in the process of collecting ongoing information from stakeholders on the implementation model and the available or needed state supports so the EBP can be modified as appropriate to align best with district needs and other state initiatives.

#### National Expert Support

In the fall of 2014, MA ESE began working with the Pyramid Model Consortium under a multiyear contract to provide statewide training and support to implement this EBP in identified districts. This has involved development of a model for scalable and sustainable implementation that has been informed by the priorities established by MA ESE and LEAs in the state. This includes alignment with the work that national PBIS experts are doing in Massachusetts to provide K-12 PBIS trainings.

As part of the evaluation plan, MA ESE will gather data to understand how the support from the national trainers is used to promote sustainability in school districts by providing and training classroom coaches and leadership teams. The long-term objective is to build state capacity for training district staff in this evidence based practice, and fading the intensity of support from the national experts and external coaches over time.

A critical component of MA ESE's model for developing a sustainable and scalable implementation of this intervention in the state is the use of external coaches. MA ESE has contracted with a cadre of trainers, known as CSPD trainers, or external coaches who have expertise in this EBP. While each of these coaches has significant experience with the PBS through Pyramid strategies in the state, each CSPD trainer is receiving additional training to build their expertise to support implementation in participating public school districts.

MA ESE's participation in the technical assistance activity by Early Childhood Personnel Center (ECPC) to create an action plan to provide a seamless system in Massachusetts for training, retention and recruitment for Part C and Part B, 619 staff, as described in the Infrastructure Development component of this report.

These coordinated improvement activities, coupled with additional training for external coaches address a barrier identified in Phase I, the lack of sufficient coaching capacity in the state to support the implementation of this EBP. By continuing to recruit and train new external coaches, MA ESE will build sustainable systems to support this implementation in the long term.

External coaches attend district leadership team meetings as described below, work with classroom coaches to support their activities in each program, and serve as statewide trainers in this EBP in partnership with the national experts. In addition, through their expertise in this EBP, they are able to help ensure that districts are implementing with fidelity. MA ESE currently has seven CSPD trainers assigned to this initiative. In the past year each trainer has had the opportunity to work one-on-one with national experts to hone their training ability and each external coach has received personal coaching on their presentation skills. MA ESE plans to offer additional opportunities in 2016 for the external coaches to further build their training capacity including monthly calls with the national experts.

#### District Leadership Teams

As part of their participation in this initiative each district was required to identify a district leadership team that will support the use of PBS through Pyramid strategies in their district. Each district leadership team consists of the following individuals, at a minimum: a district administrator; an early childhood administrator; an individual with behavioral expertise; an individual who will act as a classroom coach in the district; and a teacher. As a condition of their acceptance into Pyramid Model trainings, district leadership teams were asked to complete a readiness checklist indicating their commitment to this initiative. This checklist required the signatures of relevant district-based stakeholders such as the superintendent.

Each of the 18 district leadership teams attended a two and a half day Leadership Team Academy which was run by the national Pyramid Model Consortium in collaboration with MA ESE. These Leadership Team Academies were offered in May, September, and October of 2015. Beginning with the September 2015 Leadership Team Academy, MA ESE offered a joint Leadership Team Academy for preschool teams implementing PBS Through Pyramid Strategies and school age teams implementing PBIS. Participating districts were encouraged to send teams to both academies, and the national trainers from each model worked together at the direction of MA ESE to design a portion of the training that was conducting jointly. The new joint training emphasized the importance of consistent social emotional supports for children as they move from grade to grade and the overlap between the key features of both evidence based practice models. The external coaches attended these meetings with their partner districts in order to support strategic planning activities and to get to know the individuals they would be working with in the coming months.

One of the key measures of implementation of PBS through Pyramid strategies is the "Early Childhood Program-Wide PBS Benchmarks of Quality." This tool allows district leadership teams to assess their current implementation of nine critical elements of PBS Through Pyramid Strategies as measured by 47 different benchmarks. This tool will be used throughout the implementation of this EBP by participating districts to assess the use of Pyramid practices in their program. District leadership teams completed their baseline benchmarks of quality at the initial Leadership Team Academy. Throughout the remainder of the school year, district leadership teams are encouraged to meet, at least monthly, to support ongoing planning for implementation. External coaches are also funded to provide regular support at these monthly meetings in addition to ad hoc support requested by the districts.

In March of 2016, district leadership teams, the national Pyramid Model Trainers, the external coaches, and MA ESE staff convened for a Mid-Year Leadership Team Meeting. At this meeting, six participating districts presented on their current implementation status and there was an opportunity for all district leadership teams to share with each other the resources, tools, and presentations they have developed to support local implementation. District leadership teams also completed a mid-year assessment of their progress using the Benchmarks of Quality tool described above. This activity allowed them to assess changes in their implementation status from the plan developed at the initial Leadership Team Academy. The national experts provided teams with additional training on data-based decision making which included the various tools available to support data collection and use as part of PBS Through Pyramid Strategies model. The teams also participated in an activity with their external coaches to identify current challenges to implementation and to develop a strategic plan for addressing these challenges in the coming months.

MA ESE also used this meeting as an opportunity for authentic stakeholder feedback from the participating districts on current implementation and experiences working with the state. MA ESE developed a participant survey to understand better the current challenges, opportunities, and needs of the cohort of implementing districts. The survey was anonymous and asked educators to describe what current supports are most helpful, what additional supports are needed from the external coaches and the state, the quality of the coaching activities they are engaged in with their external coaches, and what additional training, resources, and supports are necessary to scale up and expand implementation in the district. MA ESE plans to use this data for strategic planning purposes to ensure future activities meet district needs and to provide targeted assistance to districts that requested specific areas of additional support.

District leadership teams will reconvene in June 2016 to reflect on their first year of implementation with the national Pyramid Model experts and the districts' external coaches. At this one day meeting teams will engage in a facilitated planning process to identify implementation goals for the next school year. Similar to the Mid-Year Leadership Team Meeting, MA ESE will ask districts to complete the Benchmarks of Quality tool and additional data collection to assess their current implementation status and identify future needs.

Central to the sustainable local implementation of the Pyramid strategies in preschool classrooms is the district leadership team. By establishing a team that meets regularly and has oversight responsibility for educators using PBS through Pyramid strategies in their classrooms, the EBP builds additional local capacity and ownership over the implementation. MA ESE currently is developing additional opportunities for leadership teams to connect and share best practice outside of scheduled statewide meetings as the districts move into year two and beyond.

Another key component of the initiative is the training and support provided to district-based behavior specialists and teachers in the 18 implementing districts and their community partners. Beginning in summer 2015, MA ESE offered a four-day Pyramid Practices Training, referred hereafter as training modules. Any educator implementing PBS through Pyramid strategies in their classroom or program may participate. Each day of training addresses a critical component of PBS through Pyramid strategies, including the appropriate services and supports necessary at each tier of this intervention framework. In order to build capacity within the state to offer these trainings in the future, MA ESE partnered with an expert trainer from the Pyramid Model Consortium to co-train with the external coaches and to provide ongoing training support to these external coaches in how to deliver the Practices training. To date, MA ESE has offered the Pyramid Practices Training three times to more than 140 educators in the state. MA ESE and its stakeholders are committed to providing the EBP across environments to support social/emotional outcomes for children and their families. For this reason, MA ESE has invited district personnel, community-based child care and Head Start personnel from participating communities to attend Practices trainings to promote community-wide implementation. At the trainings, district and community personnel are able to collaborate and share ideas on ways to implement the EBP in each setting a child attends to support sustainability and a continuity of approach and experience.

Beginning in 2015, MA ESE supported additional training of the external coaches in how to deliver the training modules to Massachusetts educators. External coaches have participated in approximately ten coaching calls with the national trainers to discuss how to deliver the training modules and how to tailor that delivery to the specific needs of Massachusetts educators. Over time, and as the external coaches develop additional capacity, MA ESE plans to use these coaches to provide more specialized local and regional trainings that meet the unique needs of each participating district. As MA ESE expands implementation into additional districts in future years, the external coaches will also be able to support Practices Training statewide.

#### Training District-Based Classroom Coaches

A critical feature of PBS through Pyramid strategies is the use of classroom coaches to support implementation with fidelity. Each participating district has been asked to identify at least one classroom coach who will provide coaching support to teachers implementing the EBP. The classroom coach is a member of the district leadership team and receives additional training in how to coach teachers implementing this EBP. In addition to attending the Practices Training, classroom coaches attend a two-day training on the [Teaching Pyramid Observation Tool](#) or TPOT. This tool is used to assess implementation fidelity of PBS through Pyramid strategies and as a tool to reinforce high-quality practices that support children's social-emotional development and behavior. In order to use the TPOT, classroom coaches must pass an assessment that confirms they can use the tool to reliability. MA ESE has offered the TPOT training twice, once in October 2015 and once in February 2016, and plans to offer additional TPOT trainings in coming years based on districts' need. At the 2015 TPOT training, MA ESE opened participation to agency partners that are members of the Massachusetts Pyramid Model State Leadership Team. Representatives from Head Start and community mental health organizations participated, and by doing so, further expanded the capacity for coaching within the state across preschool environments.

Classroom coaches are also supported through a series of five, one-hour virtual coaches' calls with the national experts. These calls are designed to provide training in practice-based coaching and to offer techniques and strategies for classroom coaches as they begin to support teachers implementing PBS through Pyramid strategies. MA ESE has offered this series of calls twice so far, once in the fall of 2015 and again in the spring of 2016. Each of the calls was recorded so that individuals who were unable to attend a call could access the content at a later time. MA ESE is currently exploring additional options for supporting classroom coaches as they continue their work with teachers implementing this EBP.

#### Pyramid Model Trainings for Families

As described in the Phase I SSIP report, it is very important to Massachusetts stakeholders that families have significant involvement in state initiatives. In order to address this need as part of state and local implementation strategies, MA ESE is offering training and support in a six module family training series to support Pyramid practices in the home. This program, [Positive Solutions](#), was developed by the national Pyramid Model experts. MA ESE is supporting the use of this program in participating districts as a means to promote family engagement and the use of evidence-based strategies for improving social emotional development across environments, including the home. In October 2015, MA ESE offered the first train-the-trainer event on Positive Solutions to external coaches and trainers under contract with MA EEC. The goal of this training was to prepare external coaches to support the use of Positive Solutions in districts implementing PBS through Pyramid strategies and for MA EEC contractors to support the use of this training program in community based child care programs. By utilizing a train-the-trainer model, MA ESE is further developing the statewide and district level capacity and promoting sustainability. In the next school year and beyond, MA ESE will continue to support increased family involvement with programs implementing Pyramid Model practices to ensure consistent social emotional supports across environments for young children with disabilities.

#### Schedule of Previous and Current Activities

##### Activities for the 2015-2016 School Year Pyramid Model Implementation

Date	Training	Audience
5/20-5/22/15	Leadership Team Academy (2.5 Days) (5 Districts participated)	District leadership team and External Coaches
6/29-6/30/15	Pyramid Practices Training Part 1 (2 Days) (Approximately 30 practitioners participated)	Practitioners (teachers), Classroom Coaches, Behavior Specialists, and External Coaches
8/18-8/19/15	Pyramid Practices Training Part 2 (2 Days) (Approximately 30 practitioners participated)	Practitioners (teachers), Classroom Coaches, Behavior Specialists, and External Coaches

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9/22/15	Kick Off Webinar – District leadership teams from May 2015	District leadership teams and External Coaches
9/30-10/2/15	Leadership Team Academy (2.5 Days) 4 Districts participated	District leadership team and External Coaches
10/2/15	Positive Solutions Train-the-Trainer 17 Individuals participated	External Coaches and Community Trainers
10/21-10/22/15	TPOT (Teaching Pyramid Observation Tool) Training (2 Days) 28 participants including community partners	Classroom Coaches and External Coaches
10/27-10/29/15	Leadership Team Academy (2.5 Days) 10 Districts participated	District leadership team and External Coaches
11/5, 11/12, 11/19, 12/3, & 12/10/15	Five, 1-hour coaches training calls – Virtual Approximately 10 people participating	Classroom Coaches and External Coaches
11/12/15-11/13/15	Pyramid Practices Training Part 1 (2 Days) Approximately 90 participants	Practitioners (teachers), Classroom Coaches, Behavior Specialists, and External Coaches
1/14/16 - 1/15/16	Pyramid Practices Training Part 2 (2 Days) Approximately 90 participants	Practitioners (teachers), Classroom Coaches, Behavior Specialists, and External Coaches
2/1-2/2/16	TPOT (Teaching Pyramid Observation Tool) Training (2 Days) Approximately 30 classroom coaches trained	Classroom Coaches and External Coaches
2/26/2016	Prevent/Teach/Reinforce Young Children (PTR-YC) Training (1 Day)	Behavior Specialists and External Coaches
3/1/16	Leadership Team Mid-Year Meeting (1 Day)	District leadership teams and External Coaches
3/3-4/14/16	Five, 1-hour coaches training calls - Virtual	Classroom Coaches and External Coaches
3/14-3/15/16	Pyramid Practices Training Part 1 (2 Days)	Practitioners (teachers), Classroom Coaches, Behavior Specialists, and External Coaches
4/25/16	Pyramid Practices Training Part 2 (1 Day)	Practitioners (teachers), Classroom Coaches, Behavior Specialists, and External Coaches
4/26/16	Prevent/Teach/Reinforce Young Children (PTR-YC) Training (1 Day)	Behavior Specialists and External Coaches
6/2/16	Leadership Team End of Year Meeting (1 Day)	District leadership teams and External Coaches
Bi monthly check in with district leadership team and external coach	Bi monthly, on site or via phone	External coaches with District leadership team

Inter- and Intra-Organization Collaboration for Implementation

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One of the reasons that MA ESE selected PBS through Pyramid strategies as the evidence-based practice to improve social emotional outcomes for young children with disabilities is the history of this EBP in the state and the strong record of its effective use by individuals working with young children across environments. MA ESE heard strong support from stakeholders that existing in-state capacity should be expanded to further support young children with disabilities receiving services in public schools. As part of the interagency Pyramid Model State Leadership Team, MA ESE works collaboratively with other agencies and individuals supporting the implementation of the EBP in the state. One example of this collaboration is the Massachusetts Pyramid Model State Conference which brings together individuals from a number of backgrounds to discuss PBS through Pyramid strategies and activities throughout the state, including district implementation.

*(c) Specify how the State will involve multiple offices within the SEA (and other State agencies) to support LEAs in scaling up and sustaining the implementation of the EBPs once they have been implemented with fidelity.*

### State Education Agency & Other Partners Collaboration to Support Implementation

The implementation of PBS through Pyramid strategies in Massachusetts is a result of significant inter- and intra-agency collaboration. The Special Education Planning and Policy Development (SEPP) office at MA ESE is leading the effort to support the implementation in public school districts in the state. This initiative involves regular collaboration with other offices in the agency. As described in Component I, SEPP worked closely with the Office of Tiered System of Supports (OTSS) to identify participating districts and to create an aligned Leadership Team Academy to support continuity of experiences for students across the grade span. SEPP is continuing to work with OTSS on creating additional trainings and resources for the districts implementing the preschool and school age models.

SEPP is also integrating SSIP priorities into statewide professional development and technical assistance opportunities offered by other MA ESE offices. As described in earlier in this Phase II report, SEPP prioritized participation by districts also involved in other initiatives that are aligned with the goals of the SSIP, most especially those participating in the Low-income Education Access Project or LEAP. SEPP has also begun working with MA ESE's six regional [District and School Assistance Centers \(DSACs\)](#) to make sure that DSAC staff is aware of trainings and opportunities available to the districts they support so local initiatives can be better aligned.

The SSIP work also involves representatives from offices in MA ESE. Led by SEPP, other MA ESE staff have been involved in the developing the SSIP, as key stakeholders in the Phase I analyses most recently in developing elements of the state and local infrastructure that are needed to support implementation by participating schools districts. The Early Childhood Special Education (ECSE) Leadership Team regularly consults with representative from the MA ESE offices of Special Education, Early Learning, Data Services, District and School Turnaround, Data Services, State System of Accountability, District and School Turnaround, and Tiered System of Support. It is anticipated that this collaboration will continue, and as opportunities arise for further alignment, SEPP staff will ensure that these initiatives support the scalable and sustainable implementation of PBS through Pyramid strategies and school-aged PBIS.

MA ESE has strong partnerships with both MA EEC and MA DPH. A representative from MA EEC attends all ECSE Leadership Team meetings and is often in attendance at statewide PBS through Pyramid strategies trainings and events to ensure alignment of initiatives across the two agencies. In addition, MA EEC vendors are invited to participate in Pyramid Model Practices, or module, training to develop capacity across the mixed-delivery system. This ongoing collaborative relationship ensures that not only is there scalable and sustainable implementation in public school district programs but that other child care providers, including Head Start programs, are aware of the activities taking place in public schools and promotes community-wide systems for social, emotional, and behavior health.

Additionally, MA ESE is working to promote aligning of the Part B SSIP with MA DPH's work on the Part C SSIP. MA DPH has identified the version of PBS through Pyramid strategies for infants and young children, known as the [Parents Interacting with Infants](#) (PIWI) Model, as one of its key evidence-based practices for supporting the social emotional development of children in Early Intervention for the Part C SSIP. MA ESE and MA DPH are working together to identify future opportunities for connection between these two initiatives. In addition, MA ESE staff serve on the stakeholder group for the MA DPH SSIP and vice versa. This cross collaboration and sharing of ideas will further support the creation of a longitudinal system of supports for young children as they move from early intervention into Part B services.

## Evaluation

- (a) Specify how the evaluation is aligned to the theory of action and other components of the SSIP and the extent to which it includes short-term and long-term objectives to measure implementation of the SSIP and its impact on achieving measurable improvement in SIMR(s) for infants and toddlers with disabilities and their families.
- (b) Specify how the evaluation includes stakeholders and how information from the evaluation will be disseminated to stakeholders.
- (c) Specify the methods that the State will use to collect and analyze data to evaluate implementation and outcomes of the SSIP and the progress toward achieving intended improvements in the SIMR(s).
- (d) Specify how the State will use the evaluation data to examine the effectiveness of the implementation; assess the State's progress toward achieving intended improvements; and to make modifications to the SSIP as necessary.

*(a) Specify how the evaluation is aligned to the theory of action and other components of the SSIP and the extent to which it includes short-term and long-term objectives to measure implementation of the SSIP. Specify its impact on achieving measurable improvements in SIMR for children and youth with disabilities.*

As reported in FFY 14, the State Systemic Improvement Plan (SSIP) for the MA ESE focuses on leveraging broad statewide initiatives and building state and local infrastructure and capacity to promote the training for local educators, in partnership with families, to implement and scale up Positive Behavior Supports (PBS) through Pyramid Model strategies to improve early childhood social emotional outcomes for children with disabilities. Specifically, MA ESE's theory of action posits that as MA ESE: 1) leverages statewide initiatives; 2) provides districts with access to high quality professional development; 3) supports strong district leadership teams; 4) provides high quality coaching through both district-based and external coaches to implement PBS through Pyramid strategies with fidelity in classrooms; 5) provides training to engage families, then there will be improvement in social emotional outcomes for students receiving early childhood special education services. As part of the requirements for the SSIP submission, MA ESE is conducting an evaluation that examines the implementation of PBS through Pyramid strategies in Massachusetts and its impact on improving student level outcomes.

## Staffing Resources

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MA ESE has established an internal SSIP evaluation team consisting of the following intra-agency staff: the SSIP coordinator, the early childhood outcomes specialist, data analysts, and internal research and evaluation office staff with expertise in evaluation methods and program evaluation. MA ESE has allocated personnel resources to participate in and support the evaluation of the SSIP as described below. Evaluation of the SSIP will be led collaboratively by staff members in two MA ESE offices: 1) the Special Education Planning and Policy Office (SEPP) which is leading the SSIP implementation, and 2) the Office of Planning, Research, and Delivery Systems (OPR) where the internal research and evaluation office for the agency resides. Multiple OPR staff members with expertise in evaluation methods and program evaluation will provide support for the evaluation. As the project develops, MA ESE may consult with third party evaluators, also.

In January 2016, MA ESE convened a group of stakeholders, including family members, the PTI, school district staff, and state agency representatives to solicit feedback on the implementation and evaluation plans required for this SSIP submission. The stakeholders provided invaluable insight to MA ESE regarding potential implementation challenges, evaluation questions, and additional training and support needed at the local level to effectively collect, analyze, and use the results of the data to make instructional decisions. Further details regarding these decisions are woven throughout this component.

### Alignment of the Evaluation to the Theory of Action

Implementation activities rest heavily on developing a strong and sustainable set of Pyramid Model skills and expertise in participating district leadership teams, educators, and classroom coaches. In order to develop these skills, the following key activities have been carried out to date:

1. MA ESE procured the services of the national Pyramid Model Consortium for a multi-year contract to provide training, including, but not limited to, Leadership Team Academies (2.5 days per district), Pyramid Practices Trainings for educators and classroom coaches (4 days), and Teaching Pyramid Observation Tool Training (TPOT) (2 days). Each of these trainings was designed to strengthen the skills of district leadership team members, district teachers or other classroom personnel, and/or individuals acting as classroom coaches. MA ESE has designed the training to build local capacity by supporting the district leadership team and classroom coaches to provide ongoing mentoring and training for teachers implementing PBS through Pyramid strategies in their classroom.
2. Seven external coaches with expertise in PBS through Pyramid strategies were hired by MA ESE to provide ongoing implementation support to the participating districts' leadership teams and classroom coaches. MA ESE is providing additional training and coaching to these external coaches to further develop their coaching skills and their ability to deliver statewide training in aspects of PBS through Pyramid strategies. External coaches attend Leadership Team Academies (see above) with their assigned districts, meet regularly with their assigned district leadership teams, and provide on-site coaching and support to district leadership team members and classroom coaches.

These two key activities are intended to lead to a number of short- and long-term outcomes that the evaluation will measure at both the state and district levels. In the short term, at the state level, the contract with the Pyramid Consortium makes it possible for MA ESE to provide trainings to the district leadership teams and educators in the 18 participating districts. Regular meetings between MA ESE and the external coaches build the coaches' skills to support district implementation. In the short term at the district level, there will be increased knowledge and use of Pyramid practices by district leadership teams, external and classroom coaches, and other practitioners, and an increased awareness of the importance of social emotional supports in early childhood.

In the long term, at the state level, the effective and systemic use of the external coaches by MA ESE to support local implementation will provide additional capacity for all child serving agencies to support the expansion of the implementation of PBS through Pyramid strategies with fidelity. MA ESE and its partners, the Massachusetts Departments of Early Education and Care (MA EEC), Public Health (MA DPH), and Mental Health (MA DMH) continue to work together to bring community-wide supports to participating school districts and their communities, including in staff in child care settings, Head Start programs, and among social service staff. In the long term at the district level, each district will have a knowledgeable district leadership team to oversee the implementation and expansion of this model into additional classrooms. Districts will have trained classroom coaches that provide on-site training to classroom educators, ensure that PBS through Pyramid strategies will be implemented with fidelity and that implementation is monitored in classrooms. As identified in MA ESE's SSIP Theory of Action, together these activities will result in an increase in the number of children who experience the appropriate social emotional support and instruction in preschool settings, and as a result, more children with disabilities will exit preschool with improved social emotional outcomes. Further, districts and their community partners will be better equipped to serve children with disabilities across settings, thereby promoting inclusive opportunities.

### Evaluation Questions

The evaluation of PBS through Pyramid strategies implementation is aligned to the Theory of Action by design. The evaluation collects and analyzes data in order to both support the ongoing improvement of the implementation of this model and measure the short- and long-term outcomes of the Theory of Action.

This section outlines each of the questions the evaluation is designed to answer and the alignment to the corresponding portion of the Theory of Action (see attached). A description of the measures and the methodology used to answer these questions is included in the subsequent methods section in 3c.

#### *Evaluation Questions Aligned to the Theory of Action at the State Infrastructure Level (see Theory of Action - orange and red bars)*

MA ESE has identified a number of evaluation questions, aligned to the Theory of Action, to inform the implementation of PBS through Pyramid strategies to support improved social emotional outcomes for young children with disabilities. The evaluation questions (EQs) below address aspects of the implementation plan at the state infrastructure level including: (a) the creation of a cadre of high quality state-level external coaches through the Comprehensive System of Personnel Development (CSPD); (b) the provision of program-wide PBS professional development for all personnel; (c) the development of strong district leadership teams; and (d) the creation of a cadre of high quality classroom coaches and mentors for program staff.

EQ1a: In what ways is MA ESE using the SSIP, including the statewide implementation of PBS through Pyramid strategies, to build state-level capacity to support improved social emotional outcomes for young children with disabilities?

- Are there additional and better trained external coaches under contract after the beginning of the implementation than prior to the implementation?
- In what ways, if any, does state provided training and support, improve the ability of external coaches to supply expert adult

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coaching to districts?

- What external coach services do districts report as being specifically supportive of the implementation; or conversely, what skills do districts report additional training is needed for their external coach?
- Is the scope of services provided by external coaches to districts appropriate?
- In what ways does the scope of services grow and change over time?
- What external coach services do districts report as being specifically supportive of the implementation or what skills do districts report the coaches need additional training on?

EQ1b: To what extent is implementation of PBS through Pyramid strategies in MA integrated with other early childhood and/or ESE initiatives at the community/local and state levels?

- Is MA ESE promoting a seamless system for children and students with disabilities from birth to grade 12 by aligning Part C, ECSE and K-12 initiatives?
- Is MA ESE promoting community-wide systems of support for children and their families?

*Evaluation Questions Aligned to the Theory of Action at the Program/District Infrastructure Level (see Theory of Action – green bar)*

At the district level, MA ESE will also monitor implementation progress through ongoing data collection to inform improvements in these activities. The EQs below address aspects of the implementation plan at the district infrastructure level including: (a) the provision of adequate training for classroom coaches and leadership teams; (b) the provision of program-wide PBS professional development for district personnel to promote sustainability; (c) the development of strong district leadership teams to support sustainability; and (d) providing strong PBS coaching and mentoring for classroom teachers and staff.

EQ2: Is the state-level plan resulting in the number of schools and classrooms participating in PBS through Pyramid strategies sample growing over time?

- Is MA ESE providing the type and number of statewide trainings and meetings required to support implementation of PBS through Pyramid strategies in participating districts?
- To what extent are district leadership teams participating in state provided trainings?
  - For example: Do the appropriate members of the district leadership teams attend the required trainings? How many of the trainings do they attend? What feedback do they provide MA ESE about the trainings?
- Do districts have more on-site staff available to support the implementation of PBS through Pyramid strategies?
- Based on responses to the Benchmarks of Quality (baseline, mid-year, and end of school year), are districts making progress on the implementation of PBS through Pyramid strategies over the course of every school year? Over the course of the current 2015-2018 implementation period?
- Over time, is the level of fidelity of implementation of PBS through Pyramid strategies in each district and the statewide sample improving overall?

EQ2b: Are districts developing systems to support sustainable training and coaching practices at the local level?

- To what extent has the alignment of social emotional supports for children in participating districts improved across environments? Across grade spans?
- Are district leadership teams, coaches, and practitioners increasing their use and understanding of Pyramid practices?
- Have school districts created sustainability plans in the event of district leadership and staff turnover?

*Evaluation Questions Aligned to the Theory of Action at the Classroom Level (see Theory of Action – purple bar)*

At the classroom level, MA ESE will also monitor implementation progress through ongoing data collection in partnership with district leadership teams to inform improvements in these activities. The EQs below address aspects of the implementation plan at the classroom level including: (a) the use of PBS through Pyramid strategies through PBS instruction and curriculum; (b) partnering with families to implement PBS strategies; and (c) the use of ongoing data collection and analysis by educators to inform instruction.

EQ3a: Are teachers implementing PBS through Pyramid strategies in their classrooms?

- Are educators improving their understanding and use of Pyramid practices?
- Are structures and supports in place at the local level to support ongoing use of Pyramid Model practices over time?

EQ3b: Does the fidelity of classroom implementation improve over time?

- Are educators increasing their use of the critical features of PBS through Pyramid strategies over time to a level sufficient to reach fidelity of implementation?
- Are educators increasing the use of data to support instructional and programmatic decision making?

*Evaluation Questions Aligned to the Theory of Action at the Student Level (see Theory of Action – blue bar)*

The Theory of Action articulates the relationship between the activities at the state, district, and classroom level and how those activities will lead to improved early childhood social emotional outcomes for students with disabilities. At the student level, MA ESE will evaluate whether these activities lead to the anticipated improved outcomes.

EQ4a: Is the number of children in MA, aged 3-5, with disabilities, exiting from preschool with age-expected social emotional functioning increasing?

- Are children's ratings on Indicator 7a, Summary Statement 2, improving over time?

EQ4b: Is the number of children in MA, aged 3-5, with disabilities, exiting from preschool with greater than expected growth in their social emotional functioning increasing?

- Are children's ratings on Indicator 7a, Summary Statement 1, improving over time?

Key SSIP Outcomes

As MA ESE began to develop the evaluation plan, the internal team, in collaboration with stakeholders, developed the above

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evaluation questions. These questions were designed so that the answers, or outcomes, would have a basis for measurement. Through this process, MA ESE has identified seven key outcomes at the state (S1-S3), district (D1-D3), and child level (C1) for the work it is undertaking as part of the SSIP. Each of the outcomes is aligned with the Theory of Action. Additional information about the inputs, activities, and evaluation of these outcomes can be found in Tables 1 and 2 below.

*State Level Outcomes*

S1. Short & Intermediate Term: In order to build state capacity, MA ESE will a) leverage the cadre of PBS external coaches to support districts and communities; b) collaborate with community and social services agencies to provide additional training and support to families; and c) engage in ongoing collaboration with colleagues in Part C and K-12 PBIS initiatives to build community liaisons and data sharing agreements to promote effective transitions and improve social emotional outcomes.

S2. Intermediate Term: MA ESE supports the implementation of the newly created PBS/PBIS crosswalk designed to promote state level collaboration to create a seamless model of Positive Behavior Supports (PBS) for preschool through secondary schools; and is engaged in ongoing collaboration to continue to identify strategies and actions to promote local level integration of PBS.

S3. Long Term: MA ESE will provide adequate training in Pyramid Model strategies so that local school district leadership teams, teachers, and classroom coaches are participating in PBS through Pyramid strategies trainings provided by district classroom coaches and other staff.

*District/Program/Classroom Level Outcomes*

D1. Short Term: District administrators and educators will participate in statewide trainings on PBS through Pyramid strategies including Leadership Team Academies, Practices Trainings, and Coaches' Trainings to become familiar with the tenets of PBS and PBS through Pyramid strategies and classroom and program-wide implementation.

D2. Intermediate Term: The participating districts will build sustainable internal capacity to train additional teachers to implement Pyramid strategies in their classrooms and sustainable improvement plans to support implementation of Pyramid and PBIS strategies.

D3. Intermediate and Long Term: Teachers will be able to implement PBS through Pyramid strategies with fidelity to improve the social/emotional development of young children with disabilities.

*Child Level Outcome*

C1. Long Term: Children with disabilities, aged 3-5, will exit preschool with social emotional competencies that will allow them to access and participate in the general curriculum and in all aspects of the school.

Table 1: Description of Outcomes, Inputs, and Activities

Table 1 presents an overview of the key outcomes MA ESE intends to achieve as a result of the activities outlined in the Theory of Action and described above. Detailed information about how MA ESE will evaluate each of the intended outcomes is available in Table 2.

Evaluation Questions (EQ)	Outcomes	Type of Outcome	Inputs	Activities
		(Level of Impact)		
EQ1a In what ways is MA ESE using the SSIP, including the statewide implementation of PBS through Pyramid strategies, to build state-level capacity to support improved social emotional outcomes for young children with disabilities?	S1. MA ESE: a) will leverage the cadre of Pyramid Model external coaches to support districts and communities; b) will collaborate with community and social services agencies to provide additional training and support to families; and c) will engage in ongoing collaboration with colleagues in Part C and K-12 PBIS initiatives to build systems of collaboration, community liaisons and data sharing agreements to promote effective transitions and improve social emotional outcomes.	Short & Intermediate Term (State Infrastructure)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>MA ESE &amp; district level staff</li> <li>External coaches</li> <li>MA ESE &amp; district level funding</li> <li>Pyramid Model State Leadership team</li> <li>Provide statewide training on PBS</li> </ul>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide intra- and inter-agency statewide PBS/Pyramid training for district leadership teams, educators, and families.</li> <li>Procure of a national provider to support implementation of this evidence-based practice in the state.</li> <li>Procure of and trainings for external coaches through the Comprehensive System of Personnel Development (CSPD) to increase capacity external coaches to provide statewide Pyramid Model Trainings.</li> <li>Collaborate with inter- and intra-agency staff.</li> <li>Develop resources and materials, including PBS/PBIS crosswalk, for state, local, and community partners.</li> <li>Provide training for individuals to provide community-wide Positive Solutions trainings to educators and families.</li> <li>Provide support for statewide data collection and analysis.</li> <li>Attend an inter- and intra-agency social/emotional task</li> </ol>

(Level of Impact)

Evaluation Questions (EQ)	Outcomes	Type of Outcome	Inputs	Activities
EQ1b	S2. MA ESE will  S2a) support the implementation of the newly created PBS/PBIS crosswalk designed to promote state level collaboration to create a seamless model of Positive Behavior Supports (PBS) for preschool through secondary schools; and  S2b) will engage in ongoing collaboration to continue to identify strategies and actions to promote local level integration of PBS.	Intermediate Term  (State Infrastructure)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>MA ESE, district level staff, and other state agency staff</li> <li>External coaches</li> <li>MA ESE funding</li> <li>Pyramid Model State Leadership team</li> </ul>	<p>force to promote and engage general and special educators.</p> <p>9. Participate in statewide interagency Pyramid Model summit.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Create and disseminate guidance –K-12 PBIS/PBS through Pyramid Strategies –PBIS crosswalk.</li> <li>Provide an interagency Pyramid Model state-wide training day.</li> <li>Create an intra-agency social/emotional task force to promote and engage general and special educators.</li> <li>Participate on statewide Birth to Grade 3 Advisory Task Force and other EC Mental Health Advisory Committees.</li> </ol>
EQ2	S3.  MA ESE will provide adequate training in Pyramid Model strategies so that local school district leadership teams, teachers, and classroom coaches are participating in Pyramid Model trainings provided by district classroom coaches and other staff.	Long Term  (State Infrastructure)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>MA ESE &amp; district level staff</li> <li>External coaches</li> <li>MA ESE &amp; district level funding</li> <li>National Pyramid Model Consortium Trainers</li> </ul>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide training to increase the number of well-trained external coaches to provide train-the-Trainer activities for district personnel.</li> <li>Provide statewide training activities to increase capacity for external coaches, district leadership teams, classroom coaches, and other district personnel.</li> <li>Procure a national provider to support improved coaching provided by the national Pyramid Model Consortium to increase effectiveness of leadership team meetings and external coach capacity.</li> <li>Provide increased support from MA ESE, other state agencies, and internal partners to support an improved ability of external coaches to supply expert adult coaching to districts and community partners.</li> </ol>
EQ2a	D1.  District administrators and educators will participate in statewide trainings on PBS through Pyramid strategies including Leadership Team Academies, Practices Trainings, and Coaches' Trainings to become familiar with the tenets of PBS and PBS through Pyramid strategies and classroom and program-wide implementation.	Short Term (Program/District Infrastructure)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>MA ESE &amp; district level staff</li> <li>External coaches</li> <li>MA ESE &amp; district level funding</li> <li>National Pyramid Model Consortium Trainers</li> </ul>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide an increase in the number of statewide activities and training for district leadership teams, classroom coaches, and other district personnel to support implementation.</li> <li>Provide coaching and support to increase in the number and frequency district leadership team meetings.</li> <li>Provide coaches' calls through the national Pyramid Model Consortium to increase the number qualified individuals trained in coaching methodology for PBS/Pyramid strategies.</li> <li>Provide coaching for increased local data collection and analysis activities.</li> </ol>
EQ3a				
EQ3a	Are teachers implementing PBS through Pyramid strategies in their classrooms?			

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Evaluation Questions (EQ)	Outcomes	Type of Outcome	Inputs	Activities
			(Level of Impact)	
EQ2b	D2.	Intermediate (District Infrastructure)		
Are districts developing systems to support sustainable training and coaching practices at the local level?	The participating districts have built sustainable internal capacity to train additional teachers to implement Pyramid strategies in their classrooms and sustainable improvement plans to support implementation of PBS through Pyramid and PBIS strategies.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>District level personnel</li> <li>MA ESE &amp; District level funding</li> <li>External coaches</li> </ul>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Hold statewide leadership team, external and classroom coaches' meetings to support an increase in the frequency of leadership team meetings</li> <li>Provide statewide PBS through Pyramid strategies Practices Trainings to promote an increase in the number of school/program wide PBS activities</li> <li>Provide statewide PBS through Pyramid strategies Practices Trainings to promote an increase in the number of classrooms implementing PBS/Pyramid strategies.</li> <li>Provide statewide coaching trainings including how to use the TPOT to increase the number of classroom coaches in participating districts.</li> <li>Provide Positive Solutions training to increase partnerships with families to support alignment of Pyramid Practices across environments.</li> <li>Provide training and guidance to Leadership Teams for increased use of the PBS/PBIS crosswalk to align PBS/Pyramid to support systemic implementation.</li> </ol>
EQ3a				
Are teachers implementing PBS through Pyramid strategies in their classrooms?				
EQ3b	D3.	Long Term (Classroom Level)		
Does the fidelity of classroom implementation improve over time?	Teachers will be able to implement PBS through Pyramid strategies with fidelity to improve the social/emotional development of young children with disabilities.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>District level staff</li> <li>External coaches</li> <li>Classroom coaches</li> <li>District level funding</li> </ul>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide statewide training activities for district leadership teams, classroom coaches, and other district personnel for effective implementation of PBS through Pyramid strategies.</li> <li>Provide statewide training to increase use of the Teaching Pyramid Observation Tool (TPOT) to use as a measure of implementation fidelity and a tool for coaching educators.</li> <li>Provide support for Leadership Teams to meet to review TPOT data to ensure teachers are reaching fidelity; programmatic and training decisions will be made based data.</li> </ol>
EQ4a	C1.	Long Term (Child)		
Is the number of children in MA, aged 3-5, with disabilities, exiting from preschool with age-expected social emotional functioning increasing?	Children with disabilities, aged 3-5, will exit preschool with social emotional competencies that will allow them to access and participate in the general curriculum and in all aspects of the school.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>District level staff (classroom educators)</li> <li>External coaches</li> <li>Classroom coaches</li> <li>District level funding</li> <li>Pyramid Model materials</li> <li>Child-level performance data</li> </ul>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>In conjunction with all activities above, MA ESE will provide ongoing training and support for school district to use Child Outcome Summary (COS) form to gather, analyze, and use the results authentic, functional assessment data to make instructional and program improvement decisions.</li> </ol>
EQ4b				
Is the number of children in MA, aged 3-5, with disabilities, exiting from preschool with greater than expected growth in their social emotional functioning increasing?				

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(b) Specify how the evaluation includes stakeholders and how information from the evaluation will be disseminated to stakeholders.

As MA ESE continued to build capacity and leverage existing initiatives, stakeholder involvement expanded to include additional partners within MA ESE, MA EEC, MA DPH, MA DMH, and Institutes of Higher Education (IHE).

In addition to the above state agencies, MA ESE collaborates with a variety of additional stakeholders to review the process, implementation, and evaluation plans for the SSIP. These stakeholders include families, district level personnel, intra-agency MA ESE staff, and community members. To date, local- and state-level stakeholders, including families, have been closely involved in choosing strategies for implementing the EBP and creating the evaluation questions detailed in this report. MA ESE solicits feedback from them through a variety of means, including but not limited to face-to-face meetings, electronic surveys, interactive webinars, and informal phone calls and emails. MA ESE collects the above data, in addition to anecdotal information, to support an iterative process of soliciting feedback and making adjustments to implementation strategies and the evaluation process. Further, the Annual Statewide Pyramid Summit, collaboratively organized by an interagency committee provides all community partners and opportunity to showcase their work and is a forum to generate additional collaboration and connections in the community.

Using a continuous improvement cycle strategy, MA ESE will widely disseminate to its stakeholders the aggregate data from the indicator analyses and other data points described in the evaluation plan. With stakeholder input, the MA ESE ECSE leadership team will then analyze the data with stakeholder input and make adjustments to the resources, allocations, and training opportunities based on the feedback and results of the analyses.

(c) Specify the methods that the State will use to collect and analyze data to evaluate implementation and outcomes of the SSIP and the progress toward achieving intended improvements in the SIMR(s).

### Methodology

This plan is designed to evaluate the implementation and outcomes of the SSIP, as well as progress toward achieving improvements in early childhood social emotional outcomes for children with disabilities. This evaluation plan considers outcomes at a variety of different levels, including the state infrastructure level and individual student level, by examining a number of implementation variables, and by following measures of these variables over time.

All data collection activities for the SSIP have been incorporated into program implementation. In addition, MA ESE is maximizing the use of electronic data collection methods to minimize the burden on participants and on the evaluation team. For example, external coaches complete online External Coach Contact Records each time they have a substantial contact with a participating district. These External Coach Contact Records are collected using an online survey tool that generates summary reports of implementation data for staff review.

The section below describes each of the measures, including the data that each measure will capture, which data will be used for each of the evaluation questions, and the analysis that will be used to address the key evaluation questions.

### Sample

For many SPP/APR indicators, including Indicator 7, districts in Massachusetts have been divided into four cohorts that are representative of the state as a whole. Because it has an average daily membership of over 50,000 students, Boston Public Schools participates in all cohort collection activities every year, including one-fourth of its students in each indicator report. This cohort model and plan for data collection was approved by OSEP on April 20, 2006.

While MA ESE has chosen a statewide State Identified Measureable Result (SIMR), the focus of the SSIP is 18 districts selected based on the various criteria described in Section 2 of this report. This group of 18 districts represents approximately 30% of the state population of children aged 3-5, with disabilities. In order to ensure that this cohort will capture a representative sample, MA ESE has increased the reporting size for Indicator 7 by requiring all districts participating in the SSIP to report Child Outcomes data each year for all children with disabilities receiving the evidenced-based practice (EBP). The sample size will continue to grow over time as the number of classrooms and teachers implementing the EBP increases.

### Measures

Detailed below are the specific measures MA ESE will use for the evaluation of the SSIP.

- [Indicator 7 Data](#): Indicator 7 (child outcomes) measures change in Outcome 1 (positive social emotional skills, including social relationship) social emotional outcomes for children at entry into and exit out of preschool special education.
- **Early Childhood Program-Wide PBS Benchmarks of Quality (BoQ)**: The BoQ measures progress on overall district implementation of PBS through Pyramid strategies as reported by members of each participating school district leadership team. The BoQ requires respondents to rate 33 benchmarks in nine subcategories regarding their current state of implementation at the time the tool is administered: not in place, partially in place, or in place. Baseline BoQ were collected at the initial Leadership Team Academies in May, September, and October 2015 for participating districts. During the first year of Phase II, the BoQ will be collected in March (mid-year) and June (end of year). In subsequent years the BoQ will be collected each year of implementation at the Mid-year and End-of-year Leadership Team Meetings.
- **The Teaching Pyramid Observation Tool**: The TPOT is a research-based tool that has been demonstrated to support the coaching of teachers implementing PBS through Pyramid strategies. The TPOT involves a classroom observation and interview questions that score presence or absence of key classroom and instructional indicators. The TPOT will be used to measure what Pyramid Model components are being implemented in participating teacher classrooms, whether the number of indicators being implemented in individual classes improves over time, and to inform the professional development provided to classroom teachers, classroom coaches and district leadership teams. The TPOT will be administered by each district at least once per year for participating educators in each implementation year.
- **The District Leadership Survey**: The survey is administered at the statewide Leadership Team meetings, held bi-annually. This information will guide MA ESE in evaluating the effectiveness of the professional development it is providing to external coaches, the effectiveness of the coaching external coaches provide to districts, and any adjustments that need to be made in the professional development and technical assistance provided at the state and local level. The survey asks district leadership team members to provide a variety of information including:
  - progress made in implementation at the time of the survey;

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- the role of the external coach in that progress;
  - challenges to implementation and expansion;
  - what additional assistance is required from a variety of sources including MA ESE in order to support implementation and expansion;
  - the strengths and fit of the external coaches to their districts;
  - district needs that external coaches are not currently meeting; and
  - training districts feel their coaches could benefit from having.
- **External Coach Contact Record:** External coaches and Positive Solutions Trainers complete this online form at least quarterly and at most each time they have a substantive contact with a district. This measure captures information ranging from the mode of contact (e.g., site visit, phone call, email) to the type of support provided, the number of individuals trained, and the status of the district's current Pyramid Model implementation. This tool will provide ongoing information about what kinds of support districts need, how many classrooms and teachers are trained and have adopted PBS through Pyramid strategies and how many have not had formal training and/or adopted a portion of PBS through Pyramid strategies. The data collected will be coded and analyzed for themes. These aggregate analyses will inform decisions about training topics, training frequency, and support for external coaches.
  - **Statewide Demographic Training Data:** As part of this work, MA ESE meets twice monthly with the ECSE leadership team to review and analyze the number of statewide trainings and meetings for participating districts, the number of participants in statewide trainings, the number of external coaches under contract, and the number of trainings/calls for external coaches. This information permits MA ESE to track not only the number of additional training opportunities and staff who have attended them but also whether the number of trainings need to be increased or decreased, and how these numbers align with the levels of implementation in PBS through Pyramid strategies sample districts and classrooms.
  - **Statewide Training Evaluations:** After every statewide evaluation or meeting MA ESE administers a training evaluation and asks specifically about the knowledge level of participants on the training topic before the training and the how much their knowledge and/or skills have increased as a result of the training.
  - **Extant documents such as SSIP and state leadership team meeting notes, stakeholder feedback, ICC meeting notes, ECSE meeting notes:** Notes and comments from district leadership and SSIP stakeholder meetings will be aggregated and coded to show:
    - the number inter- and intra-agency collaboration is increasing;
    - the number of statewide training opportunities are increasing;
    - external coaches have increased capacity to support district leadership teams;
    - district leadership teams are using and incorporating the PBS/PBIS crosswalk to build PreK – 12 systems for supporting children and students social emotional development.

Table 2 below outlines the evaluation outcomes and their alignment with the project evaluation questions EQ1a through EQ4b. The table also documents the performance indicators, the data collection methods and measures (outlined in detail above) as well as the evaluation design and the timeline used to analyze the data and address each evaluation question.

Table 2: Evaluation of Intended Outcomes

Evaluation Questions	Outcomes	Performance Indicators	Data Collection Methods/Measures	Evaluation Analysis Design	Data Collection Timeline
EQ1a: In what ways is MA ESE using the SSIP, including the statewide implementation of PBS through Pyramid strategies, to build state-level capacity to support improved social emotional outcomes for young children with disabilities?	<p>S1. MA ESE</p> <p>1. will leverage the cadre of Pyramid Model external coaches to support districts and communities;</p> <p>2. will collaborate with community and social services agencies to provide additional training and support to families; and</p> <p>3. will engage in ongoing collaboration with colleagues in Part C and K-12 PBIS initiatives to build community liaisons and data sharing agreements to promote effective transitions and improve social emotional outcomes.</p>	<p>1. Attendance of state and local staff at intra- and inter-agency statewide PBS/Pyramid training for district leadership teams, educators, and families.</p> <p>2. Attendance for external coaches, classroom coaches, district staff, and community agencies by national providers to support implementation of this evidence-based practice throughout the state.</p> <p>3. Increased numbers of well-trained external coaches through the Comprehensive System of Personnel Development</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ Vendors procured to support statewide implementation (performance indicators 1-6)</li> <li>◦ Number of statewide trainings per year (indicators 1-7)</li> <li>◦ Participation in trainings: looking for increase in # of participants over time (indicators 1-6)</li> <li>◦ Training agendas: reviewed for content changes over time (indicators 1-7)</li> <li>◦ Number of inter- and intra- agency collaboration activities (indicators 1-9)</li> <li>◦ Massachusetts state agencies and between offices within MA ESE to support training (indicators 1-9)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ Pre/post comparison - Initial data point collected in Phase I and then ongoing collection at least once every six months in Phases II and III.</li> <li>◦ Trainings evaluated as they occur to support cycle of continuous improvement.</li> <li>◦ Review of extant documents and stakeholder feedback (e.g. SSIP, State Leadership Team meeting notes, ICC meeting notes, ECSE meeting notes). Text will be coded and aggregated. Results will be analyzed regularly to support the cycle of continuous improvement.</li> </ul>	<p>Beginning in May 2015 and ongoing</p>

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Evaluation Questions	Outcomes	Performance Indicators	Data Collection Methods/Measures	Evaluation Analysis Design	Data Collection Timeline
		<p>(CSPD) and increase in training to build capacity for external coaches to provide PBS/Pyramid strategies training.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>4. Evidence of collaboration with inter- and intra-agency staff.</li> <li>5. Development and provision of resources and materials, including PBS/PBIS crosswalk, for state, local, and community partners.</li> <li>6. Increased numbers of state liaisons trained to provide community-wide Positive Solutions trainings to educators and families.</li> <li>7. Increased analysis of statewide data and use of results to make programmatic decision.</li> <li>8. Attendance at inter- and intra-agency social/emotional task force to promote and engage general and special educators.</li> <li>9. Participation in statewide interagency Pyramid model summit.</li> </ol>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Feedback from the MA ESE SSIP Stakeholder Group and related stakeholders, as needed (indicators 1-9)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o MA ESE will review aggregate data at least bi-annually to assess progress toward program-wide implementation and identify any additional statewide or local level training activities necessary to expand implementation in participating districts.</li> </ul>	

EQ1b:

S2.

To what extent is implementation of PBS through Pyramid strategies in MA integrated with other early childhood and/or ESE initiatives the community/local and state levels?

MA ESE will support the implementation of the newly created PBS/PBIS crosswalk designed to promote state level collaboration to create a seamless model of Positive Behavior Supports (PBS) for preschool through secondary schools; and is engaged in ongoing collaboration to continue to identify strategies and actions to promote local level integration of PBS.

1. Increased knowledge about the intersection between PBS through Pyramid strategies –PBIS crosswalk.
2. Increase in attendance at the interagency Pyramid Model state-wide training day.
3. Increased participation in the intra-agency social/emotional task force to promote and engage general and special educators.

- o Evidence of public access to Crosswalk and (indicator 1)
- o Attendance records and meeting minutes (indicators 1-4)
- o Conference agenda (indicator 2)
- o Increased reports of the alignment of social emotional supports across the grade span PBIS/PBS through Pyramid strategies (indicators 1-4)

- o Trainings and meetings will be evaluated as they occur and results analyzed regularly to support cycle of continuous improvement.
- o Review of extant documents and stakeholder feedback (e.g. SSIP, State Leadership Team meeting notes, ICC meeting notes, ECSE meeting notes). Text will be coded and aggregated. Results will be analyzed regularly

Beginning September 2015 and ongoing;

at least biannually.

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Evaluation Questions	Outcomes	Performance Indicators	Data Collection Methods/Measures	Evaluation Analysis Design	Data Collection Timeline
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4. Participation of ECSE staff on statewide Birth to Grade 3 Advisory task force and other EC Mental Health Advisory Committees.

to support the cycle of continuous improvement.

- MA ESE will review aggregate data at least bi-annually to assess progress toward program-wide implementation and identify any additional statewide or local level training activities necessary to expand implementation in participating districts.

EQ2: Is the state-level plan resulting in the number of schools and classrooms participating in PBS through Pyramid strategies sample growing over time?

S3. MA ESE will provide adequate training in Pyramid Model strategies so that district leadership teams, teachers, and classroom coaches are participating in Pyramid Model trainings provided by district classroom coaches and other staff.

- Increase in the number of well-trained external coaches to provide train-the-Trainer activities for district personnel.
- Increase in capacity for external coaches, district leadership teams, classroom coaches, and other district personnel.
- Increase in the effectiveness of leadership team meetings and external coach capacity.
- Improved ability of external coaches to supply expert adult coaching to districts and community partners.

- List of vendors who will act as external coaches that are procured and trained (indicators 1-4)
- Training records for external coaches (indicators 1-4)
- Quarterly analysis of aggregate External Coach Contact Record (indicators 1-4)
- Meeting agendas and evaluations to measure collaboration across Massachusetts agencies to support increased training capacity in the mixed-delivery system (indicators 1-4)
- Feedback from the MA ESE SSIP Stakeholder Group and related stakeholders, as needed (indicators 1-4)

- Pre/post comparison. Initial data point collected in Phase I and then ongoing collection at least once every six months in Phases II and III.
- Trainings evaluated as they occur and results analyzed regularly to support cycle of continuous improvement.
- MA ESE will review aggregate data at least quarterly to assess progress towards improved external coaching capacity and identify any additional statewide or local level training activities necessary to improve coaching skills
- Review of extant documents and stakeholder feedback (e.g. SSIP, State Leadership Team meeting notes, ICC meeting notes, ECSE meeting notes). Text will be coded and aggregated. Results will be analyzed regularly to support the cycle of continuous improvement.

Beginning September 2015 and ongoing; biannually.

EQ2: Is the state-level plan resulting in

D1. District administrators and

- Increased number of statewide activities to

- Annual statewide trainings logs per year (indicator 1)

- Pre/post comparison. Initial data point

Beginning September 2015 and ongoing;

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Evaluation Questions	Outcomes	Performance Indicators	Data Collection Methods/Measures	Evaluation Analysis Design	Data Collection Timeline
<p>the number of schools and classrooms participating in PBS through Pyramid strategies sample growing over time?</p> <p>EQ3a: Are teachers implementing PBS through Pyramid strategies in their classrooms?</p>	<p>educators will participate in statewide trainings on PBS through Pyramid strategies including Leadership Team Academies, Practices Trainings, and Coaches' Trainings to become familiar with the tenets of PBS and PBS strategies and classroom and program-wide implementation.</p>	<p>support district implementation of Pyramid Model Practices.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increase in frequency of District Leadership Team meetings at the district level.</li> <li>Increase in the number of teachers trained in Pyramid Practices.</li> <li>Increase in number of individuals trained in how to coach in PBS through Pyramid strategies.</li> </ol>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Training attendance logs (indicators 1,3)</li> <li>District Leadership Team Surveys: At least twice a year (indicator 2)</li> <li>TPOT training and/or additional coaches' training attendance logs (indicators 1,3,4)</li> </ul>	<p>collected in Phase I and then ongoing collection at least once every six months in Phases II and III.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Trainings evaluated as they occur to support cycle of continuous improvement.</li> <li>Coaching data reviewed at least quarterly for implementation sites.</li> </ul>	<p>at least biannually.</p>
<p>EQ2b: Are districts developing systems to support sustainable training and coaching practices at the local level?</p> <p>EQ3a: Are teachers implementing PBS through Pyramid strategies in their classrooms?</p>	<p>D2. The participating districts will build sustainable internal capacity to train additional teachers to implement Pyramid strategies in their classrooms and sustainable improvement plans to support implementation of PBS through Pyramid strategies and PBIS strategies.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increase in number and frequency of leadership team meetings.</li> <li>Increase in the number of school/program wide PBS activities.</li> <li>Increase in the number of classrooms implementing PBS/Pyramid strategies.</li> <li>Increase in number of classroom coaches in participating districts.</li> <li>Increase partnerships with families to support alignment of Pyramid Practices across environments.</li> <li>Provide training and guidance for increased use of the PBS/PBIS crosswalk to align PBS/Pyramid to support systemic implementation.</li> </ol>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>District Benchmarks of Quality Assessment: Baseline, mid, and end of year (indicators 1-6)</li> <li>External Coach Contact Record: quarterly (indicators 1-6)</li> <li>District leadership Team Surveys: At least twice a year (indicators 1-6)</li> <li>Implementation Data: at least twice a year (indicators 1-6)</li> <li>TPOT trainings and/or additional coaches trainings attendance logs (indicators 1-4)</li> <li>Aggregate TPOT scores by district: completed at least bi-annually (indicator 4)</li> <li>Feedback from the MA ESE SSIP Stakeholder Group and related stakeholders, as needed (indicators 1-6)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Pre/post comparison. Initial data point collected in Phase I and then ongoing collection at least once every six months in Phases II and III.</li> <li>Trainings evaluated and results analyzed regularly as they occur to support cycle of continuous improvement</li> <li>Coaching data reviewed at least quarterly for implementation sites</li> <li>MA ESE will review aggregate data at least quarterly to assess progress towards capacity to support sustainable implementation and identify any additional statewide or local level supports necessary to improve sustainability.</li> <li>Review of extant documents and stakeholder feedback (e.g. SSIP, State Leadership Team meeting notes, ICC meeting notes, ECSE meeting notes). Text will be coded and aggregated. Results will be analyzed regularly to support the cycle of</li> </ul>	<p>Beginning September 2015 and ongoing; at least biannually.</p>

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Evaluation Questions	Outcomes	Performance Indicators	Data Collection Methods/Measures	Evaluation Analysis Design	Data Collection Timeline
EQ3b:  Does the fidelity of classroom implementation improve over time?	D3.  Teachers will be able to implement PBS through Pyramid strategies with fidelity to improve the social/emotional development of young children with disabilities.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Effective implementation of PBS through Pyramid strategies.</li> <li>2. Increase use of the Teaching Pyramid Observation Tool (TPOT) as a measure of implementation fidelity.</li> <li>3. Increased fidelity to the PBS through Pyramid strategies as measured by the TPOT.</li> </ol>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o TPOT: At least twice a year per educator implementing PBS through Pyramid strategies (indicators 1-2)</li> <li>o District leadership Team Surveys: At least twice a year (indicators 1-2)</li> <li>o Attendance logs of classroom coaches attending TPOT trainings and/or additional classroom coaches' trainings (indicators 1-3)</li> <li>o Implementation Data: at least twice a year (indicators 1-3)</li> <li>o Aggregate TPOT scores by district: completed at least bi-annually (indicator 2-3)</li> <li>o District Leadership Teams will meet to review TPOT data to ensure teachers are reaching fidelity; programmatic and training decisions will be made based on data</li> <li>o Feedback from the MA ESE SSIP Stakeholder Group and related stakeholders, as needed (indicators 1-2)</li> </ul>	<p>continuous improvement.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Coaching data reviewed at least quarterly for implementation sites.</li> <li>o MA ESE will review aggregate data at least quarterly to assess progress towards capacity to support sustainable implementation and identify any additional statewide or local level supports necessary to improve sustainability.</li> <li>o Review of extant documents and stakeholder feedback (e.g., SSIP, State Leadership Team meeting notes, ICC meeting notes, ECSE meeting notes). Text will be coded and aggregated. Results will be analyzed regularly to support the cycle of continuous improvement.</li> </ul>	Beginning September 2015 and ongoing; at least biannually.
EQ4a:  Is the number of children in MA, aged 3-5, with disabilities, exiting from preschool with age-expected social emotional functioning increasing?	C1.  Children with disabilities, aged 3-5, will exit preschool with social emotional competencies that will allow them to access and participate in the general curriculum and in all aspects of the school.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Improvement in Summary Statement 1 and 2 values over time for Indicator 7 in participating districts when compared to the statewide sample</li> </ol>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Entry and exit data will be collected on all students with disabilities aged 3-5 in preschool classrooms implementing PBS through Pyramid strategies in participating districts beginning in Fall 2016</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Pre/post comparison. Initial data point collected in Phase I and then ongoing collection at least once every six months in Phases II and III.</li> </ul>	Beginning September 2015 and ongoing; at least annually.
EQ4b:  Is the number of children in MA, aged 3-5, with disabilities, exiting from preschool with					

greater than expected growth in their social emotional functioning increasing?

*3(d) Specify how the State will use the evaluation data to examine the effectiveness of the implementation, assess the progress toward achieving intended improvements, and make modifications to the SSIP as necessary.*

MA ESE via the ECSE Leadership team will engage in the continuous improvement cycle to examine the effectiveness of implementation by regularly analyzing data, assessing the progress toward achieving intended improvements, and proposing modifications to the SSIP. The results of the analysis and proposals for program improvement will be shared with stakeholders for their input. MA ESE will also utilize the national TA centers as needed.

Changes in PBS through Pyramid strategies implementation will be made based on the type of data and the frequency which it is received. The most immediate changes will be made based on the training evaluations – feedback from those trainings will result in changes to make the very next training more effective. The mid-year evaluations from district leadership academies will be used to inform decisions about the content and frequency of training provided to external coaches as well as to inform the ways in which external coaches should be working with the participating cohort of districts. The External Coaches Contact Records will be reviewed quarterly to assess what kinds of assistance from and how frequently districts are utilizing external coaches in order to modify the training for external coaches and how MA ESE supports them to better serve districts. All ongoing data gathered would be utilized to modify the content and to potentially plan additional trainings for external coaches and possibly change external coach assignments to create more effective matches between participated districts and external coaches. As part of the SSIP process, ESE will engage in a reflective process by regularly using the results of evaluation data to make changes to the implementation plan as needed.

**Technical Assistance and Support**

Describe the support the State needs to develop and implement an effective SSIP. Areas to consider include: Infrastructure development; Support for EIS programs and providers implementation of EBP; Evaluation; and Stakeholder involvement in Phase II.

MA ESE appreciates the technical assistance and support the agency has received to date on the development of the SSIP and reporting in Phases 1 and 2. MA ESE has participated in a variety of individualized, targeted, and universal TA from OSEP directly and from OSEP-funded TA centers, including, the IDEA Data Center (IDC), the National Center for Systemic Improvement (NCSI), the Early Childhood Technical Assistance Center (ECTA), and the Center for IDEA Early Childhood Data Systems (DaSy). The expertise of these organizations, coupled with the dissemination of information via Grads 360 and OSEP TA calls, has proved invaluable for the development of the state’s implementation and evaluation plans. In addition to the universal supports OSEP and their TA centers provided, MA ESE found the following individualized TA especially helpful: a review of and feedback on the SSIP Phase 1 and 2 reports prior to submission; participation in regional professional learning communities; and accessible state contacts for questions and resource information related to data analysis, our evidenced based practice (EBP), and evaluation planning.

Moving forward, MA ESE would appreciate additional universal and individualized guidance, including tools and resources for program evaluation, implementation analysis, and program adjustments based on data and analysis. Further, MA ESE requests these tools and resources be made available, in conjunction with expert TA staff, so that states can modify them to support analysis related to unique SIMRs and EBPs.

**Phase III submissions should include:**

- Data-based justifications for any changes in implementation activities.
- Data to support that the State is on the right path, if no adjustments are being proposed.
- Descriptions of how stakeholders have been involved, including in decision-making.

**A. Summary of Phase 3**

1. Theory of action or logic model for the SSIP, including the SIMR.
2. The coherent improvement strategies or principle activities employed during the year, including infrastructure improvement strategies.
3. The specific evidence-based practices that have been implemented to date.
4. Brief overview of the year’s evaluation activities, measures, and outcomes.
5. Highlights of changes to implementation and improvement strategies.

The Phase III Year 3 Indicator 17 report for FFY 2017 is included here as an attachment. It incorporates by reference the Phase I, II, III Year 1 and 2 reports included herein.

**B. Progress in Implementing the SSIP**

1. Description of the State’s SSIP implementation progress: (a) Description of extent to which the State has carried out its planned activities with fidelity—what has been accomplished, what milestones have been met, and whether the intended timeline has been followed and (b) Intended outputs that have been accomplished as a result of the implementation activities.
2. Stakeholder involvement in SSIP implementation: (a) How stakeholders have been informed of the ongoing implementation of the SSIP and (b) How stakeholders have had a voice and been involved in decision-making

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regarding the ongoing implementation of the SSIP.

### C. Data on Implementation and Outcomes

1. How the State monitored and measured outputs to assess the effectiveness of the implementation plan: (a) How evaluation measures align with the theory of action, (b) Data sources for each key measure, (c) Description of baseline data for key measures, (d) Data collection procedures and associated timelines, (e) [If applicable] Sampling procedures, (f) [If appropriate] Planned data comparisons, and (g) How data management and data analysis procedures allow for assessment of progress toward achieving intended improvements
2. How the State has demonstrated progress and made modifications to the SSIP as necessary: (a) How the State has reviewed key data that provide evidence regarding progress toward achieving intended improvements to infrastructure and the SiMR, (b) Evidence of change to baseline data for key measures, (c) How data support changes that have been made to implementation and improvement strategies, (d) How data are informing next steps in the SSIP implementation, and (e) How data support planned modifications to intended outcomes (including the SIMR)—rationale or justification for the changes or how data support that the SSIP is on the right path
3. Stakeholder involvement in the SSIP evaluation: (a) How stakeholders have been informed of the ongoing evaluation of the SSIP and (b) How stakeholders have had a voice and been involved in decision-making regarding the ongoing evaluation of the SSIP

### D. Data Quality Issues: Data limitations that affected reports of progress in implementing the SSIP and achieving the SIMR

1. Concern or limitations related to the quality or quantity of the data used to report progress or results
2. Implications for assessing progress or results
3. Plans for improving data quality

### E. Progress Toward Achieving Intended Improvements

1. Infrastructure changes that support SSIP initiatives, including how system changes support achievement of the SiMR, sustainability, and scale-up
2. Evidence that SSIP's evidence-based practices are being carried out with fidelity and having the desired effects
3. Outcomes regarding progress toward short-term and long-term objectives that are necessary steps toward achieving the SIMR
4. Measurable improvements in the SIMR in relation to targets

### F. Plans for Next Year

1. Additional activities to be implemented next year, with timeline
2. Planned evaluation activities including data collection, measures, and expected outcomes
3. Anticipated barriers and steps to address those barriers
4. The State describes any needs for additional support and/or technical assistance

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Certify and Submit your SPP/APR**

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.

**Selected:** 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.

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