Protocol – Indicator 4a

Essential Elements

Indicator Description

4A. Percent of local educational agencies (LEA) that have a significant discrepancy, as defined by the State, in the rate of suspensions and expulsions of greater than 10 days in a school year for children with IEPs

Measurement

4A. Percent = [(# of LEAs that meet the State-established n and/or cell size (if applicable) that have a significant discrepancy, as defined by the State, in the rates of suspensions and expulsions for more than 10 days during the school year of children with IEPs) divided by the (# of LEAs in the State that meet the State-established n and/or cell size (if applicable))] times 100.

Include the state's definition of "significant discrepancy." Discrepancy can be computed by either comparing the rates of suspension and expulsions for children with IEPs to rates for nondisabled children within the LEA or by comparing the rate of suspensions and expulsions for children with IEPs among LEAs within the state.

Data for this indicator are "lag" data. Examine the data for year before the reporting year (e.g., for the FFY 2020 State Performance Plan/Annual Performance Report (SPP/APR), use data from 2019-2020).

Stakeholder Engagement:

Special ED Advisory panel is used for stakeholder engagement. Meetings with the advisory panel are held monthly via Zoom or in-person. The advisory panel helps with targets and suggestions for training with districts and dissemination. Official minutes must be kept on all SEAP meetings and must be made available to the public on request.

For target and baseline setting for results indicators:
1. There was a series of virtual meetings with parents and for the public to review data and set targets. Special education directors are also included.
2. There are 12 parents of a child with a disability and 4 parent members of organizations out of 27 members on the panel that are engaged in setting targets, analyzing data, developing improvement activities, and evaluating progress.
3. Attendance is tracked by roll call at the beginning of each meeting, and members are marked present or absent on an attendance form. The Research Specialist takes roll and provides the parent engagement
4. In-person training was provided to all panel members on October 22, 2025, from the Program Director, Technical Assistance for Excellence in Special Education (TAESE) at Utah State University. Topics included:

a. Purpose for the Special Education Advisory Panel Under IDEA
b. Knowing and Understanding the Panel By-laws
c. IDEA Regulations Regarding the Advisory Panel
d. The Panel in the Context of the History of Special Education
e. The Relationships Between Part C of IDEA, Section 619, and Part B of IDEA
f. Required Membership of the Advisory Panel Under IDEA
g. Working as an Advisory Panel
h. Duties of the Advisory Panel Under IDEA
i. Panel Meeting Procedures
j. The Panel and OSEP Related Items – General Supervision/APR and DMS
k. Establishing Annual Advisory Panel Priorities
l. Current Issues in Special Education and their Possible Impact on the Advisory Panel

5. These meetings were advertised on website, flyers were sent to districts for students to take home to parents, districts and parent centers were also notified regarding virtual meetings.
6. There was a series of ~7 zoom meetings, to collect feedback and answer questions. There was an overview of the indicators, and historical data was presented to review trends. Suggested targets were provided, and comments were recorded. Questions and comments centered on actual data and how the data impacts children. Chat and verbal discussion were used to collect feedback.
7. Meetings are held on weekends, evenings, and at lunch to maximize the availability of people. These were held from November through January.
8. Meet at least four times per year.
   a. Solicits nominations for membership from interested parties, including parents.
   b. These meetings serve as the primary mechanism for gathering input on target settings, data analysis, and strategy development. The timeline is aligned with the administrative year (July 1 – June 30).
9. An annual report on SEAP activities and suggestions to the SEA, which must be made publicly available.
10. Results of meetings, target settings, and data analysis etc. are discussed in the APR.

There is also an annual parent conference in partnership with the Mississippi Parent Training and Information Center, which is also open to teachers and directors. The data are presented during the conference, and targets are discussed during this meeting.

Setting Target:

The state presents historical data and creates recommendations for targets. This is presented to stakeholders to gather feedback during the meeting. Notes are taken to

review and the Bureau Director of Data and Compliance, the data team and Executive Special Education Director finalize and approve targets.

Online SPP/APR Submission Tool Information:

The Bureau Director of Data and Compliance, the Director of Data Analysis and Reporting, the OTSS Developer, and the Executive Director of Special Education have access to the SPP/APR Tool with access to submit and edit the SPP/APR report. The Executive Director of Special Education approves who receives that access, and Director of Data Analysis and Reporting manages access and communication with Partner Support.

Users with access to the tool login here: https://emaps.ed.gov/suite/

Data Stewards:

1. Executive Director, Office of Special Education, Provides final review, approval, and certification of all SPP/APR submissions and related data reports.
2. Education Program Administrator for Data and Reporting / Part B Data Manager, Office of Special Education, oversees data collection, validation, and analysis; coordinates timelines and ensures compliance with IDEA and federal reporting requirements; serves as primary liaison with Partner Support and OSEP.
3. Data and Reporting Data Specialists, Office of Special Education, conduct data collection and validation; analyze district-level data; provide technical assistance to LEAs; ensure data accuracy in SharePoint and related systems.
4. Director of Data Analysis and Reporting, Office of Technology and Strategic Services, pulls data from backend systems for Indicators 1–14; compiles data for the APR and LEA determinations; ensures consistency across state data systems.
5. EDFacts Coordinators, Office of Technology and Strategic Services, maintain EDFacts file specifications, formatting, and submission requirements; ensure alignment of all data files with federal reporting standards.

Data Source Description:

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

See 618 Discipline Data Protocol

State Collection and Submission Schedule:

See 618 Discipline Data Protocol

Collection:

See 618 discipline data protocol for the data for students with IEPs.

Data for students without IEPs: From net membership enrollment and discipline records in MSIS. Data for net membership is from month one (what's reported in the EDFacts membership file). Discipline data for students without disabilities is the same collection as for students with disabilities; all coding of discipline data is the same for students with disabilities and without disabilities. Not all LEAs collect/report data (discipline and enrollment) for students without disabilities ages 3-Kindergarten (would only report if they have a public PreK program).

Data Validation:

See 618 discipline data protocol.

Data Analysis: Describe the process for data analysis.

The OTSS Developer runs a procedure that:
1. Pulls in LEA child count and checks for a minimum N size of 10 – if there aren't at least 10 students ages 6-21 with disabilities in the district, the district gets an NA and is not included in the analysis. Include in the APR the number of districts that are excluded because they do not meet the minimum N size.
2. Pulls in enrollment data for students without disabilities (from month 1) and discipline data
3. Runs calculations of rates for students with disabilities and students without disabilities, if rate for SWD is at least 2 percentage points higher than the rate for students without disabilities

MS uses the comparison option 1: The rates of suspensions and expulsions for children with IEPs to nondisabled children within the LEAs.

State's definition of "significant discrepancy" and methodology

Mississippi uses a rate difference calculation for Indicator 4. A "significant discrepancy" is defined as having students with disabilities suspended and expelled at least 2 percentage points greater than the rate of suspension and expulsion for students without disabilities. Mississippi uses the following comparison methodology defined in

34 CFR §3000170(a). 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. When significant discrepancy is determined for an LEA the MDE OSE will require the LEA to conduct a self-review of policies, procedures, and practices to determine if they contributed to the significant discrepancy.

Data on suspensions and expulsions is gathered from the State Database, Mississippi Student Information System (MSIS). The data pertaining to students with disabilities is taken from the 618 data collection, also reported to EDFacts in the Children with Disabilities (IDEA)Suspensions/Expulsions file submission. The data pertaining to students without disabilities is taken from the net membership enrollment numbers and the discipline records in MSIS.

Mississippi used a minimum "n"size of 10 students with disabilities for Indicator 4. 10 districts were excluded from the calculation because they did not meet the minimum n/cell size.

For slippage analysis – the Bureau Director of Data and Compliance will reach out to the Executive Special Education Director and Bureau Director for Policy and Programs for additional information regarding the possible causes for slippage. There are some brainstorming and discussion of what is happening in the field – programs that may have closed or had specific challenges.

Regarding adding additional information regarding the indicator – process changes are indicated and something major that may have happened in a district that might affect data.

Response to OSEP-Required Actions:

Bureau Director of Data and Compliance reviews required actions and all OSEP feedback. The Bureau Director of Data and Compliance and Executive Special Education Director will meet to discuss required actions and determine what needs to be changed. This would be reviewed and implemented.

Internal Approval Process:

Data Team provides a first pass review of the indicator to see if anything should be added. Then, the Executive Special Education Director reviews the SPP/APR and submits the final report.

Submission:

The OTSS Developer enters data into the APR tool, adds the methodology and some of the indicator information copied and pasted as necessary. The Bureau Director of Data and Compliance enters number of compliant and noncompliant districts, and reviews and updates narratives. The Executive Special Education Director is authorized to certify the final report.

Clarification:

Bureau Director of Data and Compliance reviews the request and comments for clarification and addresses the response. The Data Manager creates an internal chart with OSEP's comments and each response from the state and provides it to Director and Program Area expert to review before entering those responses during the clarification period.

Data Governance:

Mississippi has an established data governance committee and procedures that outlines the process for change control. Any changes to data collections must be formally submitted to the Change Review Board, a subset of the data governance committee and voted upon and approved by data owners.

Public Reporting:

District determination reports are created in the Spring, and a PDF or Excel form are posted on the website usually around April or May. The OTSS Developer and the Director of Data Analysis and Reporting create and prepare the determination reports. Bureau Director of Data and Compliance will review the reports then ask IT to post them. These are posted here: SPP/APR | The Mississippi Department of Education (mdek12.org)

Indicators 4a and 4b are included in determinations.

District determinations help to identify indicators for coaching.