



Protocol – Indicator 16

Essential Elements

Indicator Description

Percent of mediations held that results in mediation agreements.

Measurement

Percent = [(2.1(a)(i) + 2.1(b)(i)) divided by 2.1] times 100.

Note: 2.1(a)(i), 2.1(b)(i), and 2.1 refer to data elements in the EMAPS IDEA Part B Dispute Resolution Survey.

Stakeholder Engagement:

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 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 engage
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 of 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.

Target Setting: This is a results indicator.

States are not required to establish baseline or targets if the number of mediations is less than 10. In a reporting period when the number of mediations reaches 10 or more, develop baseline, targets, and improvement activities, and report on them in the corresponding SPP/APR.

Target must be 100%.

Online SPP/APR Submission Tool Information:

The Mississippi Department of Education (MDE), Office of Special Education (OSE), uses the U.S. Department of Education's online SPP/APR submission tool to complete and certify the State Performance Plan/Annual Performance Report each year. Access to



this system is restricted to designated state staff responsible for data verification, analysis, and certification.

User Access and Roles

Access to the SPP/APR submission tool is limited to a small group of authorized personnel:

1. Executive Director, Office of Special Education – Certifying Official: Has full access to review, approve, and certify the final submission.
2. Education Program Administrator for Data and Reporting/Part B Data Manager – Full Access: Responsible for entering and reviewing data, uploading narratives, and coordinating edits.
3. Data and Reporting Data Specialists – Read/Write Access: Assist with data review, accuracy checks, and preparation of indicator narratives.
4. Director of Data Analysis and Reporting, Office of Technology and Strategic Services (OTSS) – Full Access: Provides data verification and technical support, ensures backend alignment between state systems and the federal submission tool.
5. EDFacts Coordinators, OTSS – Read/Write Access: Validate data structure, file formats, and EDFacts integration.
6. Adding or Modifying User Access
7. Requests for new or modified user access must be submitted in writing by the Executive Director, Office of Special Education, to the U.S. Department of Education’s SPP/APR technical support team. Access is granted only after approval from OSEP’s system administrators and is reviewed annually to ensure proper authorization.
8. Technical Support
9. Technical assistance for the online SPP/APR submission tool is available through the OSEP Partner Support Help Desk. Authorized users can submit support tickets, access user guides, and request troubleshooting assistance via email or the online help portal. The Education Program Administrator for Data and Reporting/Part B Data Manager serves as the primary point of contact between MDE and Partner Support for all SPP/APR system-related issues.

Data Stewards:

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 federal reporting requirements. Serves as primary liaison with Partner Support and OSEP.

1. 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.



2. Director of Policy and Practice, Office of Special Education, Reviews data and reports for alignment with policy and programmatic requirements; assists with interpreting results and developing improvement strategies.
3. Director of the Office of Parent Engagement and Support, Office of Special Education, monitors timelines and accuracy of dispute resolution data; ensures cases are logged and closed correctly in SharePoint; supports parent engagement and procedural safeguard compliance.
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:

The Mississippi Department of Education (MDE), Office of Special Education (OSE), collects and manages dispute resolution data through a secure SharePoint database. This system serves as the central repository for all documentation related to written, signed complaints, mediations, and due process hearings, as required under IDEA Section 618.

The SharePoint site is used by the Dispute Resolution Team to log, track, and store case documentation from initial receipt through final resolution. Each case record includes dates, outcomes, and supporting documentation. The system allows for real-time updates, version control, and restricted access to ensure data integrity and confidentiality.

At the end of each reporting period, data from SharePoint are reviewed, validated, and compiled by the Dispute Resolution Team and the OSE Data Team. The information is then aggregated and reported to the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) through the IDEA Section 618 Data Submission process.

State Collection and Submission Schedule:

The Mississippi Department of Education (MDE), Office of Special Education (OSE), follows an established timeline for the annual collection, review, and submission of dispute resolution data. All information is maintained in a secure SharePoint system and managed by the Dispute Resolution Team.



Activity	Description	Timeline
Data Collection Period Opens	The data collection period opens at the beginning of the federal fiscal year. New dispute resolution cases are entered into SharePoint as they are received.	October 1
Data Due from LEAs	Districts provide all required documentation and case information for any dispute resolution activity to the OSE Dispute Resolution Team.	September 30
Data Pulled After Collection Closes	Following the close of the collection period, the Data Analyst and Dispute Resolution Coordinator pull finalized data from SharePoint for review and validation.	October–November
Data Submission to OSEP	Verified and approved data are certified by the Director and Executive Director and submitted to the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP).	December

Collection:

The Mississippi Department of Education (MDE), Office of Special Education (OSE), collects and manages all dispute resolution data through a secure SharePoint system. This platform serves as the official repository for tracking written, signed complaints, mediations, and due process hearings in compliance with IDEA Section 618 requirements.

When a dispute resolution case is received, the Data and Reporting Data Specialists enter the case information into SharePoint and assign a unique case identifier. Supporting documentation—including correspondence, determinations, agreements, and closure letters—is uploaded directly to the system. Updates are entered throughout the duration of the case to ensure accurate tracking of timelines, activities, and outcomes.

Each record in SharePoint includes key data fields such as case type, date received, date resolved, resolution type, and outcome. The Education Program Administrator for Data and Reporting/Part B Data Manager and Data and Reporting Data Specialists maintain ongoing oversight of data entry and case status to ensure completeness and accuracy.

At the close of the federal fiscal year, the Director of Data Analysis and Reporting within the Office of Technology and Strategic Services (OTSS) runs SharePoint queries and data validation checks to compile all cases meeting the federal reporting criteria. These queries extract summary counts by dispute type and outcome category. The compiled data are reviewed by the Education Program Administrator for Data and Reporting/Part B Data Manager for accuracy and consistency and then submitted to the Executive Director, Office of Special Education, for certification and inclusion in the annual IDEA Section 618 submission.



Data Validation:

The Mississippi Department of Education (MDE), Office of Special Education (OSE), maintains a comprehensive validation process to ensure the accuracy, consistency, and completeness of all dispute resolution data stored in SharePoint.

The Education Program Administrator for Data and Reporting/Part B Data Manager oversees validation activities in coordination with the Data and Reporting Data Specialists, who review district-level entries, verify documentation, and provide technical assistance to districts regarding data accuracy. Specialists routinely check that all case information—such as dates, case type, and resolution status—is entered correctly and supported by complete documentation.

The Director of Policy and Practice and the Director of the Office of Parent Engagement and Support review case outcomes to confirm that procedural safeguards are followed and that data align with state and federal requirements.

The Office of Technology and Strategic Services (OTSS) supports these efforts by ensuring the integrity of the systems and data files used in reporting. The Director of Core School Applications maintains accurate district lists and user access; the Director of Data Analysis and Reporting perform backend data checks, extracts final datasets from SharePoint and the Access dispute resolution database, and ensures alignment with IDEA Section 618 specifications; and the EDFacts Coordinators validate all data files for proper format and compliance before federal submission.

After all reviews and quality checks are completed, the Education Program Administrator for Data and Reporting/Part B Data Manager compiles the verified dataset for review and approval by the Executive Director, Office of Special Education, who certifies the final submission to the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP).

Data Analysis:

The Mississippi Department of Education (MDE), Office of Special Education (OSE), conducts a comprehensive analysis of dispute resolution data each year to identify statewide trends, district-level patterns, and areas requiring targeted improvement or technical assistance.

The Education Program Administrator for Data and Reporting/Part B Data Manager leads the data analysis process in collaboration with the Data and Reporting Data Specialists and the Director of Data Analysis and Reporting within the Office of Technology and Strategic Services (OTSS). Data is extracted from the SharePoint database and analyzed for accuracy, consistency, and completeness.



The analysis includes year-to-year comparisons of dispute resolution data to identify patterns in the number and type of complaints, mediations, and due process hearings both statewide and across local educational agencies (LEAs). The team examines outliers and variations across districts, monitors changes in resolution timelines and outcomes, and determines whether state performance targets have been met or not met. Instances of slippage are also reviewed to assess contributing factors and develop appropriate corrective actions or technical assistance supports.

Findings from the data analysis are shared with the Director of Policy and Practice, the Director of the Office of Parent Engagement and Support, and other OSE leadership to guide programmatic decisions, policy updates, and stakeholder communication. The final analysis results are incorporated into the State Performance Plan/Annual Performance Report (SPP/APR) and reviewed by the Executive Director prior to submission to the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP).

[**Response to OSEP-Required Actions:**](#)

When the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) releases required actions within the finalized State Performance Plan/Annual Performance Report (SPP/APR) and OSEP determinations, the Education Program Administrator for Data and Reporting/Part B Data Manager and Data and Reporting Data Specialists review the feedback to identify areas requiring clarification or correction.

The Education Program Administrator for Data and Reporting/Part B Data Manager coordinates an internal review meeting with the Executive Director, the Director of Policy and Practice, and the Director of the Office of Parent Engagement and Support to discuss OSEP's required actions and recommendations. During this review, assigned staff determine the steps needed to address each concern, designate responsible team members, and establish a timeline for response and implementation.

The Data and Reporting Data Specialists assist in compiling supporting documentation, revising data tables, or providing additional narrative as requested by OSEP. The Director of Data Analysis and Reporting within the Office of Technology and Strategic Services (OTSS) supports this process by verifying any necessary data corrections or resubmissions.

Once all responses are prepared, the Education Program Administrator for Data and Reporting/Part B Data Manager consolidates the documentation and drafts the state's official response. The response is reviewed and approved by the Executive Director, Office of Special Education, prior to submission to OSEP.



Internal Approval Process:

The Mississippi Department of Education (MDE), Office of Special Education (OSE), follows a structured internal review and approval process to ensure the accuracy, completeness, and quality of all data and narrative components submitted in the State Performance Plan/Annual Performance Report (SPP/APR).

The Education Program Administrator for Data and Reporting/Part B Data Manager coordinates the compilation of indicator data, narratives, and supporting documentation in collaboration with the Data and Reporting Data Specialists and the Director of Data Analysis and Reporting within the Office of Technology and Strategic Services (OTSS). Once the data are validated and narratives drafted, the Directors of Policy and Practice and the Office of Parent Engagement and Support review the content to ensure alignment with state procedures, IDEA requirements, and stakeholder input.

Following these reviews, the Education Program Administrator for Data and Reporting/Part B Data Manager submits the completed SPP/APR components to the Executive Director, Office of Special Education, for final approval and certification. The Executive Director provides official sign-off prior to submission to the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP).

This internal review and approval process occurs during November through January each year, ensuring adequate time for revision, quality control, and coordination across offices prior to the annual federal submission deadline of February 1.

Submission:

Data for this indicator are prepopulated in the online SPP/APR submission tool based on validated state submissions. The Director of Data Analysis and Reporting within the Office of Technology and Strategic Services (OTSS) verifies the prefilled data against the final validated dataset maintained in SharePoint and the state's Access database to ensure consistency and accuracy.

The Education Program Administrator for Data and Reporting/Part B Data Manager reviews the data entries and accompanying narratives, confirming alignment with statewide analyses, trends, and targets. Any discrepancies identified are addressed collaboratively between the Data and Reporting Data Specialists and OTSS prior to certification.

Once all data and narratives are verified, the Executive Director, Office of Special Education, is the authorized official responsible for certifying and submitting the final SPP/APR report to the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP), through the online SPP/APR submission tool.



Clarification:

Approximately 60 days after submission of the State Performance Plan/Annual Performance Report (SPP/APR), the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) may issue clarification requests to the Mississippi Department of Education (MDE). These requests are sent to the Executive Director, Office of Special Education, who coordinates the agency's response.

Upon receipt, the Education Program Administrator for Data and Reporting/Part B Data Manager reviews all clarification items and assigns sections to the appropriate Data and Reporting Data Specialists and program directors for input. The Director of Data Analysis and Reporting within the Office of Technology and Strategic Services (OTSS) supports this process by verifying any data corrections or updates needed in SharePoint or the Access database.

The Director of Policy and Practice and the Director of the Office of Parent Engagement and Support review draft responses to ensure alignment with state policies, procedures, and stakeholder engagement processes. The Education Program Administrator for Data and Reporting/Part B Data Manager compiles all input into an internal clarification chart that includes each OSEP comment and the state's proposed response.

Once finalized, the clarification responses are reviewed and approved by the Executive Director, Office of Special Education, who is the authorized official responsible for submitting the state's response to OSEP within the designated clarification window.

Data Governance:

The Mississippi Department of Education (MDE) follows a formal Data Governance process outlined in the agency's Data Governance Manual. This process ensures that all proposed or actual changes to data collections, reporting procedures, and system requirements are reviewed, documented, and approved prior to implementation.

The Education Program Administrator for Data and Reporting/Part B Data Manager within the Office of Special Education (OSE) is responsible for initiating requests for any modifications to the data collection process related to special education indicators. The Data and Reporting Data Specialists assist by identifying potential areas where updates or improvements may be needed based on district feedback, technical assistance activities, or changes in federal guidance.

Proposed changes are reviewed collaboratively by OSE leadership, including the Executive Director, the Director of Policy and Practice, and the Director of the Office of Parent Engagement and Support, to assess the potential impact on data accuracy, reporting requirements, and compliance with IDEA.



Once reviewed internally, the proposed change is submitted to the Office of Technology and Strategic Services (OTSS) for technical and structural evaluation. The Director of Data Analysis and Reporting and the Director of Core School Applications determine any system implications, resource needs, or required updates to SharePoint, the Access database, or related data systems.

All data collection and system changes are then presented to the MDE Change Review Board, the governing body responsible for final review and approval of data governance actions. The EDFacts Coordinators ensure that approved changes remain aligned with federal file specifications and reporting standards prior to implementation.

This structured, multi-office approach ensures that all modifications to data collections are thoroughly vetted, documented, and approved to maintain high-quality, reliable, and compliant data.

Public Reporting:

The Mississippi Department of Education (MDE), Office of Special Education (OSE), ensures public transparency and compliance with 34 C.F.R. § 300.160(f) by annually reporting the performance of each local educational agency (LEA) against the state's SPP/APR targets.

Posting Location and Format

The state's approved SPP/APR and LEA performance data are publicly posted on the MDE website under the Office of Special Education's Data and Reporting section. Reports are made available in both PDF and Excel formats to allow users to view, download, and analyze information by indicator and LEA. District Determination Reports are typically posted each spring, following OSEP's release of state determinations.

Staff Responsibilities

The Education Program Administrator for Data and Reporting/Part B Data Manager oversees the preparation of public reporting files in collaboration with the Data and Reporting Data Specialists. The Director of Data Analysis and Reporting within the Office of Technology and Strategic Services (OTSS) supports the process by extracting and verifying the final data from backend systems. Once reports are reviewed and approved by the Executive Director, Office of Special Education, the OSE requests the Office of Communications to post the files to the public website.

Accessibility and Compliance

To ensure accessibility for all users, MDE formats its public reports in compliance with Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act. Reports are created using accessible templates that include readable text, proper heading structures, and alternative text for tables or graphics. The Office of Communications, in coordination with OTSS, conducts final accessibility and usability checks before publication to confirm that all posted materials meet federal accessibility requirements.



This structured process ensures that LEA performance data are publicly available, accurate, and accessible to all stakeholders, including parents, educators, and advocacy groups.