

Indicator 8: Parent involvement

Instructions and Measurement

Monitoring Priority: FAPE in the LRE

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

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

Data Source

State selected data source.

Measurement

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

Instructions

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

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

Provide the actual numbers used in the calculation.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

8 - Indicator Data

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

Targets: Description of Stakeholder Input

Discussions and Stakeholder input of the State's Performance Plan (SPP), Annual Performance Report (APR), State's Systemic Improvement Plan (SSIP), and Results Driven Accountability (RDA)/Results Based Accountability (RBA) began in 2013 with our State Special Education Advisory Panel. The Panel is fully vested and broadly representative of Montana. Additionally, many of the panel members as well as SEA staff serve in other agency or organization leadership positions or on advisory groups in the disability community. This enables MT to draw insight and advice from a broad group of stakeholders with an understanding of Montana's unique needs, strengths, and potential weaknesses.

Other stakeholder groups we sponsor and/or engage include:

--Our Comprehensive System of Personnel Development (CSPD) includes both regional and state councils that regularly meet to assess APR data and to evaluate professional development priorities and results.

--The OPI staff has developed productive working relationships with other Montana agencies that serve youth and adults with disabilities. OPI staff participate as members of advisory councils for early childhood, vocational rehabilitation, juvenile justice, developmental disabilities, the state independent living council and the mental health divisions of the DPHHS. These connections have allowed the OPI staff to build strong working relationships with other agencies, which has resulted in multiple collaborative projects that have strengthened the commitments of all involved to working with Montana's youth to facilitate smooth transitions from birth to adulthood.

--Working with staff from TAESE, the OPI has facilitated the Montana Higher Education Consortium (HEC) for twenty years. The HEC continues to be a part of CSPD and brings together members of faculty from each of the colleges and universities teacher prep programs in Montana. Participation in the consortium is strong and includes faculty members from each of the public and private colleges in Montana. This group has worked to provide greater standardization of the teacher training programs in Montana and has worked together to improve pre-service training programs.

--The OPI staff is also engaged with the Schools Administrators of Montana (SAM) which include affiliates for Superintendents, Principals, Special Education Administrators, and Information Technology (IT) Directors. This partnership allows us to respond quickly to needs expressed in the field by school staff. We also provide SAM with a grant to help fund the Montana Recruitment Project. This program focuses on recruiting hard to fill positions such as speech/language pathologists, special education teachers, occupational therapists, and school psychologists for our districts throughout Montana.

Annually, the State Education Agency (SEA) brings together representatives from these stakeholder groups for a joint meeting facilitated by TAESE. This meeting gathers over 80 front-line stakeholders together to share up-dates of issues and gather input from a comprehensive representation of the Montana disability community, families and parents of children and students with and without disabilities. For the past seven years, the topic has been Montana's SSIP and activities have been conducted to solicit both general and specific stakeholder input. During the spring 2022 meeting, the state presented on using data within the state for Local Education Agencies (LEAs) to make decisions. This also included how to interpret the APR data.

Historical Data

Baseline Year	Baseline Data
2005	65.50%

FFY	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Target >=	70.30%	70.40%	70.50%	70.50%	70.50%
Data	66.96%	74.00%	73.88%	79.05%	73.35%

Targets

FFY	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Target >=	70.60%	70.70%	70.80%	70.90%	71.00%

FFY 2021 SPP/APR Data

Number of respondent parents who report schools facilitated parent involvement as a means of improving services and results for children with disabilities	Total number of respondent parents of children with disabilities	FFY 2020 Data	FFY 2021 Target	FFY 2021 Data	Status	Slippage
218	332	73.35%	70.60%	65.66%	Did not meet target	Slippage

Provide reasons for slippage, if applicable

Montana uses an approved sampling plan for Indicator 8. This results in differences in the data each year are based on the LEAs included in the sample.

When reviewing the data for the districts, it became apparent that the districts with the lowest response rates were our largest school district, and bigger districts on a few of the Indian Reservations. The smaller schools in the sample had higher response rates – even those on the Reservations, whereas our larger schools had the smaller response rates

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.

Parents of students with disabilities, including preschool students, are given an opportunity to complete the survey. As in previous years, in FFY2020, the survey was given to parents at the annual IEP meeting, parent-teacher conferences, and community functions; in many cases it was also sent via mail. This personalized distribution method ensured all parents received the survey; furthermore, school staff personally encouraged the parents to complete the survey. Parents of students at all grade levels, including preschool, received, and were encouraged to respond to the survey.

The number of parents to whom the surveys were distributed.

3,532

Percentage of respondent parents

9.40%

Response Rate

FFY	2020	2021
Response Rate	11.50%	9.40%

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

Montana historically has obtained high response rates from parents of children who are white and/or have learning disabilities, while getting low response rates from parents of Hispanic students, American Indian students, and students with lower incidence disabilities. To address the low response rates among these groups, the Montana OPI has hired a Family Engagement Coordinator, to work with the special education staff to encourage parents to complete the survey. Montana has also started looking into providing the survey in languages other than English to help

encourage our Spanish and Native speaking parents to complete the survey in their native language. Adding an online option will also help to reach those groups.

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

Nonresponse bias measures the differences in opinions between respondents and non-respondents in meaningful ways, such as the positivity of responses. A few things can be examined to determine nonresponse bias. One is the overall response rate. The higher the response rate, the less likely nonresponse bias will occur. Our response rate is 9.4%, which is lower than we would like. It is possible that those parents who did not respond are different in some meaningful way in their level of positivity from those who did respond. Thus, we proceeded with the next two ways for examining nonresponse bias.

Second, the representativeness of the responses can be examined. We describe this in the next section where we state: The State used statistical significance testing to determine if one group was over- or under-represented based on their response rate. Although significant differences were found in response rates by disability, race/ethnicity, and age of the child, the actual responses of these different groups of parents showed no significant differences in the overall parent involvement percentage.

Third, we can compare the responses of parents who responded early in the process to those who responded later in the process. The idea being that perhaps those who do not immediately respond are different in some meaningful way than those who respond immediately. These results showed no statistically significant differences between parents who responded earlier and parents who responded later. Therefore, we conclude that nonresponse bias is not present.

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

The State used statistical significance testing of response rates to determine if one group was over-or under-represented. Note that our survey sample was such that if all disaggregated groups have the same response rate, then, the disaggregated groups are representative of the population. For example, if all racial/ethnic groups had a 30% response rate, then the population of the respondents would mirror the actual population in terms of its racial/ethnic make-up. On the other hand, if one racial/ethnic group has a 30% response rate for example and another a 20% response rate, then the population of the respondents would not mirror the actual population in terms of its racial/ethnic make-up. Significant differences were found in response rates by disability, and race/ethnicity. In terms of disability, parents of students with a Specific Learning Disability were more likely to respond (response rate=27%) than parents of students with an Emotional Disturbance (response rate=9%). In terms of race/ethnicity, parents of White students were more likely to respond (response rate=79%) than parents of Hispanic students (response rate=5%). Although there are a few significant differences in response rates between groups of parents by race/ethnicity, primary disability, and age group, there were no significant differences in the parent involvement percentage itself between these groups of parents. For example, parents of white students had a similar parent involvement percentage as parents of Hispanic students. So, we are confident that the overall results are representative of the State despite the differences in response rates. Furthermore, parents from a wide range of districts from across the state responded to the survey. Thus, the results are representative of all racial/ethnic groups and all disability categories and reflect the population of parents in terms of geographic distribution.

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

NO

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

Montana historically has gotten high response rates from parents of children who are white and/or have learning disabilities, while getting low response rates from parents of Hispanic students, American Indian students, and students with lower incidence disabilities. The American Indian and Hispanic populations in Montana are the second and third largest racial/ethnic subgroups. However, they still account for less than 10% of the total population of students surveyed. Given this, even having one or two surveys from that subgroup not returned will lower the representative rate for that group. To help increase the representativeness in this indicator, and overall, the participation of these subgroups in the educational process, the Montana OPI has hired a Family Engagement Coordinator. The Family Engagement Coordinator will work with the special education unit to specifically reach out to low response rates groups in districts to encourage parents to complete the survey. Montana has also started looking into providing the survey in languages other than English to help encourage our Spanish and Native speaking parents to complete the survey in their native language. Adding an online option will also help to reach those groups.

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

Statistical significance testing of response rate was used to determine representativeness with a threshold of $p < 0.05$.

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

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

The OPI employed a sampling methodology to gather data for this indicator. The sampling process was conducted in accord with the OPI's five-year compliance monitoring cycle. The cycle annually ensures statewide representation of LEAs through representation of large, small, urban, and rural LEAs and a broad representation of parents of children with disabilities across the spectrum of disabilities. All parents of children with disabilities within the schools identified in the monitoring cycle are included in the sample. At the end of the five-year cycle, all parents of children with disabilities will have had an opportunity to respond to the survey instrument. The sampling methodology was reviewed by the Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) and in an e-mail received from Larry Wexler, Deputy Director of Monitoring and State Improvement Planning on it was stated, "...Thank you for your letter dated March 29, 2006, in which you provided additional information on how Montana plans to collect baseline data for performance indicator eight of your State Performance Plan. Your sampling plan for Indicator eight, as revised, is consistent with the State Performance Plan sampling directions..."

Montana reviewed its sampling plan based on a review of data from the October 2021 Child Count, and Enrollment Count. The data showed the following:

- There are 399 operating districts (as of July 1, 2021) in MT (64 K-12 Districts, 235 Elementary Districts, 98 High School Districts, 2 State Operated Programs);
- There are no districts with more than 50,000 enrolled students;
- 216 (based on October 2021 enrollment count) districts have an enrollment of fewer than 200 students; and
- There are a total of 20,014 special education students ages 3-21 (October 2021 Child Count).
- Because the vast majority of the districts have very small enrollments, 317 of the districts are grouped into one of twenty-one special education cooperatives. The cooperative structure ensures all districts have access to the full range of instructional and related services to address free appropriate public education (FAPE).

Based on that review, Montana determined that:

- For districts monitored during the 2022-2023 school year, the Part B Parent Involvement Survey will be administered in Spring 2022;
- For districts monitored in subsequent school years, the Parent Involvement Survey will be administered in the spring prior to their monitoring year. For example, the Parent Involvement Survey will be administered in spring 2023 for districts monitored during the 2023-2024 school year. This will allow survey results to be used during the monitoring process; and
- All parents of children with disabilities in the districts scheduled within each monitoring cycle will be asked to complete a survey.

Reasons for tying the Parent Involvement Survey to the monitoring cycle and administering the survey to all parents of children with disabilities:

- The Division of Special Education determined that the monitoring cycle would be the best way to reach parents of children with disabilities in a systematic manner. Aligning the districts to be surveyed with the districts to be monitored will allow for seamless integration of information concerning parent involvement with the compliance monitoring process. Furthermore, the results obtained from the survey will have a direct benefit for both parents and districts since they can actively utilize the data obtained from their districts to improve results. Additionally, by linking the distribution of the survey to those districts scheduled for an upcoming monitoring visit, it is anticipated that Montana schools will be actively involved in encouraging a high return rate of parent responses;
- The Special Education unit chose not to limit the survey to a sample of parents from each district. This is because of the small numbers of special education students at many districts and wanting to give all parents an opportunity to respond. If not all parents had an opportunity to complete the survey, this would degrade the acceptance of results by the districts; and
- The same survey will be used for both Part B parents and Part B 619 parents. Most of the issues critical to parents of children age 6-21 are the same as those that are critical to parents of children age 3-5. Using the same survey will enable results to be compared across the entire Part B age range and will allow for ease and efficiency of the data collection process.

Since the approval of this plan in March 2006, the methodology has not changed. The demographics of the districts are reviewed approximately every 4 years to determine if changes need to be made to the monitoring cycle to continue to ensure representativeness. Free and Reduced Lunch status is no longer looked at, as it is not used for any other special education data reviews.

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

Provide additional information about this indicator (optional)

8 - Prior FFY Required Actions

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

With the FFY 2021 APR, the State must submit its sampling plan and provide data consistent with the approved sampling plan.

Response to actions required in FFY 2020 SPP/APR

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- All parents of children with disabilities in the districts scheduled within each monitoring cycle will be asked to complete a survey.

Reasons for tying the Parent Involvement Survey to the monitoring cycle and administering the survey to all parents of children with disabilities:

- The Division of Special Education determined that the monitoring cycle would be the best way to reach parents of children with disabilities in a systematic manner. Aligning the districts to be surveyed with the districts to be monitored will allow for seamless integration of information concerning parent involvement with the compliance monitoring process. Furthermore, the results obtained from the survey will have a direct benefit for both parents and districts since they can actively utilize the data obtained from their districts to improve results. Additionally, by linking the distribution of the survey to those districts scheduled for an upcoming monitoring visit, it is anticipated that Montana schools will be actively involved in encouraging a high return rate of parent responses;
- The Special Education unit chose not to limit the survey to a sample of parents from each district. This is because of the small numbers of special education students at many districts and wanting to give all parents an opportunity to respond. If not all parents had an opportunity to complete the survey, this would degrade the acceptance of results by the districts; and
- The same survey will be used for both Part B parents and Part B 619 parents. Most of the issues critical to parents of children age 6-21 are the same as those that are critical to parents of children age 3-5. Using the same survey will enable results to be compared across the entire Part B age range and will allow for ease and efficiency of the data collection process.

Since the approval of this plan in March 2006, the methodology has not changed. The demographics of the districts are reviewed approximately every 4 years to determine if changes need to be made to the monitoring cycle to continue to ensure representativeness. Free and Reduced Lunch status is no longer looked at, as it is not used for any other special education data reviews.

8 - OSEP Response

OSEP's response to the State's initial FFY 2021 SPP/APR submission required the State to submit a revised sampling plan for this indicator by June 1, 2023. The State has submitted a revised plan and OSEP will respond under separate cover.

8 - Required Actions

In the FFY 2022 SPP/APR, the State must report whether the FFY 2022 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.