



Montana Office of Public Instruction - Special Education
 Board of Public Education Annual Report
 September, 2023

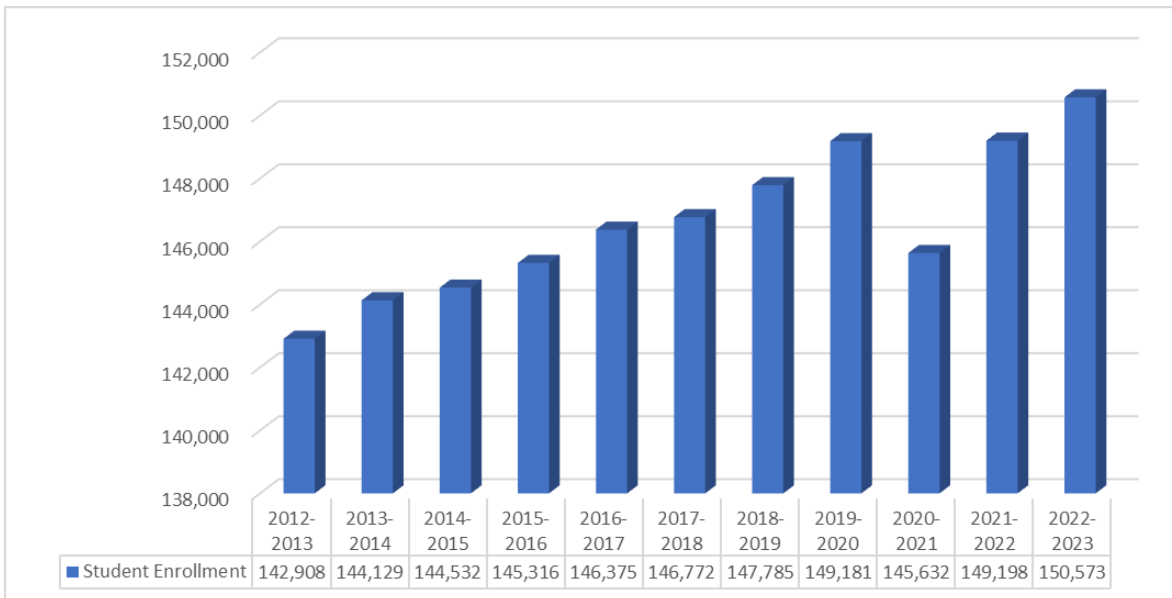
Who are Montana’s Students with Disabilities?

Student Population

In 2021–22, the number of students ages 3–21 who received special education and/or related services under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) was 7.3 million, or the equivalent of **15 percent** of all public school students. (*National Center for Education Statistics*)

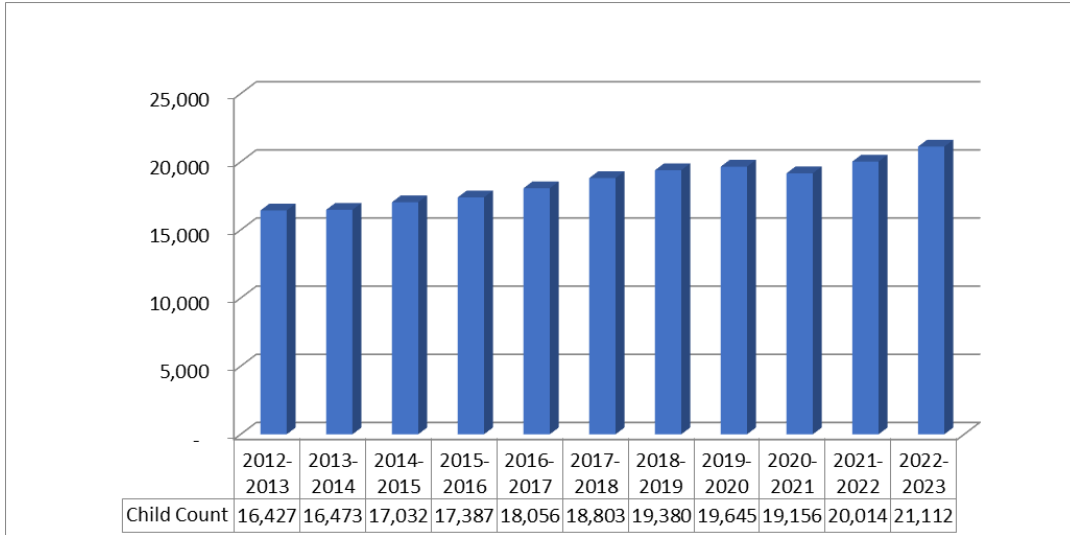
- **14 percent** of Montana’s students are served under IDEA.
- Total student enrollment in 17/18 - 146,772
- Total student enrollment in 22/23 - 150,573 (2.59% increase)
- Enrollment of students with disabilities in 17/18 - 18,803
- Enrollment of students with disabilities in 22/23 - 21,112 (**12.28% increase**)

Montana Total Student Enrollment





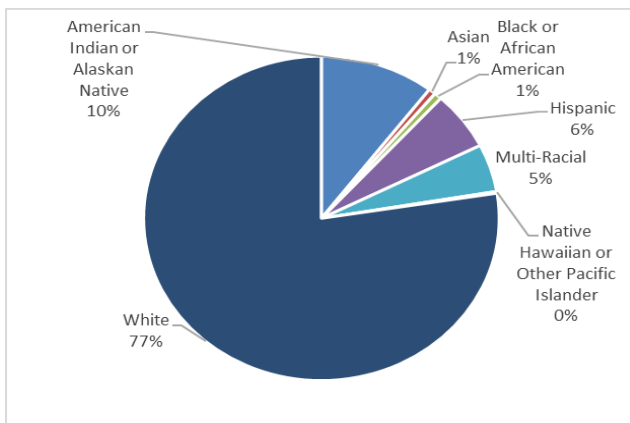
Montana Enrollment of Students with Disabilities



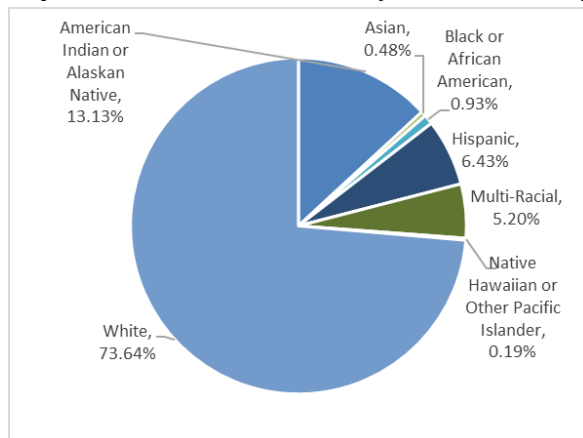
Special Education Student Demographics

Montana’s students with disabilities are proportionally represented across the state, except for one area. American Indian students account for a 3.13% higher rate of the special education student population than the state student population. Conversely, a lesser percentage of the special education population is white.

Enrollment Count by Race/Ethnicity 2022-2023



Special Education Count by Race/Ethnicity



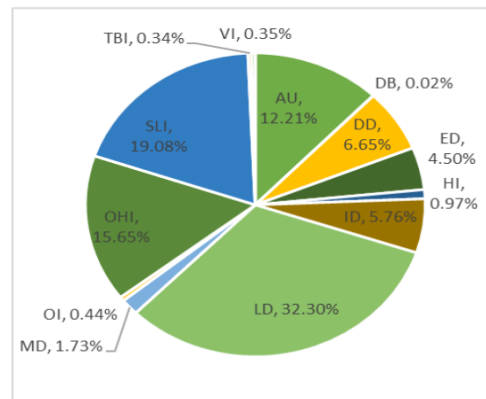


Student Disability Categories

- Students with more than one identified disability (not those reported as deaf-blind or developmental delay) must be listed as having multiple disabilities (MD) when federally reported.
- Montana does not have an MD category for eligibility, nor is a primary disability identified. The purpose of this is to recognize all disabilities that are reported.
 - e.g. Autism (AU) and the difference between state and national rates.
 - Montana students identified as AU and another disability category are reported in the federal data collection as MD.

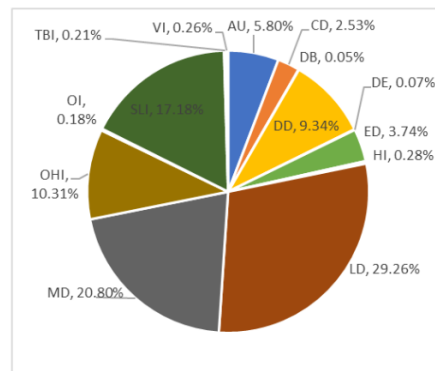
United States Special Education Child Count by Disability Category

Cognitive Delay (CD)
 Deaf-Blindness (DB)
 Developmental Delay (DD)
 Deaf (DE)
 Emotional Disturbance (ED)
 Hearing Impairment (HI)
 Learning Disability (LD)
 Multiple Disabilities (MD)
 Other Health Impairment (OHI)
 Orthopedic Impairment (OI)
 Speech-Language Impairment (SLI)
 Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI)
 Visual Impairment (VI)



Montana Special Education Child Count by Disability Category 2021 - 2022

Cognitive Delay (CD)
 Deaf-Blindness (DB)
 Developmental Delay (DD)
 Deaf (DE)
 Emotional Disturbance (ED)
 Hearing Impairment (HI)
 Learning Disability (LD)
 Multiple Disabilities (MD)
 Other Health Impairment (OHI)
 Orthopedic Impairment (OI)
 Speech-Language Impairment (SLI)
 Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI)
 Visual Impairment (VI)





Special Education Child Count by Disability Category SFY2018 to SFY2023

- One significant increase is in the Developmental Delay (DD) category. This is largely due to the age expansion of this eligibility category in 2018 from age 6 to age 9.
- Speech Language Impairment (SLI) is down from Pre-COVID numbers.

| | 2018 | 2019 | 2020 | 2021 | 2022 | 2023 |
|-----------------------------------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|
| Autism (AU) | 5.15% | 5.23% | 5.58% | 5.67% | 5.70% | 5.80% |
| Cognitive Delay (CD) | 3.10% | 2.99% | 2.95% | 2.87% | 2.69% | 2.53% |
| Deaf-Blindness (DB) | 0.03% | 0.03% | 0.03% | 0.04% | 0.03% | 0.05% |
| Developmental Delay (DD) | 3.78% | 4.07% | 4.27% | 6.51% | 8.14% | 9.34% |
| Deaf (DE) | 0.09% | 0.10% | 0.08% | 0.06% | 0.06% | 0.07% |
| Emotional Disturbance (ED) | 4.52% | 4.57% | 4.62% | 4.47% | 4.08% | 3.74% |
| Hearing Impairment (HI) | 0.37% | 0.31% | 0.32% | 0.34% | 0.30% | 0.28% |
| Learning Disability (LD) | 29.97% | 30.20% | 30.14% | 29.61% | 29.72% | 29.26% |
| Multiple Disabilities (MD) | 20.16% | 20.56% | 21.21% | 21.03% | 21.13% | 20.80% |





| | | | | | | |
|---|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|
| Other Health Impairment (OHI) | 12.13% | 11.99% | 11.57% | 11.23% | 10.66% | 10.31% |
| Orthopedic Impairment (OI) | 0.23% | 0.24% | 0.21% | 0.20% | 0.19% | 0.18% |
| Speech-Language Impairment (SLI) | 19.89% | 19.13% | 18.45% | 17.39% | 16.81% | 17.18% |
| Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) | 0.27% | 0.28% | 0.27% | 0.29% | 0.23% | 0.21% |
| Visual Impairment (VI) | 0.31% | 0.31% | 0.30% | 0.29% | 0.24% | 0.26% |

Special Education Cooperatives

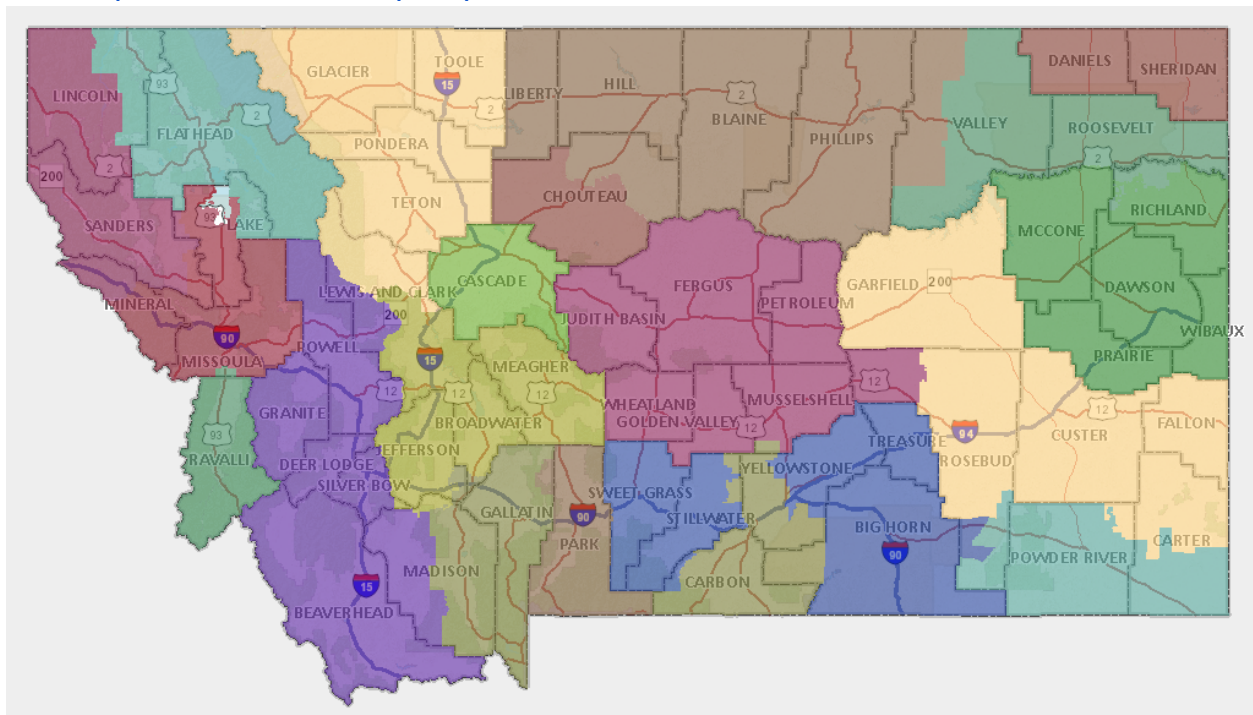
Special Education Cooperatives play a vital role in providing services to Montana’s students with disabilities. There are **399** districts operating special education programs. **319 (80%)** of those districts utilize the cooperative structure. The districts contract with their local cooperative to provide services like school psychologists, speech pathologists, and physical therapists, amongst others.

- Number of Cooperatives - 21
 - Bear Paw Cooperative
 - Big Country Cooperative
 - Big Sky Special Needs Cooperative
 - Bitterroot Valley Cooperative
 - Cabinet Mountain Cooperative
 - Central Mt. Learn. Res. Ctr.
 - Chouteau Cooperative Joint Service
 - E. Yellowstone Sp. Serv. Cooperative
 - Flathead Special Ed. Cooperative





- Gallatin/Madison Cooperative
- Great Divide Ed. Serv.
- Missoula Area Education Cooperative
- North Ctr. Learn. Res. Ctr.
- Park County Cooperative
- Prairie View Cooperative
- Prickly Pear Cooperative
- Roose-Valley Sp. Ed. Cooperative
- Sheridan/Daniels Cooperative
- Stillwater/Sweetgrass County Cooperative
- Tri County Cooperative
- Yellowstone-West/Carbon County Special Services Cooperative
- [Special Education Coop Map](#)





- Special Education Students in Cooperative Districts - Total = 6,490

| Cooperative Name | SFY2023 Child Count |
|--------------------------------|---------------------|
| Bear Paw Coop. | 512 |
| Big Country Coop. | 234 |
| Big Sky Special Needs Coop. | 383 |
| Bitterroot Valley Coop. | 405 |
| Cabinet Mountain Coop. | 358 |
| Central Mt. Learn. Res. Ctr. | 465 |
| Chouteau Co. Joint Service | 64 |
| E. Yellowstone Sp. Serv. Coop. | 264 |
| Flathead Special Ed. Coop. | 395 |
| Gallatin/Madison Coop. | 196 |
| Great Divide Educ. Serv. | 557 |
| Missoula Area Education Coop. | 636 |
| North Ctrl. Learn. Res. Ctr. | 180 |
| Park County Coop. | 56 |
| Prairie View Coop. | 141 |
| Prickly Pear Coop. | 583 |





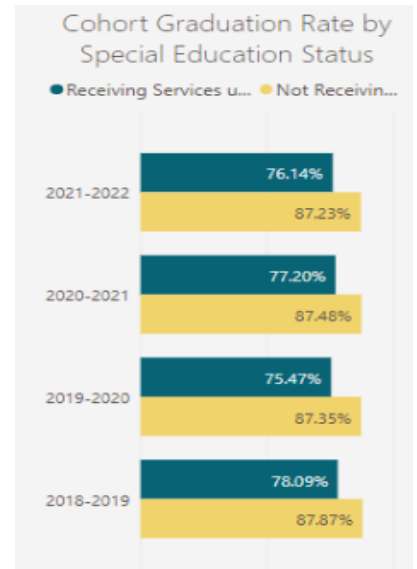
| | |
|------------------------------|-------|
| Roose-Valley Sp. Ed. Coop. | 111 |
| Sheridan/Daniels Coop. | 139 |
| Stillwater/Swt Grass Coop. | 246 |
| Tri County Coop.. | 34 |
| Yellowstone W. Carbon County | 531 |
| Non-Coop Districts | 14622 |
| State total | 21112 |



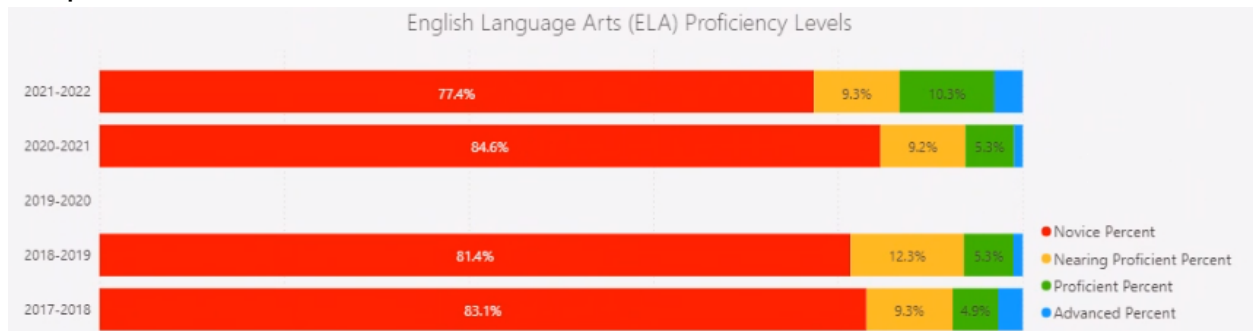


Special Education Achievement

- Graduation Rates - Montana's special education students are graduating at a slightly higher rate (76.14%) than the national average (75%).
- Montana's Special Education Proficiency Rates
 - ELA - 13.3% (significant increase from pre-COVID)
 - Math - 7% (slight increase from pre-COVID)
- Montana's Special Education Proficiency Rates for American Indian Students
 - ELA - 5.7% (significant increase from pre-COVID)
 - Math - 0% (losing nearing proficiency group)
- Math has been identified as an area for growth. The agency is taking steps to address these concerns.
 - One example is the Math Innovation Zones.
 - The CSPD regions put on a variety of professional development opportunities throughout the year. See the full report for more information on those offerings.
 - The State Systemic Improvement Plan (SSIP) is expanding to include a focus on improving student outcomes in math.

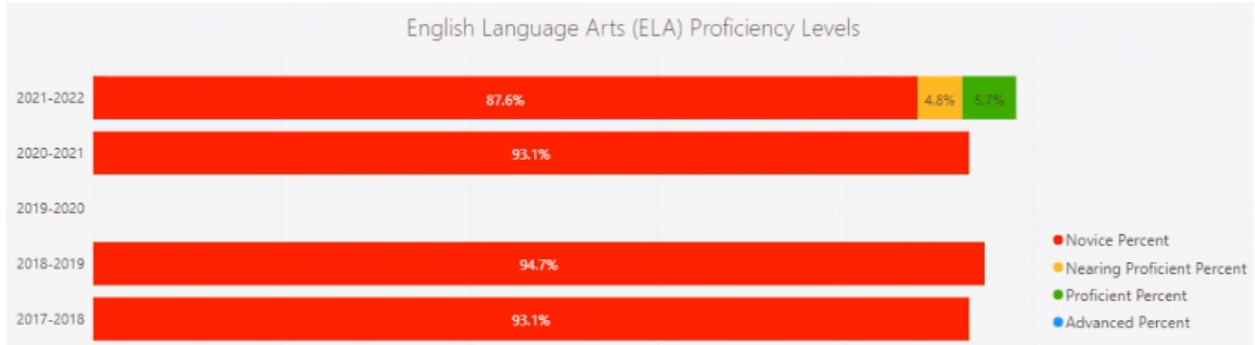


All Special Education Students

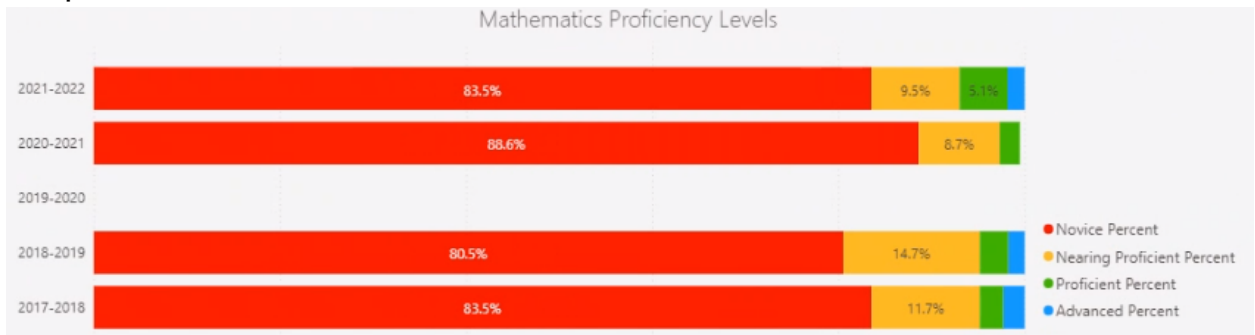




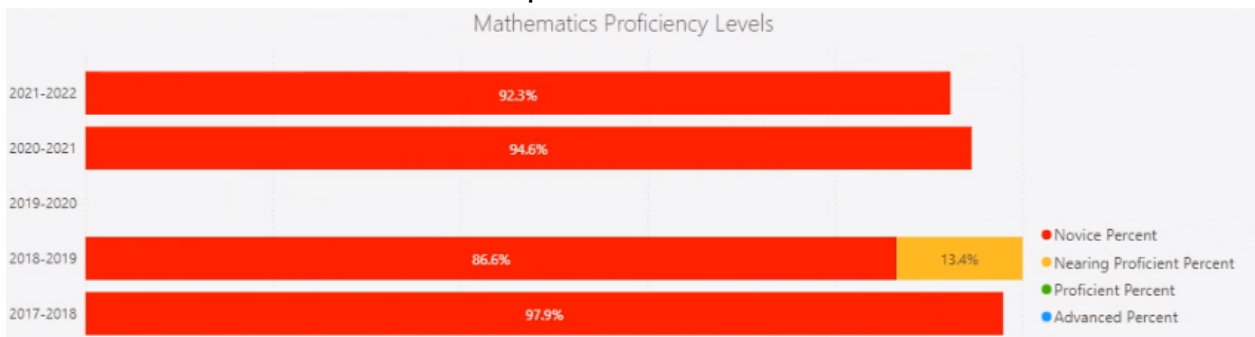
American Indian or Alaskan Native Special Education Students



All Special Education Students



American Indian or Alaskan Native Special Education Students





Federal Funding for Montana's Special Education Students

In FFY 2023, Montana has been awarded \$46,076,359 in IDEA funds.

- 11% of those funds are utilized for state level activities such as:
 - Staffing and administration of IDEA at the OPI
 - Dispute Resolution
 - Monitoring of LEAs
 - Infinite Campus - Student Information System
 - Alternate Assessment for students with severe needs
 - Discretionary grants to higher education institutions to support recruitment and retention of special education and related services staff.
- \$40,996,539 is allocated to Montana's 399 districts that receive IDEA funds.

IDEA Preschool Funds: \$1,315,398

- 100% of these funds are passed on to the LEAs.





Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) DMS 2.0 Monitoring Visit - June 2023

The Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) staff visited the OPI the last week of June. The OSEP had been reviewing documents provided by the OPI special education staff, materials available on the department's website, and visiting with stakeholders from different regions of the state prior to the on-site visit in June. This is the first time the Special Education Department has been fully monitored by the OSEP since 2009. The OPI will not receive the final report from the OSEP staff for at least another month. The OPI special education staff is working with our technical assistance providers, who also attended the on-site monitoring, to develop and implement an action plan regarding items discussed with the OSEP staff at the summary meeting on the last day of on-site monitoring.

The OPI will not receive the official report from the OSEP for quite some time, but here are a few items to note.

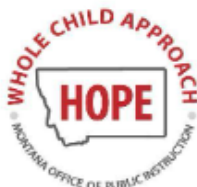
Commendations

- The teamwork the agency's staff displayed in preparation for, and during, the visit was recognized by the OSEP monitoring team.
- A quality process for IEP compliance monitoring is in place.
- Positive feedback from stakeholders regarding the OPI's special education staff, their knowledge, and willingness to help.

Areas of Focus/Growth

Fiscal Monitoring

- Increase monitoring rigor - a more detailed review of LEAs policies and procedures.
- Review/Revise calculation for proportionate share.
- *The OPI staff have already started the process of developing a self-assessment budget check for LEAs.*





Program Monitoring

- Compliance monitoring is working. The agency needs to expand the monitoring process beyond LEAs being compliant in their evaluation process and construction of the IEP to a more integrated monitoring process. Part of this is the fiscal monitoring piece mentioned above.
- Incorporate processes to ensure LEAs are providing the services listed in the IEP during the monitoring process.

Stakeholder Feedback

- Provide clarity in documentation around the evaluation process not being delayed due to a school trying to implement interventions, the MTSS model, or the state's Early Assistance Program.
- Continue to build relationships and collaborate with the parent advocacy centers.
- Indicator 8 Sampling Plan - Annual Survey Gathering Parent/Guardian Input
 - The process has been to send surveys by mail to the schools, to then be distributed to the families of students with disabilities.
 - These surveys are sent out to the schools that are on the monitoring schedule for the year (approximately 20%), and the return rate is very low.
 - *The OPI is beginning the process of switching to a digital survey that will be able to be delivered to all families of students with disabilities each year. The goal is increasing response rate to ensure the data is valid and actionable, resulting in the agency being able to utilize the data to improve outcomes for students.*

Data

- Review calculation of significant disproportionality. Collaborate with stakeholders.
- Create/review/update data protocols to document the OPI processes and procedures for collecting, validating, reporting, and using IDEA data.

State Systemic Improvement Plan (SSIP)

- Update SSIP Logic Model.
- Expand impact.
 - *Work has already started with the agency's SSIP Coordinator and technical assistance center to include math achievement as part of the SSIP.*





Report Prepared By: Patrick Cates - Senior Manager, Student Support Services
Dani McCarthy - Fiscal & Reporting Manager, Special Education
Anne Rainey - IDEA Part B Data Manager, Special Education

Montana's OPI Special Education Team

General Information for Special Education, Meetings and Events: [Kelley Brown](#), 406-444-5661

Contracts and Payments: [Ty House](#), 406-444-2504

School Improvement Supports

Unit Manager [John Gorton](#), 406-459-4281
School Improvement Specialist [Mercee Cislo](#), 406-437-2369
School Improvement Specialist [Alicia Herman](#), 406-438-1363
School Improvement Specialist [Katie Mattingley](#), 406-437-3874
School Improvement Specialist [Chris McCrea](#), 406-444-3864
School Improvement Specialist [Desiree Johnson](#), 406-431-1081

Early Childhood Education

Early Learning Specialist, Special Education Preschool [Lucy Beltz](#)

Additional Supports

Early Assistance Program & Dispute Resolution [Mandi Gibbs](#), 406-444-5664
Paralegal [Angie Griner](#), 406-444-2046
Continuing Education, Stipend Programs [Annette Vicedo Young](#), 406-444-0299

Continuing Education and Technical Assistance

Unit Manager [Tammy Lysons](#), 406-431-2309
Montana Autism Education Program [Doug Doty](#), 406-459-5303
GT/MTSS Program Support Specialist [Jackie Ronning](#), 406-438-0522
Program Support Specialist [Anne Carpenter](#), 406-465-0922

Data Systems and Reporting

IDEA Part B Data Manager [Anne Rainey](#), 406-444-4430
AIM Special Education Data System, Behavior Data [Shara Blair](#), 406-444-0685

Administration

State Special Education Director [JP Williams](#), 406-444-4426
Fiscal Management [Danni McCarthy](#), 406-444-0452

