

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 3 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 2022 SPP/APR, compare the FFY 2022 response rate to the FFY 2021 response rate) and describe strategies that will be implemented which are expected to increase the response rate, particularly for those groups that are underrepresented.

The State must also analyze the response rate to identify potential nonresponse bias and take steps to reduce any identified bias and promote response from a broad cross-section of parents of children with disabilities.

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:

1) 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.

- 2) The State Education Agency (SEA) staff has developed strong working relationships with other Montana agencies that serve youth and adults with disabilities. The SEA staff participate as members of advisory councils for early childhood, vocational rehabilitation, low incidence disabilities, developmental disabilities, and the state independent living council. This has strengthened the commitments of the agencies working with Montana's youth to facilitate smooth transitions from birth to adulthood.
- 3) Working with the Technical Assistance for Excellence in Special Education (TAESE) staff, the SEA has facilitated the Montana Higher Education Consortium (HEC). The HEC provides a mechanism for collaboration, networking, discussion, and advising of critical issues among Montana Institutes of Higher Education. The consortium works towards encouraging a more seamless educational system and merging general and special education into one unified system; understanding and promoting the use of evidence-based academic and behavioral strategies; and closely linking Montana teacher training and educational leadership programs to early childhood programs, K-12 education, and the SEA.
- 4) The SEA staff is engaged with the Schools Administrators of Montana (SAM) which include affiliates for Superintendents, Principals, Special Education Administrators, and Information Technology (IT) Directors. This partnership gives the SEA the opportunity to develop collaborative partnerships with the Local Education Agencies (LEAs). The SEA also provides 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.
- 5) Annually, the SEA brings together representatives from various stakeholder groups for a joint meeting facilitated by TAESE. This meeting brings stakeholders together to share up-dates and gather input from each other. There is a comprehensive representation of the Montana disability community, families and parents of children and students with and without disabilities.

During the FFY22 reporting period, the Student Support Services Senior Manager met with the parents and community members of the Montana School for the Deaf & Blind (MSDB) to start creating a graduate profile. In addition, our Early Assistance Program (EAP) Director presented to the parents of MSDB on the IDEA Framework (state purposes), general supervisory responsibilities and OPI's role as an SEA. The EAP Director also provided information on dispute resolution options and where at the OPI parents could go for technical assistance.

The Montana Empowerment Center and the OPI conducted various virtual presentations for parents of students with disabilities birth through age 21 and LEA staff. During the reporting period, the OPI presented on Present Levels of Academic Achievement Functional Performance (PLAAFPs), Measurable Annual Goals (MAGs), Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS), transitions, early childhood, and extended school year. Superintendent Arntzen hosted multiple community events in four geographically diverse cities across the state in December of 2022. Parents listened to the goals of legislators for education and then had the opportunity to ask questions of the legislators. Throughout the reporting period, OPI provided numerous virtual trainings for parents regarding student and school safety and supporting youth with ASD and other developmental disorders.

Annually, the OPI assists with the Montana Youth Transitions (MYT) Conference. The OPI team works in conjunction with MYT to present, coach, and mentor educators, parents, and students. This conference brings together the transition team of youth, parents, and professionals to learn strategies and resources to build a seamless transition plan from high school to the adult world. One parent stated the following, "This was my first time at the conference, and I had no idea there were so many things out there to help my son. The sessions on parenting techniques and educational tools were eye-opening, and I feel more equipped to support my child's learning journey."

Historical Data

Baseline Year	Baseline Data
2005	65.50%

FFY	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Target >=	70.40%	70.50%	70.50%	70.50%	70.60%
Data	74.00%	73.88%	79.05%	73.35%	65.66%

Targets

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

FFY 2022 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 2021 Data	FFY 2022 Target	FFY 2022 Data	Status	Slippage
323	452	65.66%	70.70%	71.46%	Met target	No Slippage

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 FFY2022, 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 survey that parents of preschool students receive is identical to the survey that parents of K-12 students receive. And as mentioned, the same distribution methods are used for both groups of parents. The data analysis method used for both groups of parents is identical. Therefore, the combined data from preschool and K-12 surveys are valid and reliable.

The number of parents to whom the surveys were distributed.

4,364

Percentage of respondent parents

10.36%

Response Rate

FFY	2021	2022
Response Rate	9.40%	10.36%

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

The metric used to determine representativeness is +/-3 discrepancy in the proportion of responders compared to target group.

Include the State's analyses of 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 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 compared the representation by race/ethnicity and primary disability in the population to the representation in the respondents using a +/- 3% criteria to identify over-or under-representativeness.

Using this methodology, differences were found by race/ethnicity and disability. The SWD population consists of 70% of Whites and 18% of American Indians; the respondents consist of 78% of Whites and 9% of American Indians. All other racial/ethnic groups were within 3% of their population. In terms of disability groups, there were six groups that exceeded the +/- 3% criteria: the SWD population consists of students with the following disabilities: 7% of Autism, 8% of Developmental Delay, 30% of Specific Learning Disability, 21% of Multiple Disabilities, 10% of Other Health Impairments, 17% of Speech/Language Impairment; the respondents consist of: 15% Autism, 5% of Developmental Delay, 24% of Specific Learning Disability, 18% of Multiple Disabilities, 5% of Other Health Impairments, 20% of Speech/Language Impairment. All other disabilities were within 3% of their population.

The demographics of the children for whom parents are 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, having one or two surveys from that subgroup not returned will lower the representative rate for that group.

Beginning with the FFY2023 APR, Montana is implementing an electronic survey rather than paper, and will be moving from a

sample of parents to a census. The SEA believes this will allow us to reach more of our underrepresented parents by allowing them to complete the survey during the annual IEP review, parent teacher conferences, or anytime throughout the year. We have also reduced the number of questions, asking targeted questions to obtain quality information from parents. These questions were developed in consultation with the Montana Empowerment Center (our OSEP Funded PTI), Disability Rights Montana, the Special Education Advisory Panel, and Special Education Directors. The survey will be provided in both English, Spanish and Braille.

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

The SEA is moving from a sample to a census survey, decreased the number of questions asked from 23 to 10, moved from paper to electronic, and have moved away from English only by adding Spanish and Braille. It is believed that more parents will be reached, such as those with English as a Second Language and our low incidence disability population. The SEA is in the process of hiring a Parent Liaison within the Special Education Division. This person will be able to assist parents in filling out the survey should they need assistance.

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 10.36%, which is higher than last year's response rate, still lower than we would like. However, 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. Although significant differences were found in response rates by race/ethnicity and disability, the actual responses of these different groups of parents showed very few or 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.

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.

Please use this link to access the description of Montana's sampling plan approved by OSEP in June 2023. This description includes charts and graphs to support the SEA's decision that cannot be included in this document.

<https://opi.mt.gov/Portals/182/Page%20Files/Special%20Education/Annual%20Performance%20Report/MontanaIndicator8SamplingPlanJune2023.pdf?ver=2023-12-14-101114-940>

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 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.

Response to actions required in FFY 2021 SPP/APR

This information can be found in the "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.”

8 - OSEP Response

In its narrative the State reported, “[p]arents of students with disabilities, including preschool students, are given an opportunity to complete the survey” and “[t]his personalized distribution method ensured all parents received the survey.” However, the State did not describe how the survey data are combined in a manner that yields valid and reliable data.

8 - Required Actions

In the FFY 2023 SPP/APR, the State must describe how the survey data are combined in a manner that yields valid and reliable data, as required by the Measurement Table.

Additionally, in the FFY 2023 SPP/APR, the State must report whether the FFY 2023 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 response data are representative of the demographics of children receiving special education services.