

Indicator 3C: Proficiency for Children with IEPs (Alternate Academic Achievement Standards)

Instructions and Measurement

Monitoring Priority: FAPE in the LRE

Results indicator: Participation and performance of children with IEPs on statewide assessments:

- A. Participation rate for children with IEPs.
- B. Proficiency rate for children with IEPs against grade level academic achievement standards.
- C. Proficiency rate for children with IEPs against alternate academic achievement standards.
- D. Gap in proficiency rates for children with IEPs and all students against grade level academic achievement standards.

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

Data Source

3C. Same data as used for reporting to the Department under Title I of the ESEA, using ED*Facts* file specifications FS175 and 178.

Measurement

C. Proficiency rate percent = [(# of children with IEPs scoring at or above proficient against alternate academic achievement standards) divided by the (total # of children with IEPs who received a valid score and for whom a proficiency level was assigned for the alternate assessment)]. Calculate separately for reading and math. Calculate separately for grades 4, 8, and high school. The proficiency rate includes both children with IEPs enrolled for a full academic year and those not enrolled for a full academic year.

Instructions

Describe the results of the calculations and compare the results to the targets. Provide the actual numbers used in the calculation.

Include information regarding where to find public reports of assessment participation and performance results, as required by 34 CFR §300.160(f), i.e., a link to the Web site where these data are reported.

Indicator 3C: Proficiency calculations in this SPP/APR must result in proficiency rates for children with IEPs on the alternate assessment in reading/language arts and mathematics assessments (separately) in each of the following grades: 4, 8, and high school, including both children with IEPs enrolled for a full academic year and those not enrolled for a full academic year. Only include children with disabilities who had an IEP at the time of testing.

3C - Indicator Data

Historical Data:

Subject	Group	Group Name	Baseline Year	Baseline Data
Reading	A	Grade 4	2018	48.33%
Reading	B	Grade 8	2018	41.75%
Reading	C	Grade HS	2018	51.11%
Math	A	Grade 4	2018	50.85%
Math	B	Grade 8	2018	45.63%
Math	C	Grade HS	2018	43.33%

Targets

Subject	Group	Group Name	2023	2024	2025
Reading	A >=	Grade 4	48.80%	48.90%	50.00%
Reading	B >=	Grade 8	42.10%	42.20%	42.30%
Reading	C >=	Grade HS	51.50%	51.60%	51.70%
Math	A >=	Grade 4	51.30%	51.40%	51.50%
Math	B >=	Grade 8	46.10%	46.20%	46.30%
Math	C >=	Grade HS	43.80%	43.90%	44.00%

Targets: Description of Stakeholder Input

The Special Education Advisory Panel (SEAP) in Montana has been in existence since 2013. The SEAP is made up of 17 members, nine of whom are parents of students with disabilities. The panel is fully vested and broadly representative of Montana. Many of the panel members serve in other agency or organization leadership positions or on advisory councils as the voice of students with disabilities. This enables the SEA to draw insight and advice from a diverse group of stakeholders with an understanding of Montana's unique needs and strengths.

In the 2023/2024 school year, the SEA asked for input on Indicators 8 and 14 from the SEAP, the Special Education Directors, Educational Advocates, and the Weekly Superintendent's Hour. The SEA presented information on Indicator 8 regarding moving from a paper and pencil, sample, 23 question survey to an electronic, census, 10 question survey. All four entities agreed with the SEA's proposal.

The SEA asked the SEAP and Special Education Directors to weigh in on Indicator 14. The SEA proposed changing two questions and set new targets. Based on the information provided from stakeholders, the SEA did change the two questions and set new targets for Indicator 14.

In the spring of every school year, the SEA brings together parents, Montana’s Parent Training and Information center the Montana Empowerment Center (MEC), the SEAP, and other state agencies for a joint stakeholder meeting. During this meeting the SEA reviews the APR submitted in February. The SEA asks for suggestions on how to potentially improve the outcomes of the indicators along with doing a data drill down of the state data and district level data.

In addition to the above-mentioned stakeholders, the SEA worked with many other stakeholder groups that support students with disabilities. Those groups include but are not limited to:
 Montana Council for Exceptional Children (MCEC) – presented on updates at the SEA, national level, and writing compliant special education paperwork
 Vocational Rehabilitation and Blind Services – strengthening our secondary transition
 Education Advocates – presented Indicator 8 changes & new monitoring process
 Summer Institute
 Montana Council of Administrators of Special Education (MCASE)
 Higher Education Consortium (HEC)
 Great Divide Special Education Cooperative board meeting
 Dawson Community College – assisting in setting up the ParaPathways Program
 Weekly Superintendent’s Hour – Indicator 8
 CSPD Regional Directors
 Montana Empowerment Center – IEP Boot Camps
 Disability Rights Montana
 University of Montana – Mental Health Professional Development Grant for the Rural and Indigenous School-based Mental Health and Empowerment (RAISE) initiative

FFY 2023 Data Disaggregation from ED Facts

Data Source:

SY 2023-24 Assessment Data Groups - Reading (ED Facts file spec FS178; Data Group: 584)

Date:

01/08/2025

Reading Assessment Proficiency Data by Grade

Group	Grade 4	Grade 8	Grade HS
a. Children with IEPs who received a valid score and a proficiency level was assigned for the alternate assessment	107	106	102
b. Children with IEPs in alternate assessment against alternate standards scored at or above proficient	42	51	54

Data Source:

SY 2023-24 Assessment Data Groups - Math (ED Facts file spec FS175; Data Group: 583)

Date:

01/08/2025

Math Assessment Proficiency Data by Grade

Group	Grade 4	Grade 8	Grade HS
a. Children with IEPs who received a valid score and a proficiency level was assigned for the alternate assessment	106	106	101
b. Children with IEPs in alternate assessment against alternate standards scored at or above proficient	55	60	52

FFY 2023 SPP/APR Data: Reading Assessment

Group	Group Name	Number of Children with IEPs Scoring At or Above Proficient Against Alternate Academic Achievement Standards	Number of Children with IEPs who Received a Valid Score and for whom a Proficiency Level was Assigned for the Alternate Assessment	FFY 2022 Data	FFY 2023 Target	FFY 2023 Data	Status	Slippage
A	Grade 4	42	107	45.07%	48.80%	39.25%	Did not meet target	Slippage
B	Grade 8	51	106	33.33%	42.10%	48.11%	Met target	No Slippage
C	Grade HS	54	102	57.41%	51.50%	52.94%	Met target	No Slippage

Provide reasons for slippage for Group A, if applicable

Through analysis of data from FFY 2022 and FFY 2023 to determine potential reasons for slippage for 4th grade reading alternate assessment proficiency rates, the state observed a notable decrease in the number of students receiving valid scores (nearly a 25% decrease). In small populations like those in Montana, shifts in small numbers can have more substantial impacts on the overall state data. Accordingly, this could have accounted in part to this slippage (as supported by the slippage reported in 3A).

While this decrease in population of students with disabilities receiving valid scores is worth noting, the state also endeavored to investigate whether there were particular LEAs that were experiencing lower proficiency rates on alternate assessments in FFY 2023 as compared to FFY 2022 to see any trends that would explain the slippage. Through this analysis, the state determined that of the 6 LEAs with the most sizeable decreases in numbers of students testing proficient in FFY 2022 as compared to FFY 2023, 4 of these LEAs were among the largest in the state. Thus, shifts in their data had greater bearing on statewide data. In FFY 2022, these 4 LEAs made up a large portion of the state total number of students with disabilities in grade 4 receiving a valid score on the alternate assessment - nearly 42%. However, in FFY 2023 there was a substantial decrease in this percentage, with the total number of students with disabilities in grade 4 receiving a valid score on the alternate assessment for these 4 LEAs only comprising about 28% of the state population. The impact of this change is important, because in FFY 2022 the students in these 4 LEAs determined proficient alternate assessment encompassed nearly 51% of the population. Accordingly, they likely disproportionately positively impacted the statewide data. However, in FFY 2023 these 4 LEAs only made up approximately 24% of the population testing proficient on grade 4 alternate systems. This of course had a much more deleterious effect on the data.

As to why proficiency rates in these large LEAs and others across the state decreased, LEAs have reported significant staffing shortages across the state. These staffing shortages have made it challenging for LEAs to find educators with the training, expertise, and experience to effectively support students with complex needs and cognitive impairments that may require more comprehensive support. This too may be a likely reason for the slippage observed. Further, to move close to the 1% threshold for participation on the alternate assessment, LEAs have been making more concerted efforts to ensure that only those students with disabilities with the most substantial needs and cognitive impairments are taking the alternate assessment. Efforts to address this likely contributed to the decrease in the number of students participating on the alternate assessment and also the proficiency rates.

FFY 2023 SPP/APR Data: Math Assessment

Group	Group Name	Number of Children with IEPs Scoring At or Above Proficient Against Alternate Academic Achievement Standards	Number of Children with IEPs who Received a Valid Score and for whom a Proficiency Level was Assigned for the Alternate Assessment	FFY 2022 Data	FFY 2023 Target	FFY 2023 Data	Status	Slippage
A	Grade 4	55	106	58.87%	51.30%	51.89%	Met target	No Slippage
B	Grade 8	60	106	49.12%	46.10%	56.60%	Met target	No Slippage
C	Grade HS	52	101	52.78%	43.80%	51.49%	Met target	No Slippage

Regulatory Information

The SEA, (or, in the case of a district-wide assessment, LEA) must make available to the public, and report to the public with the same frequency and in the same detail as it reports on the assessment of nondisabled children: (1) the number of children with disabilities participating in: (a) regular assessments, and the number of those children who were provided accommodations in order to participate in those assessments; and (b) alternate assessments aligned with alternate achievement standards; and (2) the performance of children with disabilities on regular assessments and on alternate assessments, compared with the achievement of all children, including children with disabilities, on those assessments. [20 U.S.C. 1412 (a)(16)(D); 34 CFR §300.160(f)]

Public Reporting Information

Provide links to the page(s) where you provide public reports of assessment results.

The following link is the website where assessment data have been publicly posted:
<https://opi.mt.gov/Educators/School-Climate-Student-Wellness/Special-Education#10963313031-idea-data>

The following link is a direct link to the publicly reported assessment data:

https://opi.mt.gov/Portals/182/Page%20Files/Special%20Education/IDEA%20Data/Public%20Reporting%20-%20FFY%202023%20Assessment%20Data_Suppressed.xlsx?ver=2025-01-31-072116-650

Provide additional information about this indicator (optional)

The Montana alternate assessment was not altered by the change in regular assessments that resulted in an assessment waiver for FFY 2023 and revisions to baselines for Indicators 3A and 3B. Accordingly, no baseline changes or revisions to targets were applied for Indicator 3C.

3C - Prior FFY Required Actions

None

3C - OSEP Response

3C - Required Actions