

### Indicator 3D: Gap in Proficiency Rates (Grade Level 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

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

#### Measurement

D. Proficiency rate gap = [(proficiency rate for children with IEPs scoring at or above proficient against grade level academic achievement standards for the 2023-2024 school year) subtracted from the (proficiency rate for all students scoring at or above proficient against grade level academic achievement standards for the 2023-2024 school year)]. Calculate separately for reading and math. Calculate separately for grades 4, 8, and high school. The proficiency rate includes all children 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 3D: Gap calculations in this SPP/APR must result in the proficiency rate for children with IEPs were proficient against grade level academic achievement standards for the 2023-2024 school year compared to the proficiency rate for all students who were proficient against grade level academic achievement standards for the 2023-2024 school year. Calculate separately for reading/language arts and math in each of the following grades: 4, 8, and high school, including both children 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.

### 3D - Indicator Data

#### Historical Data:

Subject	Group	Group Name	Baseline Year	Baseline Data
Reading	A	Grade 4	2023	28.40
Reading	B	Grade 8	2023	31.98
Reading	C	Grade HS	2018	40.54
Math	A	Grade 4	2023	25.80
Math	B	Grade 8	2023	28.56
Math	C	Grade HS	2018	28.85

#### Targets

Subject	Group	Group Name	2023	2024	2025
Reading	A <=	Grade 4	28.40	28.40	28.40
Reading	B <=	Grade 8	31.98	31.98	31.98
Reading	C <=	Grade HS	40.24	40.14	40.04
Math	A <=	Grade 4	25.80	25.80	25.80
Math	B <=	Grade 8	28.56	28.56	28.56
Math	C <=	Grade HS	28.55	28.45	28.35

#### 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

In FFY 2023, Montana allowed LEAs to opt into administration of a new field through year assessment for students grades 3-8 in mathematics and ELA who are required to take the statewide summative assessment. To eliminate an undue burden on students, teachers, and district leaders to prevent double-testing, the state requested a Field Test Flexibility waiver that would allow those participating schools to not administer the existing statewide summative assessments (students with the most significant cognitive disabilities in those schools would continue to take the existing alternate assessment based on alternate academic achievement standards). The U.S. Department of Education granted this waiver to Montana, which resulted in the state not having to produce or provide performance data (including proficiency assignments) for LEAs administering the field test. As a result, the only data reported in the Section 618 Assessment files utilized for Indicators 3A-3D will be the data for those LEAs administering the summative statewide assessment.

When contemplating revising targets for Indicator 3D, the state was reticent to have stakeholders provide in-depth feedback on the targets, given that a large percentage of LEAs were not included in the assessment type that was federally reported and thus the data was not meaningfully representative of the whole state’s student populations. Further, the state assessment will change again in FFY 2024, when LEAs in Montana will be required to administer the “through-year” assessment that was field tested in FFY 2023. As a result, next year Montana will have to once again reset baselines and establish new targets. The state believes that it is the FFY 2024 data that should be used to set well-informed targets predicated on the regular assessment performance for LEAs and students in the state. For this reason, the state engaged with its stakeholders and conveyed that for this FFY 2023 reporting period, the state will set targets for grades 4 and 8 for reading and mathematics for FFY 2023 through FFY 2025 that are the same as the data reported in FFY 2023. Once updated assessment data are available for FFY 2024, the state will conduct a more robust data analysis of the participation and proficiency data and work collaboratively with stakeholders to establish targets for FFY 2024 and FFY 2025.

**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 (1)**

Group	Grade 4	Grade 8	Grade HS
a. All Students who received a valid score and a proficiency was assigned for the regular assessment	5,894	6,099	9,460
b. Children with IEPs who received a valid score and a proficiency was assigned for the regular assessment	867	797	839
c. All students in regular assessment with no accommodations scored at or above proficient against grade level	2,699	2,599	4,934
d. All students in regular assessment with accommodations scored at or above proficient against grade level	56	17	42
e. Children with IEPs in regular assessment with no accommodations scored at or above proficient against grade level	110	74	71
f. Children with IEPs in regular assessment with accommodations scored at or above proficient against grade level	49	13	12

**Data Source:**

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

**Date:**

01/08/2025

**Math Assessment Proficiency Data by Grade (1)**

Group	Grade 4	Grade 8	Grade HS
a. All Students who received a valid score and a proficiency was assigned for the regular assessment	5,890	6,046	9,627
b. Children with IEPs who received a valid score and a proficiency was assigned for the regular assessment	861	776	905
c. All students in regular assessment with no accommodations scored at or above proficient against grade level	2,542	2,009	2,909
d. All students in regular assessment with accommodations scored at or above proficient against grade level	79	6	28
e. Children with IEPs in regular assessment with no accommodations scored at or above proficient against grade level	112	33	31
f. Children with IEPs in regular assessment with accommodations scored at or above proficient against grade level	49	4	6

(1)The term "regular assessment" is an aggregation of the following types of assessments as applicable for each grade/ grade group: regular assessment based on grade-level achievement standards, advanced assessment, Innovative Assessment Demonstration Authority (IADA) pilot assessment, high school regular assessment I, high school regular assessment II, high school regular assessment III and locally-selected nationally recognized high school assessment in the pre-filled data in this indicator.

**FFY 2023 SPP/APR Data: Reading Assessment**

Group	Group Name	Proficiency rate for children with IEPs scoring at or above proficient against grade level academic achievement standards	Proficiency rate for all students scoring at or above proficient against grade level academic achievement standards	FFY 2022 Data	FFY 2023 Target	FFY 2023 Data	Status	Slippage
A	Grade 4	18.34%	46.74%	27.98	28.40	28.40	N/A	N/A
B	Grade 8	10.92%	42.89%	33.61	31.98	31.98	N/A	N/A
C	Grade HS	9.89%	52.60%	41.10	40.24	42.71	Did not meet target	Slippage

**Provide reasons for slippage for Group C, if applicable**

In FFY 2023, high school students with and without disabilities receiving a valid score on the regular statewide assessment experienced decreases in proficiency rates. However, the decrease for high school students with disabilities was substantially more notable. As outlined in 3B, the state observed decreases in the proficiency rates of high school students with disabilities on regular high school assessments in both reading and math. The decrease in reading was actually more stark, but the target was met and thus slippage was not identified in 3B for reading. However, the starkness of this proficiency rate decrease for reading is evidenced much more clearly in 3D when comparing proficiency rates for high school students with and without disabilities on the reading regular statewide assessment.

The impact of fewer students as a whole participating on statewide assessment statewide likely had some bearing on the slippage, as the volatility of smaller student populations like those in Montana can have more substantial impacts on percentages. However, the state also observed trends in the LEAs reporting lower proficiency rates. The same 4 large LEAs that impacted high school students with disabilities proficiency rates for math (enumerated in 3B) had an impact on the growth in proficiency gap from FFY 2022 to FFY 2023 between students with and without disabilities. Two additional large LEAs comprising nearly 12 percent of the population of high school students with and without disabilities who received a valid score on the regular statewide assessment for reading reported substantially higher proficiency rates for students with disabilities than their peers, however, there gap in proficiency was also much greater than their peers given the high proficiency rates of students without disabilities (approximately 50 percentage point gap for both LEAs). Accordingly, the large gaps for these large districts likely also contribute to the statewide slippage for this indicator.

As to why proficiency rates across the state, and in these large LEAs, decreased, LEAs have reported significant staffing shortages across the state. These staffing shortages have made it challenging for LEAs to find educators and in particular more specialized educators with the training, expertise, and experience to effectively support students with disabilities. This too may be a likely reason for the more notable decreases in the proficiency rates for students with disabilities as compared to students without disabilities, and the overall slippage for this indicator.

**FFY 2023 SPP/APR Data: Math Assessment**

Group	Group Name	Proficiency rate for children with IEPs scoring at or above proficient against grade level academic achievement standards	Proficiency rate for all students scoring at or above proficient against grade level academic achievement standards	FFY 2022 Data	FFY 2023 Target	FFY 2023 Data	Status	Slippage
A	Grade 4	18.70%	44.50%	28.34	25.80	25.80	N/A	N/A
B	Grade 8	4.77%	33.33%	25.76	28.56	28.56	N/A	N/A
C	Grade HS	4.09%	30.51%	25.38	28.55	26.42	Met target	No Slippage

Provide additional information about this indicator (optional)

**3D - Prior FFY Required Actions**

None

**3D - OSEP Response**

**3D - Required Actions**