

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 2023 SPP/APR, compare the FFY 2023 response rate to the FFY 2022 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

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

For this reporting cycle, the state convened to solicit input from stakeholders regarding resetting the baseline for indicator 8 due to a new survey methodology. Stakeholders provided input on proposed revised targets for Indicator 8. In conclusion, the stakeholder input is reflected in the targets for this indicator.

Historical Data

Baseline Year	Baseline Data
2023	86.42%

FFY	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Target >=	70.50%	70.50%	70.50%	70.60%	70.70%
Data	73.88%	79.05%	73.35%	65.66%	71.46%

Targets

FFY	2023	2024	2025
Target >=	86.42%	70.90%	71.00%

FFY 2023 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 2022 Data	FFY 2023 Target	FFY 2023 Data	Status	Slippage
1,381	1,598	71.46%	86.42%	86.42%	N/A	N/A

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. LEAs are responsible for administering the survey to all their parents of students with disabilities ages 3-21. LEAs are provided with the necessary materials to administer the survey either in person (at IEP meetings, parent-teacher conferences, and community functions), via text message, or via email. The materials direct parents to an online portal for responding to the survey. These materials and the processes are the same for parents of students with disabilities in preschool and K-12 programs. The survey that parents of preschool students receive is identical to the survey that parents of K-12 students receive, which creates continuity across all grade bands. The same distribution methods are used for both groups of parents and the same data collation methods are used to aggregate and analyze the results. While the results can be disaggregated between the parents of preschool students and parents of K-12 students, the surveys are not different, and results are automatically combined. These efforts to ensure that responses from parents of preschool and K-12 students are identical in all design, data collection, and data analysis methods and the state is confident these measures are taken in a manner that is valid and reliable.

The number of parents to whom the surveys were distributed.

21,579

Percentage of respondent parents

7.41%

Response Rate

FFY	2022	2023
Response Rate	10.36%	7.41%

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 primary disability. Two racial/ethnic groups were not representative. Seventy-three percent (73%) of students with disabilities in the state are white, while 81% of the survey respondents were parents of white students with disabilities (+8 percentage points). Thirteen percent (13%) of students with disabilities in the state are American Indian, while 6% of the survey respondents were parents of American Indian students with disabilities (-7 percentage points). All other racial/ethnic groups were within 3 percentage points of their population.

In terms of primary disability groups, there were two disability categories that were not representative. Six percent (6%) of students with disabilities in the state are identified with autism, while nearly 17% of the respondents were parents of students identified with autism (+11 percentage points). Twenty-one percent (21%) of students with disabilities in the state are identified with multiple disabilities, while 8% of the respondents were parents of students identified with multiple disabilities (-13 percentage points). All other primary disability groups were within 3 percentage points 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

Given the lower response rate of parents of students in grades 9-12, the state will be encouraging all districts to follow-up with these parents throughout the survey administration window. Those districts that have a relatively high percentage of Native American students will be encouraged to use multiple administrative methods. The state will reach out to individual districts special education directors and/or superintendents, including those with high Native American student, and encourage the schools to share the survey with parents. The SEA will work more closely with the Montana Empowerment Center (MEC, parent training and information center) to assist the state in encouraging parents to fill out the survey.

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

In 2023-24, the state moved from a sample of a districts to a census survey, decreased the number of questions asked from 23 to 10, moved from paper to electronic, and moved away from English only by adding Spanish and Braille. All of these efforts were undertaken to make the survey more accessible to all families with the intent to increase the number of parents willing to submit responses. Training was provided to districts on the new administration method in an effort to equip them with the necessary information skills needed to effectively disseminate the survey and seek response in a way that will maximize response rates. The state believes that a higher response rate will be obtained going forward now that districts are familiar with the process and can see the impact of various response methods. The SEA will focus on working more closely with our Native American populations and teams at the agency to get this survey in the hands of parents.

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. The state's response rate is 7.41%, which is lower than last year's response rate, and therefore an area of concern. With that said, comparison of last year's response rate would not be a one-to-one analysis, as last year's survey was different in design, different in administration, and it was a sample and not a census. Accordingly, the comparability of the response rates and survey responses to prior years would not be appropriate. The state believes that the response rate will continuously increase as LEAs and families grow more familiar with the process. With this said, given the low response rate in FFY 2023, 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, the state proceeded with additional examinations of nonresponse bias.

Second, the representativeness of the responses can be examined. Although significant differences were found in response rates by race/ethnicity and disability category, 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, with 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, the state has concluded that nonresponse bias is not present.

In terms of steps to reduce bias, the state will continue its efforts to support LEAs in effectively disseminating surveys and increasing the numbers of respondents. As noted above, increased response rates are essential for limiting the potential for nonresponse bias. Further, the state will continue assessing the times in which surveys are being submitted to determine if there are any trends or key information that might be relevant to assess whether nonresponse bias might be occurring. If it is determined to possibly be occurring, the state will provide technical assistance and support to LEAs, particularly those most impacted, on effective ways to engage parents in the survey process and increase response rates.

Sampling Question	Yes / No
Was sampling used?	NO

Survey Question	Yes / No
Was a survey used?	YES

Survey Question	Yes / No
If yes, is it a new or revised survey?	YES
If yes, provide a copy of the survey.	Parent Involvement Survey 2023-24 English

Provide additional information about this indicator (optional)

The state reset the baseline to FFY 2023 data due to changes in the methodology and data source used for the parent survey. In the FFY 2023 reporting period, the state moved from a sample of LEAs to a census survey that is available to all families in the state. In addition, substantial revisions were made to the survey itself and the number of questions decreased from 23 to 10 to improve the accessibility of the survey for all families. Finally, the survey medium shifted from a hard-copy paper survey to an electronic survey and rather than only offering surveys in English, the state made surveys available in Spanish as well as in Braille. For all these reasons, the data for FFY 2023 are no longer comparable to prior years' data and thus this necessitates a change in baseline.

Through stakeholder input, the state developed new targets for FFY2023 through FFY2025. The EMAPS reporting tool would not allow the state to edit the target fields for FFY2024 and FFY2025.

A ticket (ticket #25-00700) was submitted to PSC to address this issue. Once the state is able to adjust the targets, the target for FFY2024 will be 87.17% and the target for FFY2025 will be 87.92%.

8 - Prior FFY 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.

Response to actions required in FFY 2022 SPP/APR

Parents of students with disabilities, including preschool students, are given an opportunity to complete the survey. LEAs are responsible for administering the survey to all their parents of students with disabilities ages 3-21. LEAs are provided with the necessary materials to administer the survey either in person (at IEP meetings, parent-teacher conferences, and community functions), via text message, or via email. The materials direct parents to an online portal for responding to the survey. These materials and the processes are the same for parents of students with disabilities in preschool and K-12 programs. The survey that parents of preschool students receive is identical to the survey that parents of K-12 students receive, which creates continuity across all grade bands. The same distribution methods are used for both groups of parents and the same data collation methods are used to aggregate and analyze the results. While the results can be disaggregated between the parents of preschool students and parents of K-12 students, the surveys are not different, and results are automatically combined. These efforts to ensure that responses from parents of preschool and K-12 students are identical in all design, data collection, and data analysis methods and the state is confident these measures are taken in a manner that is valid and reliable.

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 primary disability. Two racial/ethnic groups were not representative. Seventy-three percent (73%) of students with disabilities in the state are white, while 81% of the survey respondents were parents of white students with disabilities (+8 percentage points). Thirteen percent (13%) of students with disabilities in the state are American Indian, while 6% of the survey respondents were parents of American Indian students with disabilities (-7 percentage points). All other racial/ethnic groups were within 3% of their population.

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For more information on how the survey data are combined in a manner that yields valid and reliable data, please see the prompt "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."

For more information on how the state has evaluated and determined the representativeness of respondents, please see the prompt "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."

8 - OSEP Response

8 - Required Actions