

# Indicator 1: Graduation

## Instructions and Measurement

**Monitoring Priority:** FAPE in the LRE

**Results indicator:** Percent of youth with Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) exiting special education due to graduating with a regular high school diploma. (20 U.S.C. 1416 (a)(3)(A))

### Data Source

Same data as used for reporting to the Department under section 618 of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), using the definitions in ED*Facts* file specification FS009.

### Measurement

States must report a percentage using the number of youth with IEPs (ages 14-21) who exited special education due to graduating with a regular high school diploma in the numerator and the number of all youth with IEPs who exited high school (ages 14-21) in the denominator.

### Instructions

*Sampling is not allowed.*

Data for this indicator are "lag" data. Describe the results of the State's examination of the data for the year before the reporting year (e.g., for the FFY 2024 SPP/APR, use data from 2023-2024), and compare the results to the target.

Include in the denominator the following exiting categories: (a) graduated with a regular high school diploma; (b) graduated with a state-defined alternate diploma; (c) received a certificate; (d) reached maximum age; or (e) dropped out.

Do not include in the denominator the number of youths with IEPs who exited special education due to: (a) transferring to regular education; or (b) who moved but are known to be continuing in an educational program.

Provide a narrative that describes the conditions youth must meet in order to graduate with a regular high school diploma. If the conditions that youth with IEPs must meet in order to graduate with a regular high school diploma are different, please explain.

## 1 - Indicator Data

### Historical Data

Baseline Year	Baseline Data
2020	78.65%

FFY	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Target >=	82.90%	76.00%	77.00%	78.00%	79.00%
Data	78.03%	78.65%	73.73%	69.69%	69.22%

### Targets

FFY	2024	2025
Target >=	78.65%	80.00%

### 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 16 members, seven 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 2024-25 and 2025-26 school years, the SEA asked for input on Indicators 3, 4, 9, and 10 from the SEAP. The SEA presented information on the SPP/APR as a whole and then dug into the specific indicators for feedback on targets and proposed methodological changes. The SEAP agreed with the SEA's proposal. Meeting minutes from discussions with SEAP as well as presentation materials have been posted publicly for all stakeholder review and input on the state website for SEAP: <https://opi.mt.gov/Educators/School-Climate-Student-Wellness/Special-Education/Regulations-and-Guidance#10965413037-federal-requirements>.

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 partnership 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:

Monthly Special Education Director's calls

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

Summer Institute

Dawson Community College – assisted in setting up level 2 of the ParaPathways Program

CSPD Regional Directors  
 Montana Empowerment Center – Monthly meetings  
 Disability Rights Montana

**Prepopulated Data**

Source	Date	Description	Data
SY 2023-24 Children with Disabilities (IDEA) Exiting Special Education (EDFacts file spec FS009; Data group 85)	03/05/2025	Number of youth with IEPs (ages 14-21) who exited special education by graduating with a regular high school diploma (a)	924
SY 2023-24 Children with Disabilities (IDEA) Exiting Special Education (EDFacts file spec FS009; Data group 85)	03/05/2025	Number of youth with IEPs (ages 14-21) who exited special education by graduating with a state-defined alternate diploma (b)	
SY 2023-24 Children with Disabilities (IDEA) Exiting Special Education (EDFacts file spec FS009; Data group 85)	03/05/2025	Number of youth with IEPs (ages 14-21) who exited special education by receiving a certificate (c)	70
SY 2023-24 Children with Disabilities (IDEA) Exiting Special Education (EDFacts file spec FS009; Data group 85)	03/05/2025	Number of youth with IEPs (ages 14-21) who exited special education by reaching maximum age (d)	1
SY 2023-24 Children with Disabilities (IDEA) Exiting Special Education (EDFacts file spec FS009; Data group 85)	03/05/2025	Number of youth with IEPs (ages 14-21) who exited special education due to dropping out (e)	358

**FFY 2024 SPP/APR Data**

Number of youth with IEPs (ages 14-21) who exited special education due to graduating with a regular high school diploma	Number of all youth with IEPs who exited special education (ages 14-21)	FFY 2023 Data	FFY 2024 Target	FFY 2024 Data	Status	Slippage
924	1,353	69.22%	78.65%	68.29%	Did not meet target	No Slippage

**Graduation Conditions**

**Provide a narrative that describes the conditions youth must meet in order to graduate with a regular high school diploma.**

The Montana Board of Public Education has set the following as the minimum graduation requirements for all Montana students. Each local school board has the option to add additional requirements and most choose to add more rigorous requirements that all students in their district must meet. In some cases, this may result in a special education student needing to spend more than 4 years working towards their high school diploma. It can create a barrier to graduation for students who transfer to or from one Montana High School to another with more rigorous graduation standards.

10.55.905: GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS - Administrative Rules of the State of Montana

10.55.905 GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS

- (1) As a minimum, a school district's requirements for graduation shall include a total of 20 units of study that enable all students to meet the content standards and content-specific grade-level or grade-band learning progressions. Students may demonstrate achievement through a flexible system of pupil-centered learning.
- (2) In order for students to graduate, they must meet the content and performance standards. The following 13 units shall be part of the 20 units. The required units may be satisfied by an equivalent course that meets the district's curriculum and assessment requirements, which are aligned with each of the content standards:
  - (a) 4 units of English language arts;
  - (b) 2 units of mathematics;
  - (c) 2 units of social studies (including a 1/2 unit of Civics or Government);
  - (d) 2 units of science;

- (e) 1 unit of health and physical education;
  - (f) 1 unit of arts;
  - (g) 1 unit of career and technical education; and
  - (h) 1/2 unit of economics or financial literacy within the 2 units of social studies, the 2 units of mathematics, or the 1 unit of career and technical education.
- (3) Units of credit earned in any Montana high school accredited by the Board of Public Education shall be accepted by all Montana high schools.
- (4) In accordance with the policies of the local board of trustees, students may be graduated from high school with less than four years enrollment.

Rule History

NEW, 1989 MAR p. 342, Eff. 7/1/89; AMD, 1998 MAR p. 2707, Eff. 10/9/98; AMD, 2000 MAR p. 3340, Eff. 12/8/00; AMD, 2012 MAR p. 2042, Eff. 7/1/13; AMD, 2023 MAR p. 255, Eff. 7/1/23.

**Are the conditions that youth with IEPs must meet to graduate with a regular high school diploma different from the conditions noted above? (yes/no)**

NO

**Provide additional information about this indicator (optional)**

N/A

**1 - Prior FFY Required Actions**

None

**1 - OSEP Response**

**1 - Required Actions**