

Indicator 2: Drop Out

Instructions and Measurement

Monitoring Priority: FAPE in the LRE

Results indicator: Percent of youth with IEPs who exited special education due to dropping out. (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 dropping out in the numerator and the number of all youth with IEPs who exited special education (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 section 618 exiting 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 what counts as dropping out for all youth. Please explain if there is a difference between what counts as dropping out for all students and what counts as dropping out for students with IEPs.

2 - Indicator Data

Historical Data

Baseline Year	Baseline Data
2020	21.26%

FFY	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Target <=	3.40%	21.26%	21.16%	21.06%	20.96%
Data	3.81%	21.26%	20.61%	25.85%	26.44%

Targets

FFY	2024	2025
Target <=	20.86%	20.76%

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

Montana Council of Administrators of Special Education (MCASE)

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 dropping out	Number of all youth with IEPs who exited special education (ages 14-21)	FFY 2023 Data	FFY 2024 Target	FFY 2024 Data	Status	Slippage
358	1,353	26.44%	20.86%	26.46%	Did not meet target	No Slippage

Provide a narrative that describes what counts as dropping out for all youth

The dropout definition for all students in the state of Montana is:

Dropouts are the count of individuals who: were enrolled in school on the date of the previous year October enrollment count or at some time during the previous school year and were not enrolled on the date of the current school year October count, or were not enrolled at the beginning of the previous school year but were expected to enroll and did not re-enroll during the year, “no show”, and were not enrolled on the date of the current school year October count, and have not graduated from high school or completed a state or district-approved high school educational program, and have not transferred to another school, been temporarily absent due to a school-recognized illness or suspension or died.

Is there a difference in what counts as dropping out for youth with IEPs? (yes/no)

YES

If yes, explain the difference in what counts as dropping out for youth with IEPs.

Dropouts for Indicator 2 are counted based on the requirements in the EDFacts File specifications for FS009: Dropped Out

These students were enrolled at the start of the reporting period but were not enrolled at the end of the reporting period and did not exit special education through any of the other means. This includes dropouts, runaways, GED recipients (in cases where students are required to drop out of the secondary educational program to pursue the GED certificate), expulsions, status unknown, students who moved but are not known to be continuing in another educational program, and other exiters from special education.

Provide additional information about this indicator (optional).

N/A

2 - Prior FFY Required Actions

None

2 - OSEP Response

2 - Required Actions