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 2024 SPP/APR, compare the FFY 2024 response rate to the FFY 2023 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 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)
Higher Education Consortium (HEC)

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

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

Historical Data

Baseline Year	Baseline Data
2023	86.42%

FFY	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Target >=	70.50%	70.50%	70.60%	70.70%	86.42%
Data	79.05%	73.35%	65.66%	71.46%	86.42%

Targets

FFY	2024	2025
Target >=	87.17%	87.92%

FFY 2024 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 2023 Data	FFY 2024 Target	FFY 2024 Data	Status	Slippage
1,621	1,909	86.42%	87.17%	84.91%	Did not meet target	Slippage

Provide reasons for slippage, if applicable

The decrease in performance for Indicator 8 from FFY 2023 to FFY 2024 was 1.51 percentage points. The state conducted data analysis to determine the reason for the decrease and subsequent slippage. Through this analysis, the state observed a notable decrease in the percentage of respondent parents reporting schools facilitated parent involvement for 3 of the largest LEAs in the state. These 3 LEAs comprised 12.84% of the total statewide student population in FFY 2024 and comprised 11.79% of the respondent population for Indicator 8 in FFY 2024. In these 3 LEAs, the percent of respondent parents reporting schools facilitated parental involvement decreased by 11.31 percentage points from FFY 2023 to FFY 2024. This significant decrease in performance for Indicator 8 had a notable impact on the statewide data, given that the 3 large LEAs make up such a large portion of the overall state population and Indicator 8 population. As such, a reason for the slippage is the overall decrease in performance for the 3 large LEAs. Were these 3 LEAs excluded from the statewide data, the percentage of respondent parents reporting schools facilitated parent involvement would increase to 86.05% for FFY 2024. This would be a very small decrease in performance from FFY 2023 (0.37 percentage points) and would not result in slippage for the indicator.

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 to respond 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.

22,051

Percentage of respondent parents

8.66%

Response Rate

FFY	2023	2024
Response Rate	7.41%	8.66%

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 the population of a given 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-two percent (72%) of students with disabilities in the state are white, while 80% 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 16% of the respondents were parents of students identified with autism (+10 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. Eleven percent (11%) of students with disabilities in the state are identified with other health impairments, while 7% of the respondents were parents of students identified with other health impairments (-4 percentage points). Seventeen percent (17%) of students with disabilities in the state are identified with a speech/language impairment, while 22% of the respondents were parents of students identified with a speech/language impairment (-5 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 American Indian students, 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 state 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 these efforts were undertaken to make the survey more accessible to all families with the intent of increasing 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 success of these efforts is evidenced by the increase in response rate from FFY 2023 to FFY 2024 (1.25 percentage point increase). The state believes response rates will continue to increase going forward now that districts are familiar with the process and can see the impact of various response methods.

The state will focus on working more closely with our American Indian populations and teams at the agency to get this survey in the hands of parents. Additionally, the state will work on soliciting feedback from internal and external stakeholders on ways to increase the responses from American Indian populations and families of children with multiple disabilities. The state will connect with parent centers and members of the state advisory panel (SEAP) to determine ways in which the response rate for the survey can be increased, particularly for the aforementioned underrepresented populations.

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 8.66%, which is higher than last year's response rate, but still lower than the state would like, and therefore an area of concern. Note that this year was the second year of a new administration method, and the state believes that a higher response rate will be obtained going forward now that districts are familiar with the process. This can be seen already since the response rate increased from 7.41% to 8.66% from FFY 2023 to FFY 2024. However, given the low response rate, 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 the next two ways for examining nonresponse bias.

Second, the representativeness of the responses was examined. Although response rates differed significantly by race/ethnicity, the parent involvement rate did not. However, parent involvement rates were significantly higher among parents of students identified with a speech/language impairment compared to those in other disabilities, and among parents of students in grades K–2 compared to those in grades 9–12+, suggesting the possibility of nonresponse bias.

Third, the state compared 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.

Given the low response rate and the significant difference in parent involvement rate by disability, the state concludes that nonresponse bias might be 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. Further, the state will work with parent centers and other stakeholders to identify additional strategies that will address the potential nonresponse bias.

Sampling Question	Yes / No
Was sampling used?	NO

Survey Question	Yes / No
Was a survey used?	YES
If yes, is it a new or revised survey?	NO
If yes, provide a copy of the survey.	

Provide additional information about this indicator (optional)

N/A

8 - Prior FFY Required Actions

In the FFY 2024 SPP/APR, the State must report whether the FFY 2024 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 2023 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 to respond 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, primary disability, and grade group 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-two percent (72%) of students with disabilities in the state are white, while 80% 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 four 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 (+10 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). Eleven percent (11%) of students with disabilities in the state are identified with other health impairments, while 7% of the respondents were parents of students identified with other health impairments (-4 percentage points). Seventeen percent (17%) of students with disabilities in the state are identified with a speech/language impairment, while 22% of the respondents were parents of students identified with a speech/language impairment (-5 percentage points). All other primary disability groups were within 3 percentage points of their population.

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