



Office of Public Instruction

Special Education Annual Report for the Board of Public Education

September 2024

Report prepared for the September 2024 Board of Public Education meeting by:

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Montana Office of Public Instruction - Special Education
Board of Public Education Annual Report
September 2024

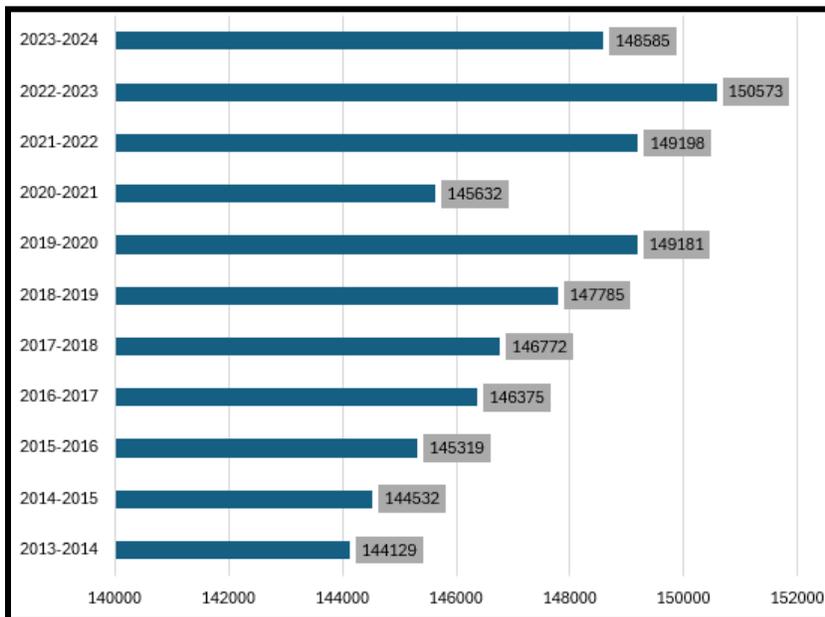
Who are Montana's Students with Disabilities?

Student Population

In 2022–23, the number of students ages 3–21 who received special education and related services under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) was 7.5 million, or the equivalent of **15 percent** of all public school students. (*National Center for Education Statistics*)

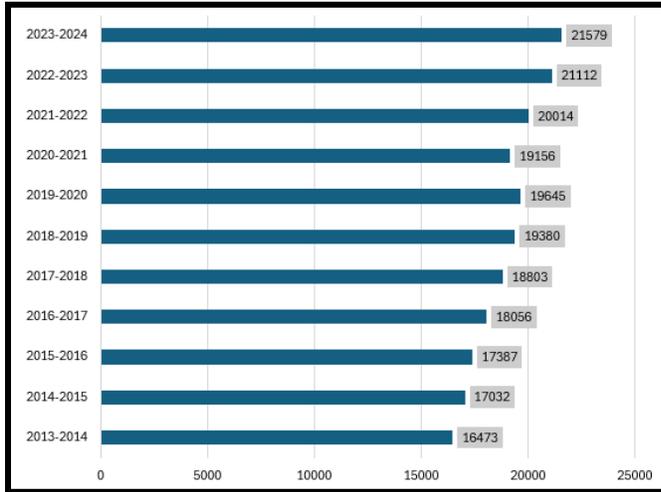
- **15 percent** of Montana's students are served under IDEA.
- Total student enrollment in 22/23 - 150,573
- Total student enrollment in 23/24 - 148,585 (1.33% decrease)
- Total enrollment of students with disabilities in 22/23 - 21,112
- Total enrollment of students with disabilities in 23/24 - 21,579 (**2.1% increase**)

Montana Total Student Enrollment





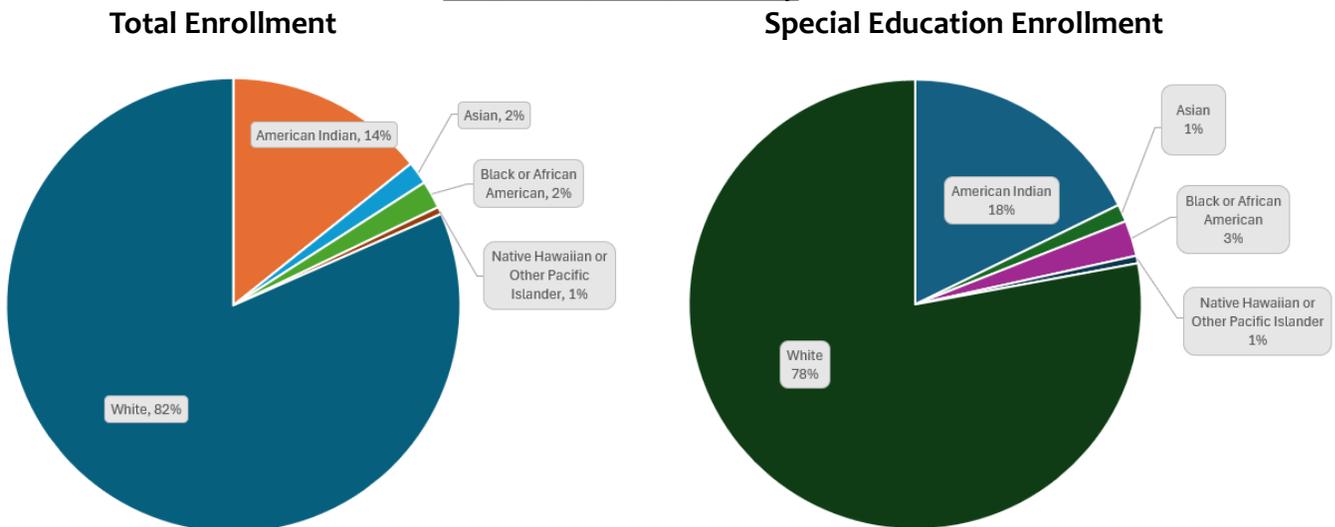
Montana Enrollment of Students with Disabilities



Special Education Student Demographics

Montana’s students with disabilities are proportionally represented across the state, except for one area. American Indian students account for a 4% higher rate of the special education student population than the state student population. Conversely, a lesser percentage of the special education population is white.

2023 - 2024 Race/ Ethnicity



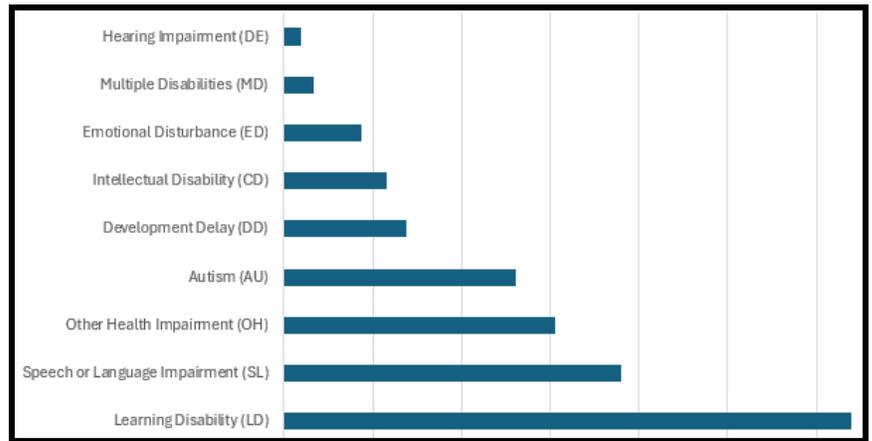


Student Disability Categories

- Students with more than one identified disability (not those reported as deaf-blind or developmental delay) must be listed as having multiple disabilities (MD) when federally reported.
- Montana does not have an MD category for eligibility, nor is a primary disability identified. The purpose of this is to recognize all disabilities that are reported.
 - e.g. Autism (AU) and the difference between state and national rates.

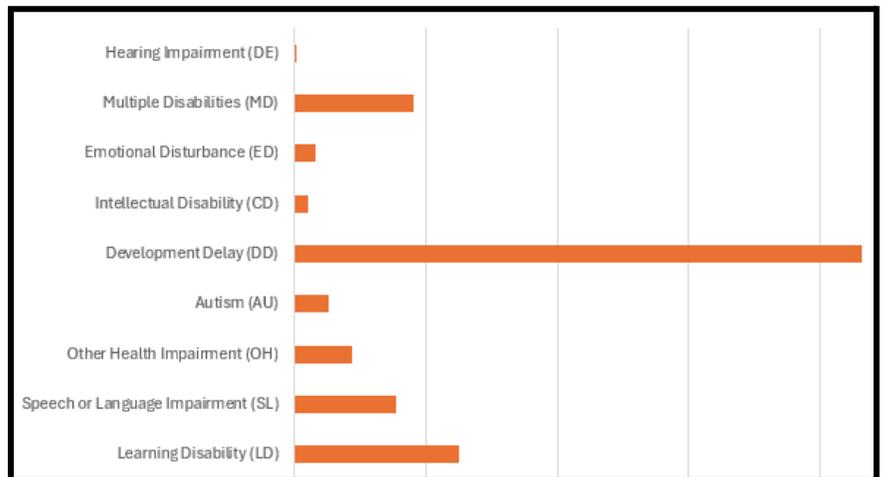
United States Special Education Child Count by Disability Category 2022-2023

Students With Disabilities. Annual Reports and Information Staff (Annual Reports). 2024. Accessed August 14, 2024.



<https://nces.ed.gov/programs/coe/indicator/cgg/students-with-disabilities>.

Montana Special Education Child Count by Disability Category 2022 - 2023





Special Education Child Count by Disability Category

<u>SFY2020 to SFY2024</u>	19-20	20-21	21-22	22-23	23-24
Autism (AU)	5.58%	5.67%	5.70%	5.80%	6.03%
Cognitive Delay (CD)	2.95%	2.87%	2.69%	2.53%	2.44%
Deaf-Blindness (DB)	0.03%	0.04%	0.03%	0.05%	0.05%
Developmental Delay (DD)	4.27%	6.51%	8.14%	9.34%	9.30%
Deaf (DE)	0.08%	0.06%	0.06%	0.07%	0.06%
Emotional Disturbance (ED)	4.62%	4.47%	4.08%	3.74%	3.60%
Hearing Impairment (HI)	0.32%	0.34%	0.30%	0.28%	0.24%
Learning Disability (LD)	30.14%	29.61%	29.72%	29.26%	28.92%
Multiple Disabilities (MD)	21.21%	21.03%	21.13%	20.80%	20.90%
Other Health Impairment (OHI)	11.57%	11.23%	10.66%	10.31%	10.06%
Orthopedic Impairment (OI)	0.21%	0.20%	0.19%	0.18%	0.15%
Speech-Language Impairment (SLI)	18.45%	17.39%	16.81%	17.18%	17.82%
Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI)	0.27%	0.29%	0.23%	0.21%	.21%
Visual Impairment (VI)	0.30%	0.29%	0.24%	0.26%	.24%

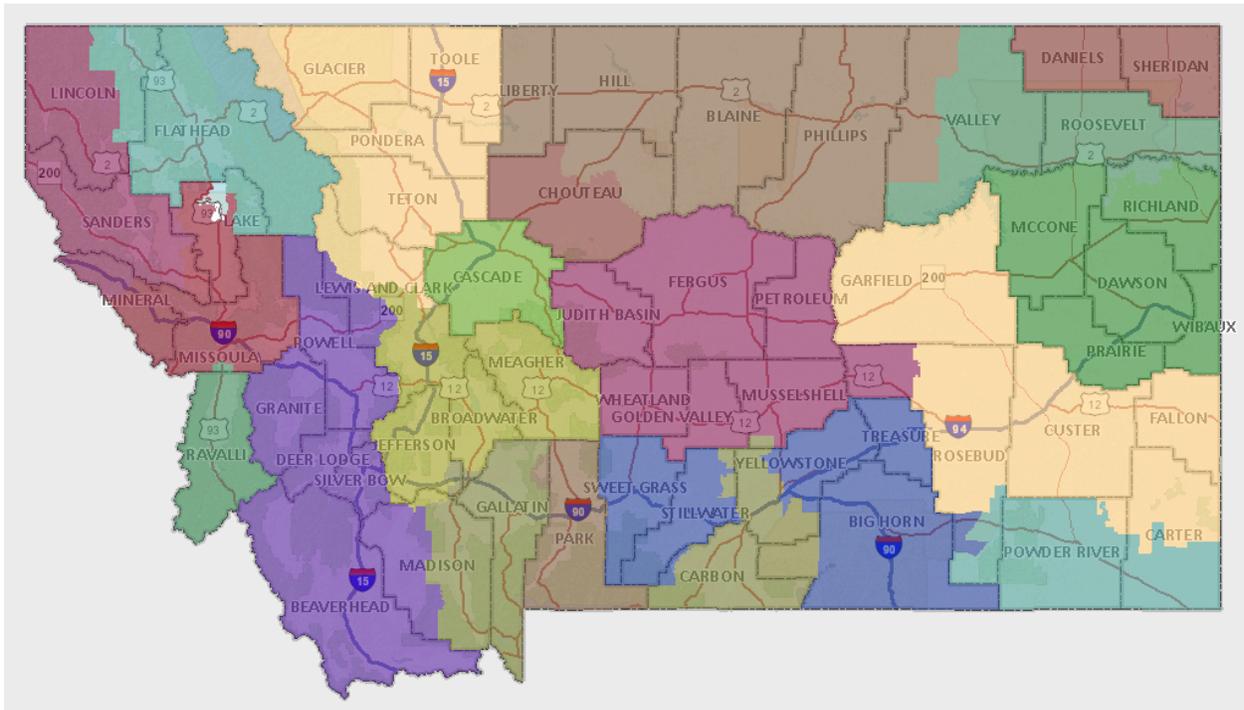




Special Education Cooperatives

Special Education Cooperatives play a vital role in providing services to Montana's students with disabilities. 398 districts are operating special education programs. **319 (80%)** of those districts utilize the cooperative structure. The districts contract with their local cooperative for assistance in providing related services personnel such as school psychologists, speech pathologists, and physical therapists, amongst others.

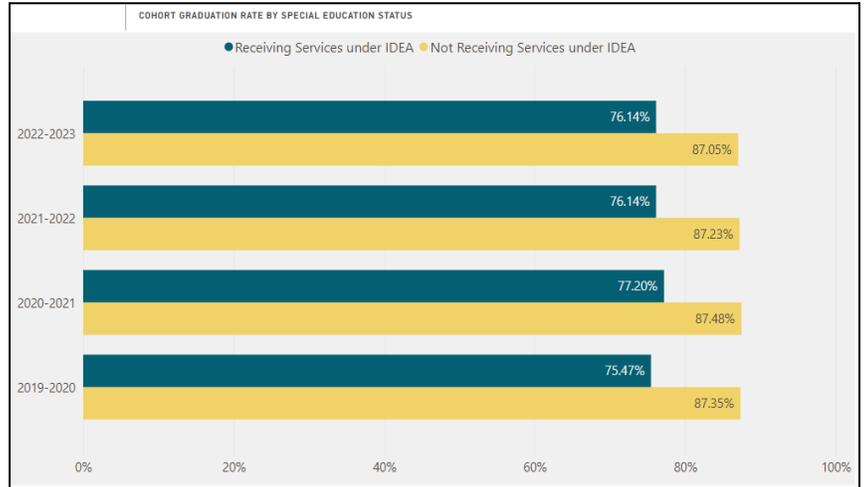
- Number of Cooperatives - 21
- [Special Education Cooperative Map](#)
- [Cooperatives and Directors](#)





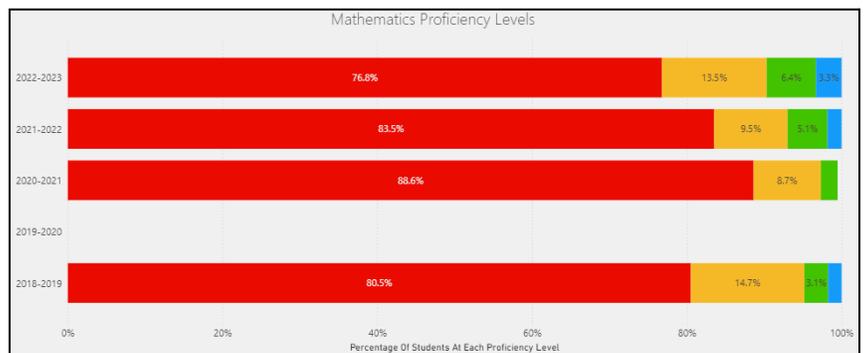
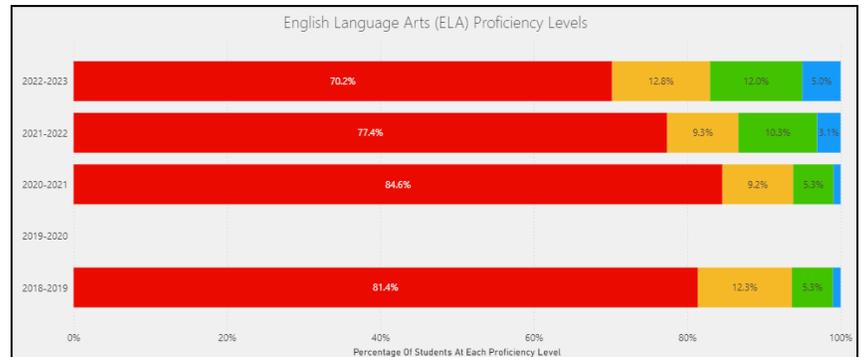
Special Education Achievement

- **Graduation Rates - Montana's special education students are graduating at a slightly higher rate (76.14%) than the national average (75%).**



- **Montana's Special Education Proficiency Rates**

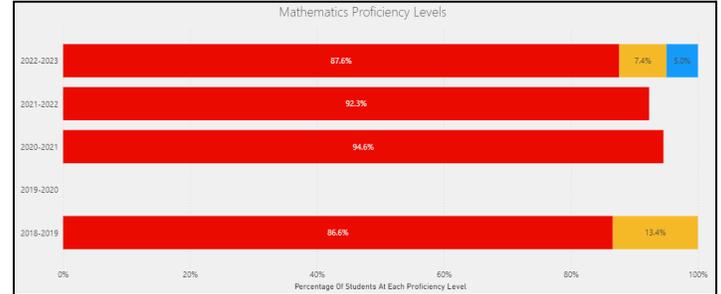
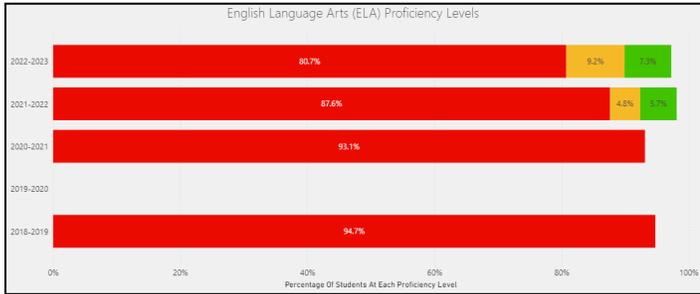
- ELA (SBAC Grade 3-8) 10.8% increase in proficiency rate over the last 3 years.
- Math - 6.9% increase in proficiency rate over the last three years.





Montana's Special Education Proficiency Rates for American Indian Students

- ELA - 12.4% reduction in students scoring in the novice range.
- Math - 7% reduction in students scoring in the novice range.



Federal Funding for Montana's Special Education Students

In FFY 2024, Montana has been awarded \$46,079,040 in IDEA funds.

- 11.7% of those funds are utilized for state level activities such as:
 - Staffing and administration of IDEA at the OPI
 - Dispute Resolution
 - Monitoring of LEAs
 - Infinite Campus - Student Information System
 - Alternate Assessment for students with severe needs
 - Discretionary grants to higher education institutions to support recruitment and retention of special education and related services staff.
 - Para Pathways initial start up.
 - Leader Services for data collections, monitoring, and SPP/APR.
- \$40,684,651 is allocated to Montana's 398 districts, Montana School for the Deaf & Blind, Yellowstone Academy, and Department of Corrections - Youth.

In FFY 2024, Montana has been awarded \$1,315,398 in IDEA preschool funds.

- 100% of these funds are passed on to the LEAs and State-Supported Programs.





Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) (DMS) Monitoring Report & Response

The Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) staff visited the OPI the last week of June, 2023. The OPI received the subsequent DMS report from OSEP in May, 2024. The OPI Special Education Department submitted the agency response to OSEP in August, 2024. Below you will find the OPI's response to the DMS report. Included in the report are links to the following updated documents:

- Student Record Review
- Special Education Integrated Monitoring System
- Special Education Guidance Document

August 16, 2024

Office of Special Education Programs
Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services
U.S. Department of Education
400 Maryland Ave., S.W.
Washington, DC 20202-7100

Dear Mr. Grigg and Mr. Schneer on behalf of OSEP:

On behalf of Montana State Superintendent of Schools Elsie Arntzen, I am responding to the results of the Differentiated Monitoring and Support (DMS) activities conducted by the United States Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) while conducting a monitoring cycle in June 2023. On May 16, 2024, the Montana Office of Public Instruction (OPI) received a letter from you documenting areas of noncompliance concerning the State's policies and procedures and State-level implementation of these policies and procedures regarding the following monitoring priorities and components of general supervision:

- Monitoring and Improvement
- Data including the State Performance Plan/Annual Performance Report (SPP/APR)
- Fiscal Management: Subrecipient Monitoring
- Dispute Resolution





- Significant Disproportionality

This letter is to report on corrective actions taken to address the identified findings of noncompliance. To summarize, the OPI has addressed the areas of noncompliance and has enumerated each required corrective action and activities completed below:

Monitoring component 1: Monitoring and Improvement

Finding: Identification of Noncompliance

1.1 OSEP finds that the State does not have a reasonably designed general supervision system to ensure the identification of noncompliance and that each educational program for children with disabilities meets the IDEA Part B requirements under 34 C.F.R. §§ 300.149 and 300.600 through 300.602.

Corrective Action Required: Policies and Procedures— *within 90 days of the date of this monitoring report the State must submit to OSEP:*

1.1 Identification of Noncompliance

1. *Updated policies and procedures, documenting its process for identifying noncompliance. The policies and procedures must ensure that the State's monitoring process is reasonably designed.*

OPI Response:

1.1(1) - To address requirements under 34 C.F.R. §§ 300.149 and 300.600 through 300.602, the OPI has developed and revised written policies and procedures for identifying noncompliance to ensure the State's monitoring process is reasonably designed as evidenced by the following documentation:

- The Montana Special Education Integrated Monitoring System Manual

Finding: Correction of Noncompliance

1.2 OSEP finds that the State does not have a general supervision system that is reasonably designed to verify correction of noncompliance in a timely manner, as required under 34 C.F.R. §§ 300.149 and 300.600 through 300.602.

Corrective Action Required: Policies and Procedures—*within 90 days of the date of this monitoring report the State must submit to OSEP:*

1. *Updated policies and procedures outlining the State's process to:*
 - a. *Determine systemic compliance when an LEA does not have sufficient updated data to demonstrate compliance; and*





- a. *Review updated data and obtain information from its LEAs consistent with the requirements in 34 C.F.R. §§ 300.149 and 300.600 through 300.602.*

OPI Response:

1.2(1)(a) - To address requirements under 34 C.F.R. §§ 300.149 and 300.600 through 300.602, the OPI has developed and revised written policies and procedures outlining the State's process to determine systemic compliance when an LEA does not have sufficient updated data to demonstrate compliance as evidenced by the following documentation:

- The Montana Special Education Integrated Monitoring System Manual p.10

1.2(1)(b) - To address requirements under 34 C.F.R. §§ 300.149 and 300.600 through 300.602, the OPI has developed and revised written policies and procedures outlining the State's process to review updates and obtain information from its LEAs as evidenced by:

- The Montana Special Education Integrated Monitoring System Manual p.8

Finding: Child find and Evaluation

1.3 OSEP finds that the State has policies, procedures, and practices that are inconsistent with 34 C.F.R. §§ 300.111, 300.122, and 300.301. Specifically, the State's use of Response to Intervention (RTI) strategies is being used to delay or deny the provision of a full and individual evaluation to a child suspected of having a disability under 34 C.F.R. § 300.8.

Corrective Action Required: Policies and Procedures—within 90 days of the date of this monitoring report the State must submit to OSEP:

1. *Updated policies and procedures that are consistent with the requirements in 34 C.F.R. §§ 300.111, 300.122, and 300.301.*
2. *A copy of the SEA's updated monitoring activities to evaluate LEA's use of RTI and ensuring that the use of RTI strategies or any prereferral processes are not used to delay or deny the provision of a full and individual evaluation of a child suspected of having a disability as required under 34 C.F.R. §§ 300.111, 300.122, and 300.301.*
3. *A specific written assurance from the State that shows—*
(1) *The State will revise its policies and procedures so that RTI is not used to delay or deny the provision of a full and individual evaluation to a child suspected of having a disability, as soon as possible but in no case later than one year from the date of*





OSEP's 2024 DMS report to be consistent with the requirements in 34 C.F.R. §§ 300.111, 300.122, and 300.301;

(2) The State will issue a memorandum or other directive to all LEAs, parent advocacy groups, and other interested parties advising that the State will be revising its policies and procedures regarding the use of RTI and provide a copy to OSEP; and the State will comply with 34 C.F.R. § 300.600(3)

(3) throughout the remainder of the FFY 2023 grant period and the entire FFY 2024 grant period.

OPI Response:

1.3(1) - To address requirements under 34 C.F.R. §§ 300.111, 300.122, and 300.301, the OPI has developed and revised written policies and procedures outlining the State's process to review updates and obtain information from its LEAs as evidenced by the following documentation:

- The Montana Special Education Guidance p.14 (attached)
- The Montana Special Education Integrated Monitoring System Manual p.8

1.3(2) - To address requirements under 34 C.F.R. §§ 300.111, 300.122, and 300.301, the OPI has developed and revised written policies and procedures outlining the State's activities to evaluate LEAs use of RTI and ensuring that the use of RTI and ensuring that the RTI strategies or any prereferral processes are not used to delay or deny the provision of a full and individual evaluation of a child suspected of having a disability as evidenced by the following documentation:

- The Montana Special Education Integrated Monitoring System Manual p.8
- Record Review p.3

1.3(3)(1) - To address the requirement of 34 C.F.R. §§ 300.111, 300.122, and 300.301, this serves as a letter of assurance that the OPI has revised its policies and procedures so that RTI is not used to delay or deny the provision of a full and individual evaluation to a child suspected of having a disability, as soon as possible but in no case later than one year from the date of OSEP's 2024 DMS report. To confirm the letter of assurance OSEP can find evidence in the following documents:

- Montana Special Education Integrated Monitoring System Manual p.8
- Montana Special Education Guidance p.14
- Record Review p.3





1.3(3)(2) - To address the requirement of issuing a memorandum to all LEAs, parent advocacy groups, and other interested parties advising that the State will be revising its policies and procedures regarding the use of RTI and provide a copy to OSEP.

- A virtual meeting was held for LEA and Cooperative Special Education Directors, the Montana Empowerment Center (MEC), and Disability Rights Montana (DRM) on June 5, 2024, from 9:00 am until 10:00 am. (screenshot attached)
- Memorandum sent to all LEA and Cooperative Special Education Directors, the MEC (parent advocacy group), and DRM on 8/15/24. (attached)
- A virtual meeting is scheduled for August 21, 2024, from 8:30 am until 9:30 am for LEA and Cooperative Special Education Directors to review the recent updates. (screenshot attached)
- At the Montana Council of Administrators of Special Education scheduled for September 23-24, 2024, the OPI Special Education Leadership Team will present on the recent changes as a result of Montana's Differentiated Monitoring System (DMS) 2.0 report.

1.3(3)(3) - To address the requirements of 34 C.F.R. § 300.306(3), the OPI did (for the remainder of FFY23) and will continue to comply with this regulation as evidenced by:

- A virtual meeting was held for LEA and Cooperative Special Education Directors, the Montana Empowerment Center (MEC), and Disability Rights Montana (DRM) on June 5, 2024, from 9:00 am until 10:00 am. (attached)
- A presentation specifically to special education educators and leaders at Montana's Summer Institute in June 2024.
- Continued compliance for FFY24 will be evidenced with the implementation of the Montana Special Education Integrated Monitoring System. Montana will provide evidence of LEA's policies and procedures, and guidance which ensures that RTI is not a prerequisite for making a referral to special education and document the monitoring of LEA's files, specifically for students who were identified previously in RTI.

Monitoring component 2: Fiscal Management: Subrecipient Monitoring

Finding: Subrecipient Monitoring

2.2 OSEP finds that the State does not have a reasonably designed system, policies and procedures, and internal controls for its subrecipient monitoring process consistent with 2 C.F.R. §§ 200.332, 200.339, 200.303, and 34 C.F.R. §§ 300.149, 300.600, and 300.604.





Corrective Action Required: Policies and Procedures—within 90 days of the date of this monitoring report the State must submit to OSEP:

1. Updated policies and procedures for fiscal monitoring consistent with the requirements of IDEA and the OMB Uniform Guidance at 2 C.F.R. §§ 200.332, and 200.339, and 34 C.F.R. §§ 300.149 and 300.600. The following requirements are examples of topics that could be included in fiscal monitoring policies and procedures:
 - a. Allowable costs consistent with 2 C.F.R. § 200.403(a) and (g);
 - a. Time and Effort charges for personnel duties consistent with 2 C.F.R. § 200.430(b);
 - a. Records and Information management to ensure fiscal records are maintained in compliance with 2 C.F.R. §§ 200.303(e), 200.334, and 200.336;
 - a. Equipment and inventory of items purchased using Federal IDEA Part B funds consistent with 2 C.F.R. §§ 200.313 and 200.314; and
 - a. The activities carried out in implementing CCEIS under 34 C.F.R. § 300.226.

OPI Response:

On July 1, 2024, OPI requested and received an extension; please see the attached email titled Montana Extension Request for further clarification. Documents will be submitted on or before October 1, 2024.

Finding: Parentally-placed Private School Children with Disabilities Proportionate Share Calculation

2.3 OSEP finds that the State does not ensure that its LEAs are correctly calculating the proportionate share for parentally-placed private school children with disabilities aged three through five for IDEA Section 619 and three through 21 for IDEA Section 611 in accordance with 34 C.F.R. §§ 300.133(a)(1) and (2).

Corrective Action Required: Policies and Procedures—within 90 days of the date of this monitoring report the State must provide documentation to OSEP that it has required its LEAs to:

1. Establish a count of parentally-placed private school children with disabilities that includes children with disabilities aged three through 21, as well as a count of parentally-placed private school children with disabilities aged three through five: Using the best data available and in consultation with private school representatives and of parentally-placed private school children with disabilities, each LEA in the State must determine the number of children with disabilities enrolled by their parents in private elementary and secondary schools that are





physically located in the LEA. Consistent with State law, children with disabilities who are homeschooled in the LEA for FFYs 2019, 2020, 2021, 2022, and 2023 must be included in this count. The State must also ensure that nonresident children with disabilities who attend private schools located in the LEA for FFYs 2019, 2020, 2021, 2022, and 2023 are included in this count.

- 2. Recalculate the proportionate share: Using the revised child counts established above, each LEA in the State must properly calculate the proportionate share of IDEA Part B funds, including funds from both IDEA Sections 611 and 619 grants, required for the provision of equitable services under 34 C.F.R. § 300.133 for FFYs 2019, 2020, 2021, 2022, and 2023.*
- 3. Determine the amount of State, local, and IDEA Part B funds, including from both IDEA Sections 611 and 619 grants actually expended: Each LEA in the State must determine the amount of State, local, and IDEA Part B funds, including funds from both IDEA Sections 611 and 619 grants that the LEA expended in FFYs 2019, 2020, 2021, 2022, and 2023 to provide special education and related services to parentally-placed private school children with disabilities (including homeschooled children to the extent that it is consistent with State law, as noted above). The amount of State and local funds and the amount of IDEA Part B funds, including funds from both IDEA Sections 611 and 619 grants must be determined and calculated separately for each fiscal year. The expenditures must be verifiable by the SEA or State and/or local auditors.*
- 4. Determine the amount of the shortfall in funds, if any, spent to provide services to parentally-placed private school children with disabilities: By subtracting the result calculated in #2 from the result determined in #3 above, each LEA must identify the amount of the shortfall, if any, in funds spent to provide services to parentally-placed private school children with disabilities. The LEA must perform this calculation separately and include IDEA Part B funds, from both IDEA Sections 611 and 619 grants for FFYs 2019, 2020, 2021, 2022, and 2023.*
- 5. Remedy any shortfall by using available State and local funds, and IDEA Part B funds from both IDEA Sections 611 and 619 grants, where available, to make up the difference: When remedying any shortfall, an LEA may use State and local funds and/or IDEA Part B funds from both IDEA Sections 611 and 619 grants to the extent the LEA has not already used an amount of such funds equal to its required proportionate share for the FFY. In addition, the State has the discretion to use a portion of its IDEA Part B funds from both IDEA Sections 611 and 619 grants reserved for State level activities to support LEAs in remedying any shortfall.*





OPI Response:

On July 1, 2024, OPI requested and received an extension; please see the attached email titled Montana Extension Request for further clarification. Documents will be submitted on or before October 1, 2024.

Monitoring component 3: Dispute Resolution

Finding: Adoption of State Complaint Procedures

3.1 OSEP finds that the State's model form for filing a State complaint is inconsistent with 34 C.F.R. § 300.153.

Corrective Action Required: *OSEP required evidence of implementation as soon as possible but no later than one year from the date of this monitoring report:*

1. *A copy of the memo sent to all LEAs explaining the revised model form and procedural safeguards.*

OPI Response:

3.1(1) - To address requirements under 34 C.F.R. §§ 300.151 and 300.153, OSEP acknowledged the State's revision of its procedural safeguards but requested a copy of the memo.

- Memorandum sent to all LEA and Cooperative Special Education Directors on August 14, 2024 (attached).

Finding: Impartial Hearing Officer Knowledge

3.2 OSEP finds that the State does not have a mechanism to ensure that hearing officers contracted by the State meet the minimum qualifications as required under 34 C.F.R. § 300.511(c)(1)(ii)-(iv).

Corrective Action Required: *Policies and Procedures—within 90 days of the date of this monitoring report the State must submit to OSEP:*

1. *Policies and procedures consistent with 34 C.F.R. § 300.511(c)(1)(ii)-(iv). that demonstrate how the State ensures that the hearing officers used by the State possess knowledge of, and the ability to understand, the provisions of the IDEA Part B, Federal and State regulations pertaining to IDEA Part B, and legal interpretations of the IDEA Part B by Federal and State courts.*
2. *Policies and procedures that demonstrate that the hearing officers used by the State possess the knowledge and ability to conduct hearings in accordance with legal practice as required under 34 C.F.R. § 300.511(c)(1)(ii)-(iv).*





3. *Policies and procedures that demonstrate how the State ensures that the hearing officers used by the State possess the knowledge and ability to render and write decisions in accordance with appropriate, standard legal practice as required under 34 C.F.R. § 300.511(c)(1)(ii)-(iv).*
4. *Evidence of Implementation—as soon as possible, but no later than one year from the date of this monitoring report the State must submit to OSEP:*
 1. *Documentation and participation logs of annual, or more frequent, trainings the State held with the hearing officers on:*
 - a. *the provisions of IDEA Part B as required under 34 C.F.R. § 300.511(c)(1)(ii)-(iv), Federal and State regulations pertaining to IDEA Part B, and legal interpretations of the IDEA Part B by Federal and State courts;*
 - b. *the knowledge and ability to conduct hearings in accordance with appropriate, standard legal practice; and*
 - c. *the knowledge and ability to render and write decisions in accordance with appropriate, standard legal practice.*

OPI Response:

3.2(1-3) - To address requirements under 34 C.F.R. § 300.511(c)(1)(ii)-(iv), the OPI has developed and revised written policies and procedures as evidenced by following documentation:

- 2024.06.12 MT OPI IDEA Hearing Officer Requirements (attached)
- 2024.06.12 Memo to Hearing Officers (attached)
- 2024.05.16 OSEP DMS Report Dispute Resolution (attached)

3.2(4) – Evidence of implementation

- 2024.06.12 Emails to HOs (Hearing Officers) Re Memo About Qualifications (attached)
- Oct. 2024 MT Sped Law Conference HO Attendees (attached)
- October 2024 Montana Special Education Law Conference Information (attached)
- 2024 Resumes of MT OPI Hearing Officers (attached)

Monitoring component 4: Significant Disproportionality





Finding: Overidentification and disproportionality

4.1 OSEP finds that the State does not have complete, written policies and procedures in place, consistent with the purposes of IDEA Part B and with IDEA Section 618(d), designed to prevent the inappropriate overidentification or disproportionate representation by race and ethnicity of children as children with disabilities, including children with disabilities with a particular impairment, as required in 34 C.F.R. § 300.173.

Corrective Action Required: Policies and Procedures—within 90 days of the date of this monitoring report the State must submit to OSEP revised policies and procedures which include:

1. The State's process for ensuring that each LEA identified with significant disproportionality identifies and addresses the factors contributing to the significant disproportionality, as required in 34 C.F.R. § 300.173; and
2. The State's oversight of the expenditure and use of CCEIS funds by districts identified with significant disproportionality, consistent with 34 C.F.R. § 300.646(d)(1)(ii).

OPI Response:

On July 1, 2024, OPI requested and received an extension; please see the attached email titled Montana Extension Request for further clarification. Documents will be submitted on or before October 1, 2024.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions or if I can provide you with additional information.

Sincerely,

Danielle McCarthy
State Director of Special Education

C: Elsie Arntzen, Montana State Superintendent of Public Instruction
Julie Murgel, Montana OPI Chief Program Officer
Patrick Cates, Montana OPI Student Support Services Senior Manager





Para Pathways Project

The OPI Special Education Department is excited to announce the launch of our Para Pathways Project. The Para Pathways Project is an innovative approach to improve recruitment and retention of special education teachers.

The OPI Special Education Department recognizes the capacity and potential of the 1800+ paraprofessionals across our great state working with Montana's students with disabilities. These paras are connected to the heart of their communities. Every principal or special education teacher knows a para they would like to see running their own classroom.

The Para Pathways program is a way for paraprofessionals to work towards special education licensure. There will be a blend of online modules and courses offered through our partner, Dawson Community College (DCC) to earn a Special Education Technician license. This license will be roughly the equivalent of an associates degree in special education and will allow them to take on a larger role in the special education classroom. We look forward to launching the first stages of the project in the fall of 2024. Stay tuned for more information on the Para Pathways Project!

Stage 1: Online professional development modules grounded in IDEA law and regulation.

- **Zero cost to schools/staff!** These modules will be available to all school staff throughout the state at no cost. The OPI is building it into our special education budget.
- An identified set of modules within the library will be outlined for the Special Education Technician pathway.
 - Incentive for SPED paras to take this set of courses - **\$20/module**.
 - Set of modules will be required for entrance into DCC's SPED Tech program.

Stage 2: Entrance into DCC's Special Education Technician program.

- DCC will host 4-6 courses over the course of a year.
- Incentivized - OPI, in partnership with DCC, will cover the cost of the tuition.
- Candidates will have a service agreement upon completion of the program.





Stage 3: Full Special Education Licensure - DCC, in coordination with the universities offering special education degrees, will provide an Associate's Degree option (a few extra courses) for those interested in pursuing their special education teaching license.

Montana's OPI Special Education Team

[Kelley Brown](#), General Information, Meetings, and Events, 406-444-5661

[Ty House](#), Contracts and Payments, 406-444-2504

Administration

Danni McCarthy	State Special Education Director	406-594-3610
Danni McCarthy	Fiscal Management	406-594-3610
Kimberlea Emmons	Fiscal & Reporting Manager	406-444-3124

Continuing Education & Technical Assistance

Tammy Lysons	Unit Manager	406-431-2309
Katie Mattingley	Montana Autism Education Program	406-437-3874
Jenny Jarvis	GT/MTSS Program Support Specialist	406-410-1140
Anne Carpenter	Program Support Specialist	406-465-0922
Annette Vicedo Young	Continuing Ed & Stipend Programs	406-444-0299
Lucy Beltz	Early Learning Specialist, Special Education Preschool	406-431-4654

School Improvement Supports

John Gorton	Unit Manager	406-459-4281
Mercee Cislo	School Improvement Specialist	406-437-2369
Alicia Herman	School Improvement Specialist	406-438-1363
Desiree Johnson	School Improvement Specialist	406-431-1081
Crystal Wright	School Improvement Specialist	406-202-7920

Data Systems and Reporting

Kristie Sears	IDEA Part B Data Accountability Specialist	406-444-4430
Shara Blair	AIM Special Education Data System & Behavior Data	406-444-0685

Dispute Resolution

Mandi Gibbs	Early Assistance Program & Dispute Resolution	406-444-5664
Angie Griner	Paralegal	406-444-2046

